



MINUTES

219th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**2010
PART I
JOURNAL**

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Errata 2008

The following error on Page 27 of the *Minutes of the 218th General Assembly (2008)* is called to the attention of users of that volume:

The election of the Class of 2012 for the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns was inadvertently left out. The text for the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, Class of 2012, is shown with a gray highlight below:

“E. Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

“GANC Nomination—Class of 2010

1.	Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty	WFC	36-45	Mid-Kentucky	LW	AL	NEW
2.	Gay Byron	BFC	46-55	Genesee Valley	NE	AL	NEW †
3.	Belinda Rice	BFE	46-55	Charlotte	MAT	WCL	NEW †

“GANC Nomination—Class of 2012

5.	Terry Alexander	WMC	56-65	Western North Carolina	MAT	AL	REN
6.	F. William Gray	WME	56-65	Western New York	NE	AL	REN
7.	Jerri Rodewald	WFE	65+	Riverside	SCH	AL	REN
8.	Darcy Metcalfe (YA)	WFE	26-35	Wabash Valley	LIN	AL	NEW
9.	N’Yisrela Watts-Afriyie	BFE	46-55	Pacific	SCH	AL	NEW

The following error on Page 61 of the *Minutes of the 218th General Assembly (2008)* is called to the attention of users of that volume:

“Protest of Confrontation after Committee Testimony—From Gary Green[~~—commissioner from the Presbytery of Grand Canyon~~]: ‘Following my testimony before committee 11 on the evening of Tues. June 24th, 2008, I was followed out of the committee conference room and confronted by a Mr. Glenn Dickson and verbally assaulted with charges of being a liar, but no specifics as to what he thought was a lie were mentioned. I believe that this needs to be brought to the attention of the Stated Clerk.’”

Gary Green was not a commissioner to the assembly.

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the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Overtures, and Commissioners' Resolutions

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OFFICERS

Two Hundred and Nineteenth General Assembly (2010)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Moderator

ELDER CYNTHIA BOLBACH

Vice-Moderator

THE REVEREND LANDON WHITSITT

Stated Clerk

THE REVEREND GRADYE PARSONS

Associate Stated Clerks

ELDER LOYDA PUIG AJA
THE REVEREND KERRY CLEMENTS
ELDER FREDERICK J. HEUSER JR.
THE REVEREND JILL HUDSON
THE REVEREND MARCIA MYERS
THE REVEREND MARK TAMMEN
THE REVEREND ROBINA WINBUSH

Assistant Stated Clerks

DEBORAH DAVIES
ELDER C. LAURIE GRIFFITH
JOYCE LIEBERMAN
THE REVEREND CARLOS MALAVÉ
JEWEL MCRAE
MARTHA MILLER
CHRIS NICHOLAS
KERRY RICE
ELDER DOSKA ROSS
ELDER MARGERY SLY
ELDER VALERIE SMALL
JULIA THORNE
THE REVEREND SHARON YOUNGS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Changes made by the 219th General Assembly (2010) to overtures, commissioners' resolutions, communications, recommendations, and resolutions of General Assembly entities appear as text enclosed in brackets. Bracketed text that is underlined was added by the assembly to the original text; bracketed text that is stricken was original text deleted by the assembly. Bracketed text with a gray screen background indicates changes made by plenary.

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

SECTION ONE

Proceedings of the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Including Reports of Assembly Committees

The World Wide Web

<http://www.pcusa.org/ga219>

Many of the reports of the General Assembly and the minutes can be found on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Web site. In the Fall of 2010, the Web site will be updated with four reports as approved by the assembly. These reports, can be found at the following address:

<http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications.htm>

- Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call, Item 11-06, p. 830
- Human Rights Update 2010, Item 11-04, p. 812
- Living Through Economic Crisis: The Church's Witness in Troubled Times: A Social Involvement Report for the 219th General Assembly (2010), Item 10-09, p. 733
- Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education, Item 10-11, p. 772

**THE JOURNAL OF THE
219TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2010)**

Saturday, July 3, 2010, 1:30 P.M.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was convened by Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator, 218th General Assembly (2008), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Preceding the convening of the assembly, Alika Galloway, liturgist, and John Lee, song leader, led the assembly in an opening liturgy.

COMMISSIONING OF COMMISSIONERS AND ADVISORY DELEGATES

Moderator Reyes-Chow, Stated Clerk Parsons, Dennis Hughes (moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly), and John Wilkinson (moderator-elect of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly), led the assembly in a Service of Commissioning for Commissioners and Advisory Delegates, which included a litany of enrollment and commitment to faithful fulfillment of their service as commissioners and a charge to commissioners.

ENROLLMENT AND QUORUM

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Stated Clerk Parsons, who advised the Moderator that Standing Rule D.2. permits that the roll be established by registration. Stated Clerk Parsons recommended that the roll of the 219th General Assembly (2010) be established by the list of those who had registered or would register. Based on pre-registration with the General Assembly Meeting Service, there would be present at this assembly:

- 712 commissioners from 173 presbyteries
- 173 young adult advisory delegates
- 25 theological student advisory delegates
- 8 missionary advisory delegates
- 15 ecumenical advisory delegates

The assembly approved that the roll of the 219th General Assembly (2010) be established by the list of those who had registered or would register. Stated Clerk Parsons then informed the Moderator that G-13.0105 of the *Book of Order* establishes that the “quorum of the General Assembly shall be one hundred commissioners, fifty of whom shall be elders and fifty of whom shall be ministers, representing presbyteries of at least one fourth of its synods.”

Moderator Reyes-Chow informed the assembly that at a later time, before taking any additional votes, a quorum of commissioners present at this assembly would be established by the use of the electronic voting system.

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The roll of the General Assembly can be found on page 1409.

SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Stated Clerk Parsons announced that in accordance with Standing Rule B.3., corresponding members are designated and present at the General Assembly. The list of corresponding members can be found on page 1417.

Moderator Reyes-Chow welcomed the corresponding members.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

The report of the Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area was presented by Chaz Ruark, executive presbyter of the presbytery, and Sandra Hawley and Manley Olson, co-moderators of the local arrangements committee. Participating in the presentations were Donetta Wickstrom, Presbytery of Northern Waters, and Rallah Madison, Presbytery of Minnesota Valley.

REPORT OF THE MODERATOR AND VICE-MODERATOR

Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow called upon Vice-Moderator Byron Wade to assume the chair. Vice-Moderator Wade recognized the Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008), Bruce Reyes-Chow, who presented the report on the work of the Moderator during the last two years. At the conclusion of the report, Moderator Reyes-Chow assumed the chair. Vice-Moderator Byron Wade presented a report of the work of the Vice-Moderator over the last two years.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION COUNCIL

Moderator Reyes-Chow called upon Carol Adcock, chair of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), who provided a report on the work of the GAMC. Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the GAMC, Roger Dermody, deputy executive director of the GAMC, and Curtis Kearns, executive administrator of the GAMC, participated in the report, including the presentation of videos.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized James Madson, moderator of the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), who described the process by which the GANC places names in nomination and the procedure for making nominations from the floor.

REPORT ON BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Moderator Reyes-Chow called upon Joey Bailey, deputy executive director of Mission Support Services, GAMC, who described the process to be used in identifying items with budget implications and how that process can inform decisions made during the assembly.

COMMISSIONER ORIENTATION

Moderator Reyes-Chow and Stated Clerk Parsons led the commissioners through a period of orientation.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR THE ASSEMBLY

Moderator Reyes-Chow called on Stated Clerk Parsons to recommend a committee structure for the assembly.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) voted to approve Item 00-02. [See p. 97.]

REPORT OF ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRAL

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Heath Rada, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved Items 01-04 and 01-08. The assembly approved Items 01-10 and 01-11. The assembly approved Item 01-03 as amended by Items 01-10 and 01-11. The assembly approved Item 01-01.

The committee moved Item 01-02. The assembly removed the final response to referral "F. General Assembly Mission Council, Referral 57" (*Redevelop Congregational Resource Materials, on the Subject of Reproductive Options*) and then approved Item 01-02 as amended. The response to referral 57 was referred to the Assembly Committee on Health Issues and became Item 19-07.

Aleida Jernigan, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, presented the remainder of the committee's report.

The assembly approved Items 01-05, 01-06, and 01-09. Jernigan announced that Item 01-07 was under appeal and would be considered by the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. [The committee decided, with comment, not to refer Item 01-07.]

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

Assembly Committee on Business Referral

Item 01-01. Proposed Docket of the General Assembly.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 101.)

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

That the recommendation is approved with amendment (removed the response to referral "F. General Assembly Mission Council, Referral 57"). (See p. 103.)

Item 01-03. Referrals of Business.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 170.)

Item 01-04. Suspend Standing Rule A.2.a.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 180.)

Item 01-05. Baptism at Opening Worship

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 180.)

Item 01-06. Celebration of Communion on July 4

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 180.)

Item 01-07. San Diego Overture.

The appeal was considered by the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. (See p. 180.)

Item 01-08. New President and Dean of Johnson C. Smith Seminary.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 181.)

Item 01-09. Invite Representative from the Presbyterian Church of Nicaragua as an Ecumenical Advisory Delegate.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 181.)

Item 01-10. Referral of Item 05-29.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 181.)

Item 01-11. Referral of Item 03-29.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 181.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stated Clerk Parsons made several announcements, including a reminder that the deadline for business to be submitted to the assembly was 1:30 p.m., Sunday, July 4th.

CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator Reyes-Chow called upon Heather Grantham, a theological student advisory delegate from San Francisco Theological Seminary, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 5:20 p.m.

Saturday, July 3, 2010, 7 P.M.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator, 218th General Assembly (2008), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Michael East, a young adult advisory delegate from the Presbytery of Eastern Oklahoma, and Caroline Sherard, a young adult advisory delegate from the Presbytery of Trinity, led the assembly in the convening prayer.

VOTING PROCEDURES

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized the Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons for a test of the voting system.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING RULE H.1.b.(4)(c)

The 219th General Assembly (2010) voted to approve the suspension of Standing Rule H.1.b.(4)(c) to allow for ninety minutes of questions posed to the moderatorial candidates.

RECOGNITION OF FORMER MODERATORS

Moderator Reyes-Chow welcomed the following former moderators to the platform:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>G.A.</u>	<u>Church</u>
Herbert D. Valentine	1991	203rd	PC(USA)
John M. Fife	1992	204th	PC(USA)
David L. Dobler	1993	205th	PC(USA)
John M. Buchanan	1996	208th	PC(USA)
Patricia G. Brown	1997	209th	PC(USA)
Syngman Rhee	2000	212th	PC(USA)
Jack Rogers	2001	213th	PC(USA)
Fahed Abu-Akel	2002	214th	PC(USA)
Susan R. Andrews	2003	215th	PC(USA)
Rick Ufford-Chase	2004	216th	PC(USA)

ELECTION OF THE MODERATOR

Moderator Reyes-Chow called for the election of the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as required by *Book of Order*, G-9.0200, and Standing Rule H.

Dennis Hughes, moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, reported on moderatorial candidate expenses. Hughes noted that the expenses comported with the standing rules.

The Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons described the procedure for the election.

Moderator Reyes-Chow announced that six candidates had declared their intention to stand for election. There were no additional nominations from the floor. The most recent past Moderator present, Rick Ufford-Chase, Moderator, 216th General Assembly (2004), met with the candidates backstage and led them in prayer.

Six candidates were placed in nomination: Julia Leeth, Presbytery of Santa Barbara, who was nominated by Hector Reynoso, Presbytery of Mission; Jin S. Kim, Presbytery of the Twin Cities, who was nominated by Rosy Latimore, Presbytery of Detroit; James A. Belle, Presbytery of Philadelphia, who was nominated by John Sweet, Presbytery of Philadelphia; Cynthia Bolbach, Presbytery of National Capital, who was nominated by Danny Murphy, Presbytery of Trinity; Eric G. Nielsen, Presbytery of Northern Waters, who was nominated by Marilyn S. Gamm, Presbytery of The John Knox; and Maggie Palmer Lauterer, Presbytery of Western North Carolina, who was nominated by Heath Rada, Presbytery of Western North Carolina.

Following nominating speeches, each candidate was afforded an opportunity to address the General Assembly for five minutes. Vice-Moderator Byron Wade led the General Assembly in prayer. Stated Clerk Parsons explained the use of the speaker-recognition system. The candidates then responded to questions from the floor. At the expiration of the time allotted for this process, the candidates were escorted from the hall by former Moderator Ufford-Chase. Stated Clerk Parsons explained the electronic voting procedures.

Cynthia Bolbach was elected Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) on the fourth ballot, receiving a total of 325 votes. Of the total votes cast Julia Leeth received 148, James A. Belle received 51, Maggie Palmer Lauterer received 49, Eric G. Nielsen received 37, and Jin S. Kim received 25.

Moderator Reyes-Chow declared that Cynthia Bolbach was duly elected to the office of Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010).

After being escorted back into the hall by former Moderator Ufford-Chase, Moderator-elect Bolbach was accompanied to the platform by family members and friends.

INSTALLATION OF NEWLY ELECTED MODERATOR

Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons and retiring Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow installed Cynthia Bolbach to the office of Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010). Retiring Moderator Reyes-Chow presented Moderator Bolbach with the moderatorial stole, and with the Celtic crosses that have been worn by all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Moderators since 1983.

Charlotte Lohrenz led the assembly in prayer for the Moderator.

Moderator Bolbach addressed the assembly briefly.

PRESENTATIONS TO RETIRING MODERATOR AND VICE-MODERATOR

Moderator Bolbach recognized Stated Clerk Parsons for a special presentation. Stated Clerk Parsons presented retiring Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow with a replica of the Celtic crosses that have been worn by all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Moderators since 1983. Stated Clerk Parsons also presented ties to retiring Moderator Reyes-Chow and retiring Vice-Moderator Wade.

CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator Bolbach called upon Larry Moir, a missionary advisory delegate serving in Africa. Moir offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 11:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 4, 2010, 10 A.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered for worship in Hall E of the Minneapolis Convention Center. The service featured former Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow preaching. The service included the Sacrament of Communion, the commissioning of mission personnel, the Sacrament of Baptism, and the recognition of military chaplains.

Sunday, July 4, 2010, 1:30 P.M.

The assembly met in assigned committees from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 4, 2010, 5:30 P.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered for a reception for Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010); a 4th of July picnic; and fireworks on Nicollet Island.

Monday, July 5, 2010, 7:00 A.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered for the General Assembly Breakfast with speaker Phyllis Tickle.

Monday, July 5, 2010, 9:30 A.M.

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

Tuesday, July 6, 2010, 8:30 A.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered for morning worship with Taylor Lewis Guthrie preaching.

Tuesday, July 6, 2010, 9:30 A.M.

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

Wednesday, July 7, 2010, 8:30 A.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered for the Ecumenical Service of Worship in the sanctuary of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Reverend Peg Chamberlin, executive director of the Minnesota Council of Churches and also president of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., preached the sermon.

Wednesday, July 7, 2010, 1:30 P.M.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Moderator Bolbach expressed appreciation to the five candidates for General Assembly Moderator.

Eric Thomas, a theological student advisory delegate from Johnson C. Smith Seminary, led the assembly in the convening prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Heath Rada reported that the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures examined the Minutes of the General Assembly from the time of its convening on Saturday afternoon, July 3, through the end of business on Sunday, July 4 [Items 02-02, 02-03, 02-06, 02-07, 02-08, 02-09, 02-10], and found them in order. [See pp. 185–86, 188.] [There is no Item 02-04.] The assembly received for information Item 02-01. [See p. 185.] The assembly approved Item 02-05. [See p. 186.]

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

Moderator Rada, Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, recognized Patricia Valentine, moderator, Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report on financial implications on the per capita budget of actions taken at this assembly. Valentine announced that the total financial implications of actions recommended by assembly committees amounted to: \$156,985 for 2010; \$404,743 for 2011; and \$109,793 for 2012. On Saturday morning, the committee will present to the assembly its final recommendation for balancing the per capita budget for 2011 and 2012.

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

Moderator Rada, Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, recognized Julia Henderson, moderator, Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, for a report on financial implications to the mission budget of actions taken at this assembly. Henderson reported the total financial implications of actions under consideration by the assembly for the mission budgets were: \$52,087 for 2010; \$307,861 for 2011; and \$227,183 for 2012. On Saturday morning, the committee will present to the assembly its final recommendation for balancing the mission budget for 2011 and 2012.

DECADE OF THE CHILD

Moderator Bolbach recognized Martha Bettis Gee, staff of the General Assembly Mission Council. Bettis Gee introduced a video on the Decade of the Child. The assembly joined in a litany for the Decade of the Child.

Moderator Bolbach recognized Olanda Carr Jr., vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures. Carr led the assembly in an orientation of the keypads for voting.

CONFIRMATION AND INSTALLATION OF THE VICE-MODERATOR

Moderator Bolbach introduced Landon Whitsitt, minister commissioner, Presbytery of Heartland, whom she appointed Vice-Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010). The assembly confirmed Landon Whitsitt as Vice-Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) and Moderator Bolbach and Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons led a service to install him into the position.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH GROWTH, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, AND PILP

Moderator Bolbach recognized Mindy Douglas Adams, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education, and PILP (Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program), for a report from the committee. The consent agenda was approved: Items 15-01 (approved as amended), 15-02 (approved), 15-05 (approved), 15-06 (approved), 15-07 (approved), 15-11 (approved), 15-12 (approved), 15-13 (referred to GAMC). Moderator Douglas Adams recognized Jay Hudson, president, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP). Hudson presented a report on the work of PILP. The assembly approved Item 15-03 as amended. Moderator Douglas Adams recognized Thomas Letts, vice-moderator, Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education, and PILP. Vice-moderator Letts introduced Items 15-04 and 15-08. Items 15-04 and 15-08 were approved. Moderator Douglas Adams introduced Item 15-09 and Item 15-10. Item 15-09 and Item 15-10 were approved.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education, and Presbyterian Publishing. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education, and PILP

[Consent agenda items are indicated by an asterisk. Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign (\$).]

***Item 15-01. On Transferring Community Church of Seattle from the Presbytery of Seattle to the Presbytery of North Puget Sound.**

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 1151.)

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

“*Note:* It is understood the effective date [~~is January 1, 2011~~] will be upon favorable action of the General Assembly].”

***Item 15-02. On Establishing the United Church of the San Juans in Ridgway, Colorado, as a Union Church.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1151.)

***Item 15-05. Confirm Election of PILP Board of Directors**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1158.)

***Item 15-06. Partnership Covenant Between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1158.)

***Item 15-07. Approve the List of Colleges and Universities as Related to the PC(USA).**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1162.)

***Item 15-11. On Establishing the Christ Community Church in Cortland, New York, as a Union Church**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1180.)

***Item 15-12. On Establishing the United Church of the Plains as an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Union Church.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1181.)

***Item 15-13. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Assisting the Emmanuel Church of Tirana in Planting Churches and Forming a New Reformed Denomination in Albania.**

That the recommendation is referred to the General Assembly Mission Council (and its office of World Mission). (See p. 1181.)

Item 15-03. Renew Commitment to Help Grow Christ’s Church Deep and Wide.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 1152.)

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

“d. Grow in Diversity: Welcome everyone. Learn from others. Reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of God’s peoples in the world [including leadership] (Gal. 3:26–29; Rev. 7:9–10).”

Item 15-04. Presbyterian Multicultural Network (PMN) Church Growth Report

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1154.)

\$Item 15-08. Task Force to Study Racial Ethnic and New Immigrant Church Growth.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1163.)

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$17,970 (2011); \$27,205 (2012); \$9,735 (Per Capita—GAMC).]

\$Item 15-09. On Convening a Conversation to Develop a Strategy for Addressing Hispanic/Latino Participation at All Levels of the Church

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1164.)

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$0; (2011) \$13,310; (2012) \$13,310 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Item 15-10. Youth Task Force Report

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1165.)

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

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

Item 15-A. Women of Faith Awards—GAMC. (See p. 1183.)

The Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education, and PILP reports to the 219th General Assembly (2010) that the awards were acknowledged and will be presented to the recipients at meetings of their respective presbyteries.

Item 15-B. Sam and Helen Walton Awards, 2009 and 2010. (See p. 1185.)

The Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education, and PILP reports to the 219th General Assembly (2010) that the awards were acknowledged and will be presented to the recipients at meetings of their respective presbyteries.

Item 15-C. Minutes, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program.

That the minutes are approved.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL ISSUES AND INSTITUTIONS

Moderator Bolbach recognized Sharon Stanley, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions, for a report from the committee. The assembly approved the consent agenda: Items 16-02 (approved), 16-04 (disapproved), 16-05 (approved), 16-07 (approved), 16-09 (approved), 16-13 (approved). Moderator Stanley introduced Item 16-10, approval of Stephen A. Hayner as president of Columbia Theological Seminary. Item 16-10 was approved. At Stanley's request, Moderator Bolbach recognized Stephen A. Hayner. Hayner addressed the assembly briefly. Moderator Stanley introduced Item 16-14, approval of Paul T. Roberts as president and dean of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary. Item 16-14 was approved. At Stanley's request, Moderator Bolbach recognized Paul T. Roberts. Roberts addressed the assembly briefly. Moderator Stanley introduced Item 16-15, approval of Michael Jinkins as president of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Item 16-15 was approved. At Stanley's request, Moderator Bolbach recognized Michael Jinkins. Jinkins addressed the assembly briefly. Item 16-08 was approved. Item 16-06 was approved with amendment and with comment. Item 16-03 was disapproved. At Stanley's request, Moderator Bolbach recognized Dawn DeVries, moderator, General Assembly Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism. Item 16-11 was approved. At Stanley's request, Moderator Bolbach recognized Jane D. Douglass, moderator, General Assembly Special Committee on the Belhar Confession. Item 16-12 was approved as amended. Item 16-01 was answered by the action taken on Item 16-12.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions

[Consent agenda items are indicated by an asterisk. Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign (\$).]

***Item 16-02. On Amending W-4.4000 by Adding Prayer.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1192.)

***Item 16-04. On Amending W-4.4006 to Include Questions to the Presbytery.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 1197.)

***Item 16-05. Nominees to the Mountain Retreat Association Board.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1198.)

***Item 16-07. Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1201.)

***Item 16-09. New Trustees to PC(USA) Theological Institutions.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1207.)

***Item 16-13. Term "Offices" in W-4.4001b of the Directory for Worship.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1219.)

Item 16-10. Approve Stephen A. Hayner as President of Columbia Theological Seminary.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1208.)

Item 16-14. Dean of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary—From the Committee on Theological Education.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1220.)

Item 16-15. President of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary—From the Committee on Theological Education.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1220.)

Item 16-08. On Approving the Revised Covenant Between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and El Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1201.)

Item 16-06. Baptism Requirement for Participation in Lord’s Supper.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment and with comment. (See p. 1198.)

Amendment:

1. Amend the title of Item 16-06 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“Item 16-06. [~~Baptism Requirement for Participation in Lord’s Supper~~] [On Baptism and the Lord’s Supper].”

2. Amend the first two recommendations so that Recommendation 1. becomes 2. and Recommendation 2. becomes 1., with other changes as marked: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“~~[2.]~~ [1.] That the approach to the Lord’s Table always be gracious and invitational, not scrutinizing membership credentials, but extending Christ’s welcome to the people of God.

“~~[1.]~~ [2.] That [~~the practice of extending~~] the invitation to the Lord’s Supper [be gracious and hospitable] [~~to all the baptized faithful~~] (W-2.4006; see W-2.4011) be maintained, remembering that “access to the Table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love” (W-2.4011).”

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

“4. That [~~unbaptized~~] [not yet baptized] persons who present themselves at the Lord’s Table be warmly received and promptly [~~instructed~~] [invited into conversation] on the significance of the sacraments, in order that their hunger for spiritual nourishment might be met by a gracious invitation to Christ and to Christian life through baptismal discipleship.”

Comment: This statement is offered as pastoral advice.

Item 16-03. On Amending W-2.3008b Regarding Baptism of Children.

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 1193.)

Item 16-11. Report of the General Assembly Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1209.)

[Financial Implications: [(2010) \$12,075; (2011) \$23,900; (2012) \$3,110—OGA Per Capita]

Item 16-12. Report of the Special Committee on the Belhar Confession

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 1213.)

Amend the recommendation with the addition of the following two paragraphs: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[Scripture references should be added by footnotes, using those references found in earlier versions of the Belhar Confession published by the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. The “Accompanying Letter” customarily included with the Belhar Confession should be printed in *The Book of Confessions* as a background document without confessional status.]

“[To direct the General Assembly Mission Council and its Office of Theology and Worship to create a fully inclusive language version of the Belhar Confession for the Web similar to the inclusive language version of The Confession of 1967.]”

Item 16-01. On Commending Confessions that Uphold the Oneness of All Believers, and Discontinuing Efforts to Include the Belhar Confession in *The Book of Confessions*.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 16-12. (See p. 1189.)

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Heath Rada, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Rada moved that the docket for this session be amended to include the report of the Assembly Committee on Review of General Assembly Permanent Committees since the assembly was running ahead of schedule. The assembly approved the docket as revised.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON REVIEW OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY PERMANENT COMMITTEES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Kenneth Godshall, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Review of General Assembly Permanent Committees, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved Items 17-Report 1 (1–8): Report on the Review of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE).

At Godshall’s request, Moderator Bolbach recognized Cynthia Campbell, president of McCormick Theological Seminary to make a presentation. Campbell presented the Award for Excellence in Theological Education to Barbara Wheeler, former president of Auburn Theological Seminary. The assembly approved Items 17-Report 2 (1–6): Report on the Review of the General Assembly Nominating Committee. The assembly approved Items 17-Report 3 (1–7): Report on the Review of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations. The assembly approved Items 17-Report 4 (1–7): Report on the Review of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Review of GA Permanent Committees. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Review of General Assembly Permanent Committees

I. For Plenary Action

Report 1: Report on Review of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE).

That the recommendations below are approved. [See self-study on p. 1251.]

The Assembly Committee on Review of General Assembly Permanent Committees:

1. Commends the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) for its work, accomplishments, and insights gained in providing a self-study. The Review Committee was impressed with COTE’s discussions, openness, and willingness to listen to ideas and questions, and was also impressed with COTE’s high attendance at review meetings.
2. Urges COTE to continue the important conversation begun in the Raising Leaders document, particularly in the areas of exploring the changing leadership needs of the Presbyterian churches.
3. Encourages COTE to further explore issues involving commissioned lay pastor formation and relations between theological schools and middle governing bodies partnerships.

4. **Commends the recent reorientation of the agenda of COTE toward various emerging themes important to the life of the church and theological education as constructive and adaptive to the rapidly changing nature of the world, church, and theological institutions.**

5. **Encourages COTE to find ways to address issues associated with theological education by and for Presbyterians beyond the Presbyterian seminaries and covenant partners. These issues may include evaluating the educational and formational quality of programs enrolling Presbyterian students. They may also involve opportunities for appropriate ecumenical collaboration.**

6. **Encourages COTE to continue to explore opportunities to develop additional funding, particularly in support of students and reducing the indebtedness of beginning clergy.**

7. **Encourages COTE to explore current trends as to where Presbyterian pastors are receiving theological education.**

8. **Recommends that the following report of the Review of the Committee on Theological Education be approved.**

Report of the Review of the Committee on Theological Education

Introduction: The review of General Assembly permanent committees was conducted according to the provisions in the Standing Rules and the standards in the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

Mission: Established in 1986, the Committee on Theological Education has the responsibility for developing and maintaining a comprehensive plan for theological education from the perspective of the whole church. The committee serves as an advocate for theological education, seeking to support seminaries and strengthen them for their mission in the world.

Membership: Voting members of the committee include thirteen ministers and elders elected to represent the church at large, two of which are liaisons from the General Assembly Mission Council, and a representative, usually the president, from each of the ten seminaries related directly to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Corresponding members include representatives from Auburn Theological Seminary and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico; a representative of the Omaha Seminary Foundation, and representatives of two non-Presbyterian seminaries invited by the committee. The COTE is staffed by the Office of Theological Education in the Theology Worship and Education ministry area of the General Assembly Mission Council.

Process: The Committee on Theological Education provided a self-study based on their work for the years 2003–2009. The General Assembly Committee to Review Permanent Committees reviewed the self-study, examined the survey results, and interviewed the COTE staff and Self-Study Task Force.

Findings:

A. Fidelity to Mission and Partnership

1. Does COTE as it was created by the church serve and support the church's mission in a particular area? Does COTE exhibit a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC (USA)?

Based on COTE's self-study and report, COTE appears to be doing even better now than in the past and exhibits faithfulness to doing even better in the future. The COTE shows increasing faithfulness to their mandate even with strained resources.

2. Do the basic processes of COTE demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly? Does COTE exhibit leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources in which COTE acts?

The COTE's basic operational process demonstrates fidelity to mission and accountability. The COTE has gone "above and beyond" in their accomplishment of their assigned mission. The review committee members were encouraged by the listening approach that the representatives from COTE used. They demonstrated the importance of "raising leaders," and we encourage that continuation. We appreciate COTE's many collaborations with ecumenical entities outside of the PC(USA).

3. Does COTE exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies or committees of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity?

The COTE collaborates well with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examination of Candidates, Committee on the Office

of General Assembly, Presbyterian Tentmakers, Urban Theological Educators Roundtable, Worldwide Ministries, and the National Hispanic Caucus.

4. Does the COTE provide timely responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly?

Based on the information we have received, COTE has been fully accountable to assembly requests.

B. Effectiveness of Services

1. Does COTE have a defined and consistent process for completing its work?

The COTE has become more collaborative and imaginative, rather than merely responsive in its process. The COTE's manual of operations and other policies and procedures are a good example of this consistency.

2. Does COTE have a regular process of self-evaluation of its services?

Yes. COTE self-evaluates every year, and the high number of seminary presidents who attended the committee meeting and were engaged and genuinely interested in the review committee's thoughts was impressive. The COTE is self-reflective.

3. Does COTE employ a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large?

The COTE needs to reach the congregations about financial support and the Theological Education Fund (TEF). The review committee would like COTE to continue to pursue support all the way to the individual congregational level every year through any means possible.

4. Does COTE utilize current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission?

The COTE is increasing the use of digital media to more effectively communicate with congregations. The COTE should continue to explore and use effectively new media. The electronic newsletter is growing in subscriptions and there is increasing interest in COTE's blog and other social network (e.g. Facebook). We commend COTE's actions in making thank-you phone calls to TEF donors.

5. Does COTE have a developed vision and plan for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before, and the context of the PC(USA)?

Yes, a collaborative plan is in place that is being guided by forthcoming recommendations from the following projects: Joint Committee on Leadership Needs; a continuing Self-Study Task Force charge to clarify the mission and role of COTE, advise the committee on possible adjustments to the membership and structure of COTE, possible recommendations on stated meeting norms, and new ways to better coordinate seminary resources; a review of the Theological Education Fund; and research conclusions by PC(USA) Research Services and an independent firm contracted by COTE that are each currently conducting research with key constituents.

Report 2: Report on Review of the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

That the recommendations below are approved. [See self-study on p. 1263.]

The Assembly Committee on Review of General Assembly Permanent Committees:

1. **Commends the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) for its work, accomplishments, and insights gained in providing a self-study. Affirms the GANC for creative thinking, a superior presentation, and its efforts to present the information through a variety of imaginative and experiential learning modes.**

2. **Shares the concerns expressed in the self study concerning increasing age diversity among nominees, particularly among younger Presbyterians. The Review Committee encourages the GANC to continue its efforts to recruit nominees from the younger cohorts and to explore recruiting opportunities in campus ministries, Presbyterian colleges, and seminaries.**

3. **Recommends that the GANC include clerks of session and presbytery nominating committees in its communications in order to expand the pool of potential nominees and to increase awareness of service opportunities at the national level.**

4. **Urges General Assembly entities to consider re-nominations as the exception, rather than the rule and applied only to those members whose continued service is clearly beneficial to on-going or projected work in order to assist the GANC in making its careful nominations.**

5. Recommends that the GANC engage the entities it serves in seeking creative and flexible opportunities for Presbyterians to participate in their work beyond the confines of current set terms and work patterns.

6. Recommends that the following report of Review of the General Assembly Nominating Committee be approved.

Report of Review of the General Assembly Nominating Committee

Introduction: The review of General Assembly permanent committees was conducted according to the provisions in the Standing Rules and the standards in the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

Mission: The mission of the General Assembly Nominating Committee is to propose nominees to such boards, agencies, and committees as the General Assembly shall from time to time designate. The GANC's singular and essential task is to assist the General Assembly in discerning God's call for particular individuals to serve the church in special ways. The GANC understands through its process of careful nomination and election that it assists the organization and structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to live more faithfully as the Body of Christ.

Membership: The GANC has sixteen members nominated by the Moderator and elected by the General Assembly. One member resides in each of the sixteen synods. They serve six-year terms. The Office of the General Assembly staffs the committee.

Process: The GA Nominating Committee provided a self-study based on their work for the past five years. The General Assembly Committee to Review Permanent Committees reviewed the self-study, examined the survey results, and interviewed the self-study committee of GANC.

Findings:

A. Fidelity to Mission and Partnership

1. Does the GANC, as it was created by the church, serve and support the church's mission in a particular area? Does the GANC exhibit a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC (USA)?

Yes. The GANC does its work faithfully and carefully, seeking to represent the breadth of diversity of the PC(USA).

2. Do the basic processes of the GANC demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly? Does the GANC exhibit leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources in which the GANC acts?

Yes. The GANC study shows an awareness of the opportunities and challenges of discerning men and women who are called to service among General Assembly bodies.

3. Does the GANC exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies or committees of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity?

Yes. The committee works closely with the various General Assembly entities and was affirmed in the study and in our meetings.

4. Does the GANC provide timely responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly?

Yes.

B. Effectiveness of Service

1. Does the GANC have a defined and consistent process for completing its work?

Yes. The GANC creatively led the committee through an exercise describing the breadth, depth, challenges, and opportunities in the committee's work, including insight into the complex process of providing nominees for service on General Assembly boards, agencies, and committees.

2. Does the GANC have a regular process of self-evaluation of its services?

Yes, there is on-going evaluation of GANC nominating processes.

3. Does the GANC employ a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large?

Yes. The GANC has increased its communication to middle governing bodies and the committee encourages the GANC to continue to improve communication across all levels of the church.

4. Does the GANC utilize current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission?

Yes. The GANC uses a variety of emerging technological tools including Web pages, texting, Twitter, and more.

5. Does the GANC have a developed vision and plan for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before and context of the PC(USA).

Based on its report, the GANC is deeply aware of its mandate and the challenges and opportunities in recruiting and nominating servant leaders for the denomination.

Report 3: Report on Review of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER).

That the recommendations below are approved. [See self-study on p. 1244.]

The Assembly Committee on Review of General Assembly Permanent Committees:

1. Commends the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) for its work, accomplishments, and insights gained in providing a self-study, including the following:

a. affirming the clear focus of identity and mission in the Reformed tradition and the way it continues to faithfully articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity, while promoting awareness of the unity of the Church catholic;

b. maintaining positive relationships with other denominations and continuing to seek new ways of building relationships;

c. remaining true to our history and our calling to live out the biblical and confessional requirements for unity and reconciliation;

d. having a clear awareness of our changing social context both nationally and globally;

e. affirming the formation of new partnerships with faith based and secular ministries of compassion and justice;

f. evidences an awareness of the new context for ministry in terms of immigrant churches and changing demographics;

g. working collaboratively within the context of General Assembly entities;

h. being mindful of the funding conditions that currently prevail and is working cooperatively with other General Assembly agencies in sharing what needs to be done to fulfill their collective ecumenical commitments, and

i. being recognized as leaders in ecumenism by other denominations and councils.

2. Encourages GACER to live constructively with the tension between the academic and the practical in matters pertaining to ecumenical relationships.

3. Encourages an increased programmatic focus, within budgetary constraints.

4. Encourages strengthening ecumenical reception at the local level, within budgetary constraints.

5. Encourages the on-going dialogue between GACER, Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) toward clarifying the work of ecumenical and interreligious relationships as well as strengthening the relationships between these General Assembly entities in the most cost-efficient way possible.

6. Encourages GACER to work to increase an understanding of the difference between ecumenical relationships (Christian to Christian) and interreligious (Christian to other religions) throughout the PC(USA) and within budget constraints.

7. That the following report of the Review of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations be approved.

Report of the Review of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations

Introduction: The review of General Assembly permanent committees was conducted according to the provisions in the Standing Rules and the standards in the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

Mission: The mission of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) is to lift up ecumenical involvement and work as central to the gospel and key to the life of the church. We encourage the church to remain open to the working of God's Spirit among people of other religious traditions in their individual and corporate lives. The GACER connects the ecumenical efforts of all governing body levels of the church and provides a common point for all ecumenical efforts with those beyond our church.

Membership: The committee is composed of sixteen members elected by the General Assembly, ecumenical members, the Stated Clerk, the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council, and other ex officio members.

Process: The GACER provided a self-study based on their work for the past ten years. The General Assembly Committee to Review Permanent Committees reviewed the self-study, examined the survey results, and interviewed the executive committee of the GACER.

Findings:

A. Fidelity to Mission and Partnership

1. Does the GACER as it was created by the church serve and support the church's mission in a particular area? Does the GACER exhibit a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA)?

Yes, GACER serves and supports the PC(USA)'s mission in the area of ecumenism and is faithful to its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).

2. Do the basic processes of the GACER demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly? Does the GACER exhibit leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources in which the GACER acts?

Yes, GACER has provided leadership and guidance to the General Assembly and its agencies on new opportunities to strengthen the relationships with other faith communities. Yes, GACER is held accountable through regular annual and regular reports to GAMC, which also reviews its minutes. Further GACER submits a biannual agency summary to the General Assembly.

3. Does the GACER exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies or committees of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity?

Yes, GACER cooperates and collaborates with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), and other agencies of the General Assembly.

4. Does the GACER provide timely responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly?

Yes.

B. Effectiveness of Services

1. Does the GACER have a defined and consistent process for completing its work?

Yes.

2. Does the GACER have a regular process of self-evaluation of its services?

Yes.

3. Does the GACER employ a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large?

Yes, to an extent, but the committee encourages GACER to work on creative ways to communicate up to the local congregations.

4. Does the GACER utilize current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission?

Yes, GACER is continuing to use and explore emerging technologies through the use of its website and staff blog, and is exploring emerging technologies.

5. Does the GACER have a developed vision and plan for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before, and context of, the PC(USA)?

Yes, GACER has developed numerous dialogues, initiatives, and relationships that conform to its historic mandate and emerging issues.

Report 4: Report on the Review of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

That the recommendations below are approved. [See self-study on p. 1221.]

The Assembly Committee on Review of General Assembly Permanent Committees:

- 1. Commends the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) for its work, accomplishments, and insights gained in providing a self-study.**
- 2. Affirms that the church's social witness is an essential part of the church's identity and that ACSWP plays a key role in equipping us to engage in that social witness.**
- 3. Affirms the effort to strengthen the relationship between ACSWP and General Assembly Mission Council.**
- 4. Recommends training for ACSWP's committee members and staff as they work with the public and the media to ensure appropriate and accurate communications.**
- 5. Recommends that ACSWP work with Office of Communication of the General Assembly Mission Council to improve communication with the whole church, especially younger people, utilizing emerging technological tools.**
- 6. Although we recognize that it is not the mandate of ACSWP to disseminate information, we recommend that ACSWP work with Research Services to better understand why certain members of the church have a better understanding of ACSWP's work and use that as a basis for better communication with congregational leaders.**
- 7. Recommends that the following report of Review of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy be approved.**

Report of Review of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

Introduction: The review of General Assembly permanent committees was conducted according to the provisions in the Standing Rules and the standards in the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

Mission: The mission of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is to develop, interpret, and monitor policies that encourage and challenge the church and society to reflect and act in faithful response to God's call to do justice. The ACSWP serves the leadership of the General Assembly and General Assembly Mission Council by providing carefully reasoned arguments and forceful theological justifications for the church's response to critical social issues. The ACSWP's focus on policy development rather than program implementation differentiates it from other ministry areas and brings greater interaction with the Office of General Assembly.

Membership: Twelve members are elected by the General Assembly commissioners upon nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee or from the floor. Three are already elected members of the General Assembly Mission Council, so there is an intentional overlap for strong coordination and communication with the church's central direction-setting body. In addition to the customary diversity considerations, members are chosen for areas of expertise including social ethics, international affairs, economics/business, science/medicine, law, and biblical studies; usually several members have served or are serving in the pastorate.

Process: The ACSWP provided a self-study based on their work for the past six years. The General Assembly Committee to Review Permanent Committees reviewed the self-study, examined the survey results, and interviewed the executive staff of ACSWP.

Findings:

A. Fidelity to Mission and Partnership

1. Does the ACSWP as it was created by the church serve and support the church's mission in a particular area? Does the ACSWP exhibit a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA)?

Yes. They were able to do this with reduced staff and funding.

2. Do the basic processes of the ACSWP demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly? Does the ACSWP exhibit leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources in which the ACSWP acts?

Yes. The ACSWP provides advice and guidance on social issues after consulting many perspectives. They have exhibited leadership on issues impacting the church. Not only have they responded to the requests made of them, they have initiated six resolutions, study papers, and social involvement reports.

3. Does the ACSWP exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies or committees of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity?

For the most part they have done this. We were impressed with the advice and counsel memos generated. The ACREC (Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns) and ACWC (Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns) gave them high marks. However, in a recent example it might have been beneficial if ACSWP had sought input from an organization related to the work that ACSWP was doing. This would have been beneficial to both groups.

4. Does the ACSWP provide timely responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly?

The ACSWP has responded in a timely manner given the complexity of the subjects and the budget and staff constraints.

B. Effectiveness of Services

1. Does the ACSWP have a defined and consistent process for completing its work?

Yes. They have a six-step process to complete the work.

2. Does the ACSWP have a regular process of self-evaluation of its services?

Yes. The ACSWP provides a regular update to all General Assemblies. Following each assembly the committee conducts a thorough two-year self-review. They also bring to the General Assembly the minutes of all the meetings that took place during the preceding two years. There is a Review of GA Permanent Committees every six years.

3. Does the ACSWP employ a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large?

While it is not in their mandate to disseminate the reports they are asked to create, they do a commendable job of sharing their work with other entities.

4. Does the ACSWP utilize current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission?

Yes. The ACSWP uses emerging technologies such as a website and multimedia. They have 4,000 members on their e-list who receive regular updates.

5. Does the ACSWP have a developed vision and plan for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before and context of the PC(USA).

Yes. Although it is difficult to plan for emerging issues, ACSWP has a vision and a process in place that allows them to respond when a need arises.

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

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

Item 17-A. Minutes, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

That the minutes are approved.

Item 17-B. Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations.

That the minutes are approved.

Item 17-C. Minutes, Committee on Theological Education.

That the minutes are approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stated Clerk Parsons reminded the assembly that this was the last day that the General Assembly Exhibit Hall would be open.

Moderator Bolbach recognized the Reverend David Baak of the Reformed Church in America, who led the assembly in prayer. The assembly recessed at 5:35 p.m. to reconvene at 7:30 p.m.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Roy Howard, minister commissioner from the Presbytery of National Capital, led the assembly in the convening prayer.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

Moderator Bolbach called on Jay Rock, coordinator for Interfaith Relations, General Assembly Mission Council, to introduce ecumenical guests. Rock introduced Dr. Mohammed El-Sanoui, from the Islamic Society of North America, and the Reverend Jennie Lightfoot, from the Lake Superior Band of Ojibway, who brought greetings to the assembly.

SPEAK-OUT

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members were given an opportunity to speak out on issues outside the deliberative mode of the assembly for fifteen minutes, with one-minute limits on individual speeches. Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons instructed the assembly on the procedure to be followed during the time allotted for the speak-out. Moderator Bolbach then recognized persons, who spoke on various concerns.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Aleida Jernigan, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, who recommended an amendment to the docket. The assembly amended the docket to proceed to consider the report from the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations immediately following the report of the Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revision.

“GROWING THE CHURCH DEEP AND WIDE” VIDEO

Moderator Bolbach recognized Carol Adcock, moderator of the General Assembly Mission Council, to introduce the *Growing the Church Deep and Wide* video.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Moderator Bolbach recognized Julia Henderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, for a report from the committee. The assembly approved Item 09-10. The report of the committee was arrested. [For the rest of the report, see pp. 71, 80.]

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON FORM OF GOVERNMENT REVISION

Vice Moderator Landon Whitsitt assumed the chair. Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Tim Beal, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revision, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved Item 07-01 with amendment and answered Items 07-02, 07-03, 07-04, 07-06, 07-07, 07-09, 07-10, and 07-12 with its action on Item 07-01. The assembly disapproved Item 07-05. In response to Item 07-11, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. [Note: There was no Item 07-08.]

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revision and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revision

[Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign (\$).]

Item 07-01. Recommendation 1, Form of Government Revision

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 485.]

1. Amend Footnote 1 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

“ Throughout this document and the Form of Government, the capitalized term ‘Church’ refers to the Church Universal, the Church as it is called to be in Christ; ~~the lower case term “church” refers to denominations,~~ except as part of a title (i.e. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). ~~[In place of the vernacular use of “church” to denote a congregation of believers, the term “congregation” is used.] ”~~ ”

2. Amend the third paragraph of “F-1.0404 Openness” as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“*a new openness in its own membership, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, ethnicities, and worldly conditions, made one in Christ by the power of the Spirit, as a visible sign of the new humanity;*”

3. Amend G-1.0102 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“*The polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presupposes the fellowship of women~~[,]~~ ~~and~~ men~~[,]~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~ir~~ and children united in covenant relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ. The organization rests on the fellowship and is not designed to work without trust and love.”*

4. Amend the fourth paragraph of G-1.0201 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“*~~They shall be~~ At its sole discretion the presbytery may then declare~~d~~ them an organized congregation of the presbytery~~.]~~ ~~and~~ The congregation shall then proceed to the election of ruling elders and, if they so decide, deacons. The presbytery shall prepare, examine, ordain, and install these newly elected persons. Presbytery shall continue to work closely with the congregation in securing pastoral leadership, in plans for the service and witness of the congregation, in coordinating its work with other congregations, in counseling concerning incorporation and bylaws for the congregation conforming to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and in giving other forms of support and encouragement that will strengthen the mission of the congregation in the larger life of the denomination.”*

5. Amend G-1.0303c as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“*c. Reaffirmation of faith, for persons previously baptized in the name of the triune God and having publicly professed their faith.*”

6. Amend G-1.0504 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“*The installed pastor shall ordinarily moderate all meetings of the congregation. If it is impractical for the pastor to preside, he or she shall invite another teaching elder who is a member of the presbytery or a person authorized by the presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or the installed pastor is unable to moderate and/or to name another moderator. the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.”*

7. Amend G-2.0105 by adding a footnote to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2.0105 Freedom of Conscience

“*It is necessary to the integrity and health of the church that the persons who serve it in ordered ministries shall adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity as expressed in this Constitution. So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained. It is to be recognized, however, that in entering the ordered ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), one chooses to exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds. His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek, or serve in, ordered ministry. The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the council in which he or she is a member.^[12]*

“*[12. Very early in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, even before the General Assembly was established, the plan of reunion of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia contained the following sentences: ‘That when any matter is determined by a majority vote, every member shall either actively concur with or passively submit to such determination; or if his conscience permit him to do neither, he shall, after sufficient liberty modestly to reason and remonstrate, peaceably withdraw from our communion without attempting to make any schism. Provided always that this shall be understood to extend only to such determination as the body shall judge indispensable in doctrine or Presbyterian government.’ (Hist. Dig. (P) p. 1310.) (Plan of Union of 1758, par. II.)*”

8. Amend G-2.0401 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee*, provided that the committee shall consist of at least three active members of the congregation, and shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session. The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote. [~~When no other provision is made, this committee shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on session, and the pastor shall serve ex officio without vote.~~] *When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect.”*

9. Amend G-2.0501 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *Teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament) shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). They may serve in a variety of ministries, as authorized by the presbytery. When they serve as preachers and teachers of the Word, they shall* [~~rightly explain the Word of truth~~] *(2 Tim. 2:15) and shall* preach and *teach the faith of the church, so that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service. When they serve at font and table, they shall interpret the mysteries of grace and lift the people’s vision toward the hope of God’s new creation. When they serve as pastors, they shall support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life. When they serve as presbyters, they shall participate in the responsibilities of governance, seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ’s body through devotion, debate, and decision.”*

10. Amend G-2.0504a as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *The installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A teaching elder may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call. When a congregation determines that its strategy for mission under the Word so requires, the congregation may call additional pastors. Such additional pastors shall be called co-pastors or associate pastors, and the duties of each pastor and the relationship between the pastors of the congregation shall be determined by the session with the approval of the presbytery. When a congregation has two pastors serving as co-pastors, and the relationship of one of them is dissolved, the other remains as pastor. The relationship of an associate pastor to a congregation is not dependent upon that of a pastor. An associate pastor is* ordinarily *not eligible to be the next installed pastor of that congregation.”*

11. Amend the second paragraph of G-2.0504b as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is* ordinarily *not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.”*

12. Amend G-2.0703 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *The order for that service* of worship [~~found~~] *in the Directory for Worship* [~~(W-4.4000)]~~ *shall be followed.”*

13. Amend G-2.0803–.0806 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *2.0803 Call Process*

“ *According to the process of the presbytery and prior to making its report to the congregation, the pastor nominating committee shall* [~~obtain approval~~] receive and consider the presbytery’s counsel *on the merits, suitability, and availability of those considered for the call. When the way is clear for the committee to report to the congregation, the committee shall notify the session, which shall call a congregational meeting.*

“ ~~[2.0804 Dissent~~

~~“ [On the election of a pastor, if it appears that a substantial minority of the voters are averse to the nominee who has received a majority of the votes and that they cannot be persuaded to concur in the call, the moderator may recommend to the majority that they not prosecute the call. If the congregation is nearly unanimous, or if the majority insist upon their right to call a pastor, the moderator shall forward the call to the presbytery, certifying the results of the vote and any other facts of importance. The moderator shall also inform the person being called of the nature and circumstances of the decision.]~~

“ ~~[2.0805]~~ [2.0804] *Terms of Call*

“ [Text remains unchanged.]

“ ~~[2.0806]~~ [2.0805] *Installation Service*

“ *When the congregation, the presbytery, and the teaching elder (or candidate) have all concurred in a call to a permanent or designated pastoral position, the presbytery shall complete the call process by organizing and conducting a service of installation. Installation is an act of the presbytery establishing the pastoral relationship. A service of installation occurs in the context of worship. The [order for that] service [of worship] ~~[outline found]~~ in the Directory for Worship⁵ [W-4.4000]⁵ shall be followed.*”

14. Amend G-2.0901 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *An installed pastoral relationship may be dissolved only by the presbytery. Whether the teaching elder, the congregation, or the presbytery initiates proceedings for dissolution of the relationship, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation to consider the matter and to consent, or decline to consent, to dissolution⁵; ~~unless the presbytery expressly finds that the church’s mission under the Word imperatively demands dissolution of the relationship without such a meeting.~~*”

15. Amend G-2.0905 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not ~~[offer]~~ [provide] their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.*”

16. Amend the title, G-2.10, as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *G-2.10 COMMISSIONING RULING ELDERS TO ~~[LIMITED]~~ [PARTICULAR] PASTORAL SERVICE*”

17. Amend G-2.1002 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction ~~[mentioned previously]~~ [determined by presbytery]. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery.*”

18. Amend Paragraph 2 of G-3.0103 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ *Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body’s implementation of the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation. Councils above the session shall establish by their own rule ~~[committees or entities]~~ [committees on representation] to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. [A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.]”*

19. Amend the sixth paragraph of G-3.0106 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“~~The funding of mission similarly demonstrates the unity and interdependence of the church. The failure of any part of the church to participate in the stewardship of the mission of the whole church diminishes that unity and interdependence. All mission funding should enable the church to give effective witness in the world to God’s new creation in Jesus Christ, and should strengthen the church’s witness to the mission of God.~~”

“~~Each council above the session shall prepare a budget for its operating expenses, including administrative personnel, and may fund it with a per capita apportionment among the particular congregations within its bounds. Presbyteries are responsible for raising their own funds and for raising and timely transmission of [per capita] funds to their respective synods and the General Assembly. Presbyteries may direct per capita apportionments to sessions within their bounds~~, but in no case shall the authority of the session to direct its benevolences be compromised.”

20. Amend the second paragraph of G-3.0109 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

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

21. Amend the second, third, and fourth paragraph of G-3.0109b(6) as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“~~[Commissions]~~ [A commission] of presbytery, synod, or General Assembly shall be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible and sufficient to accomplish their work. A quorum of any commission shall be established by the designating council but in no case shall be less than a majority of its members (except as limited by D-5.0204).”

“~~[Commissions]~~ [A commission] of a session shall be composed of at least two ruling elders, and a teaching elder in an installed or temporary relationship with the congregation governed by that session or a ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service.”

“~~[The]~~ [A] commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings and shall submit that record to the council for incorporation into its records. Actions of a commission shall be regarded as actions of the council that created it. A commission may be assigned additional duties as a committee, which duties shall be reported and handled as the report of a committee.”

22. Amend the first paragraph of G-3.0201 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“~~The session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors. All members of the session are entitled to vote. The pastor shall be the moderator of the session, and the session shall not meet without the pastor or designated moderator. [If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provisions for a moderator.] Presbyteries shall provide by rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience.~~”

23. Amend G-3.0202f as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“~~f. send to presbytery and General Assembly requested [financial contributions,] statistics[,] and other information according to the requirements of those bodies~~, as well as voluntary financial contributions.”

24. Amend G-3.0203 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“~~The session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. The moderator shall call a special meeting when he or she deems necessary or when requested in writing by any two members of the session. [The business to be transacted at special meetings shall be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting.] There shall be reasonable notice given of all special meetings. The session shall also meet when directed by presbytery. Sessions shall provide by rule for a quorum for meetings; such quorum shall include the moderator and either a specific number of ruling elders or a specific percentage of those ruling elders in current service on the session.~~”

25. Amend G-3.0204a as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ ~~There shall be rolls of baptized, active, and affiliate members in accordance with G-1.0401, G 1.0402, and G-1.0403. The session [may] [shall] delete names from the roll of the congregation [when requested to issue a certificate of transfer of membership to another congregation; when a member requests that his or her membership be terminated; when a member joins another congregation or otherwise renounces the jurisdiction of the session; when a member has moved or otherwise ceased to participate in the ministry of Christ’s Church as defined in G-1.0304 for a period of not less than two years and after efforts on the part of the session to encourage the member to return to meaningful participation have failed, and after provision of written notice; or when a member dies.] [upon the member’s death, admission to membership in another congregation or presbytery, or renunciation of jurisdiction. The session may delete names from the roll of the congregation when a member so requests, or has moved or otherwise ceased to participate actively in the work and worship of the congregation for a period of two years. The session shall seek to restore members to active participation and shall provide written notice before deleting names due to member inactivity.]”~~

26. Amend the first paragraph of G-3.0301 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ ~~The presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district and is composed of all the congregations and teaching elders within that district. [Teaching elders and ruling elders should be present in numbers as equal as possible.] The presbytery shall adopt and communicate to the sessions a plan for determining how many ruling elders each session should elect as commissioners to presbytery], with a goal of numerical parity of teaching elders and ruling elders]. This plan shall require each session to elect at least one commissioner and shall take into consideration the size of congregations as well as a method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. Ruling elders elected as officers of the presbytery shall be enrolled as members during the period of their service. A presbytery may provide by its own rule for the enrollment of ruling elders serving as moderators of committees or commissions.”~~

27. Amend G-3.0301a as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ ~~a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility shall include organizing, receiving, [and] merging], dismissing, and dissolving] congregations in consultation with their members; overseeing congregations without pastors; establishing pastoral relationships and dissolving them; guiding the preparation of those preparing to become teaching elders; establishing and maintaining those ecumenical relationships that will enlarge the life and mission of the church in its district; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to congregations in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration to the end that the church’s witness to the love and grace of God may be heard in the world.”~~

28. Amend the title, G-6.02, as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ ~~G-6.02 INTERPRETING THE CONSTITUTION[=THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION]~~”

29. Amend the third paragraph of G-6.02 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ ~~All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the Book of Order arising from councils of the church shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall communicate its report and recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly], no less than sixty days prior to the General Assembly].”~~

30. Amend G-6.04b as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ ~~b. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such proposals to amend the Book of Order to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (G-6.02), which shall examine the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). [At least sixty days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly,] [F][t]he advisory committee shall report its findings to the General Assembly along with its recommendations, which may include an amended version of any proposed constitutional changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the committee. The General Assembly shall~~

not consider any amendment until it has considered the report and any recommendations from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.”

Item 07-01., Recommendation 2, Advisory Handbook for Councils for the Development of Policies and Procedures Required by the Form of Government.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 524.]

1. Amend the “Policies and Procedures Guide for the Work of the Session” by adding a new row nine as follows (to follow the eighth row containing “G-1.05”): [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

<p>“G-1.0502”</p>	<p>“<u>Meetings of the congregation shall be called by the session, by the presbytery, or by the session when requested in writing by one fourth of the active members on the roll of the congregation. Adequate public notice of all congregational meetings shall be given. Congregations shall provide by their own rule for minimum notification requirements and give notice at regular services of worship prior to the meeting.</u>”</p>	<p>“<u>Has the congregation decided on what adequate notice will be for their meetings?</u>”</p>
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2. Amend the first row of “Policies and Procedures Guide for the Work of the Presbytery” as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

<p>“F-1.0403 “G-3.0103</p>	<p>“Councils above the session shall establish by their own rule [committees or entities] <u>committees on representation</u> to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. <u>A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.</u>”</p>	<p>“Does the presbytery choose to retain an entity comparable to the current Committee on Representation (COR) to serve this purpose? If a COR is retained, what is the appropriate makeup of such a committee in its context? If this responsibility is lodged with another presbytery entity, how will the presbytery approve its plan for complying with the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation? How and on what basis will the presbytery review the committee’s implementation of its plan?”</p>
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3. Amend the first row of “Policies and Procedures Guide for the Work of the Synod” as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

<p>“F-1.0403 “G-3.0103</p>	<p>“Councils above the session shall establish by their own rule [committees or entities] <u>committees on representation</u> to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. <u>A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.</u>”</p>	<p>“Does the synod choose to retain an entity comparable to the current Committee on Representation (COR) to serve this purpose? If a COR is retained, what is the appropriate makeup of such a committee in its context? If this responsibility is lodged with another synod entity, how will the synod approve its plan for complying with the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation? How and on what basis will the synod review?”</p>
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4. Amend the first row of “Policies and Procedures Guide for the Work of the General Assembly” as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline]

<p>“F-1.0403 “G-3.0103</p>	<p>“Councils above the session shall establish by their own rule [committees or entities] [<u>committees on representation</u>] to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. [<u>A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.</u>]</p>	<p>“Does the General Assembly choose to retain an entity comparable to the current Committee on Representation (COR) to serve this purpose? If a COR is retained, what is the appropriate makeup of such a committee in its context? If this responsibility is lodged with another GA entity, how will the General Assembly approve its plan for complying with the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation? How and on what basis will the General Assembly review the committee’s implementation of its plan?”</p>
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Item 07-02. On Amending 3.0109 of the Report of the Form of Government Task Force to Allow Flexibility in the Composition of Committees.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, of this report. [See p. 549.]

Item 07-03. On Adding a New G-3.0303—Relations with Other Presbytery and Ecumenical Partners to the Proposed Form of Government.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, of this report. [See p. 550.]

Item 07-04. On Commending the Work of the FOG Task Force to the Church for Additional Study and Discernment.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, of this report. [See p. 552.]

Item 07-05. On Developing the Form of Government as an Enabling Constitution Instead of a Manual of Operations.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 553.]

Item 07-06. On Amending G-3.0103 and G-3.0111 of the New Form of Government.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, of this report. [See p. 556.]

Item 07-07. On Receiving the Report of the FOG Task Force and Posting a Draft on the Website Inviting Presbyteries to Propose Specific Amendment to the Present Form of Government.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, of this report. [See p. 559.]

Item 07-08. [There is no Item 07-08.]

Item 07-09. On Amending the G-3.0103 of the Report of the Form of Government Task Force.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, of this report. [See p. 564.]

Item 07-10. Amendment to Proposed Form of Government.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, of this report. [See p. 565.]

Item 07-11. Effect of a Major Revision of the *Book of Order* on Previous Authoritative Interpretations.

In response to Item 07-11, the 219th General Assembly (2010) approved the following resolution: [See p. 566.]

“The Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revision recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) empower the Moderator to appoint a Special Committee on Existing Authoritative Interpretations of the *Book of Order*. The special committee shall be composed of six members recommended by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC), and the Office of the General Assembly, and charged to make recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012) concerning the status of specific existing authoritative interpretations of the Constitution based on the Status of Authoritative Interpretations as shown below:

“Status of Authoritative Interpretations

“While the status and applicability of any authoritative interpretation is subject to the judgment of the assembly, it is the considered judgment of the ACC that if this proposal to amend the Form of Government were to be approved, generally speaking the status of authoritative interpretations would vary according to the relationship of newly approved language to previous language.

“1. If language approved in the Constitution explicitly restates the content of existing authoritative interpretations, it is no longer an authoritative interpretation but is incorporated into the Constitution.

“2. If language is approved that is identical to, or essentially the same as the language of constitutional provisions that have already been interpreted, current authoritative interpretations would continue in force. The ACC believes this would apply, for example, to authoritative interpretations regarding current G-6.0106b, G-6.0108, G-8.0201, and G-9.0404d.

“3. If language is approved that is substantively different from currently interpreted constitutional language, clarification from the General Assembly would be required as to the status and applicability of existing authoritative interpretations through the provisions of G-13.0103r.

“4. If language is approved that contradicts the substance of an existing authoritative interpretation, the current interpretation would have no effect.

“5. If language is approved that totally removes a constitutional provision that has been authoritatively interpreted, the authoritative interpretations attached to that provision would be removed as well.”

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$9,660; 2012: \$0 (Per Capita-OGA)]

Item 07-12. On Receiving the Report of the Form of Government Task Force, Dismiss the Task Force with Thanks, Taking Specific Actions on the Report’s Recommendations.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, of this report. . [See p. 570.]

DISSENT

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 07-01 of the Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revision: Daniel McBride, Presbytery of Shenango; Jeff Ogden, Presbytery of Stockton; Stephen K. Stelle, Presbytery of Shenango; and Lee Wagoner, Presbytery of Shenango.

CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator Bolbach called upon Pearl Kim, young adult advisory delegate from the Atlantic Korean Presbytery, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 9:45 p.m.

Thursday, July 8, 2010, 9:30 A.M.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Vice Moderator Landon Whitsitt led the assembly in the convening prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Bolbach called upon Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons for announcements on various topics.

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

Moderator Bolbach called on Patricia Valentine, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report on financial implications.

Valentine reported that the total financial implications to per capita budget of actions approved on Wednesday, July 7, 2010, were \$30,045 for 2010; \$74,075 for 2011; and \$26,155 for 2012. The total financial implications of actions recommended by assembly committees, but not yet considered by the assembly, amounts to: \$113,230 for 2010; \$309,153 for 2011; and \$72,723 for 2012.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Moderator Bolbach called on Robert Baker, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, for a report on financial implications.

Baker reported that no actions approved on Wednesday had financial implications on the mission budget. The total financial implications to mission budget of actions recommended by assembly committees, but not yet considered by the assembly, amounts to: \$52,087 for 2010; \$307,861 for 2011; and \$227,183 for 2012.

PRESBYTERIAN PEACEMAKING VIDEO

Moderator Bolbach recognized Mark Koenig, coordinator for the Peacemaking Program, and Laura Mariko Cheifitz, director of Leading Generations Initiative of the Fund for Theological Education, to introduce a video in honor of the anniversary of Presbyterian Peacemaking.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Moderator Bolbach recognized Jim Madson, moderator of the General Assembly Nominating Committee, for a report from the committee. Stated Clerk Parsons reviewed the Standing Rules for nomination from the floor and outlined the procedure for considering the nominations.

Madson withheld Items 00-01M.4 and 00-01M.5 until after the report of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination. Madson announced that challenges were presented to 00-01L.9, 00-01N.7, and 00-01T.1. The assembly elected all nominees that were uncontested.

Challenged nominations were considered as follows:

00-01L.9 [General Assembly Committee on Representation]: Madson placed the name of Heather Walchar in nomination for election to the General Assembly Committee on Representation, class of 2014. Commissioner Julie Leveranz nominated Kathryn Dianne Bell from the floor to replace the committee nominee and spoke to the nomination. Lita Simpson spoke to the nomination of Walchar. The assembly elected Walchar.

00-01N.7 [General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission]: Madson placed the name of Arnold Rots in nomination for election to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, class of 2016. Commissioner Faith Jongewaard nominated Margaret MacLeod from the floor to replace the committee nominee and spoke to the nomination. David Bennett spoke to the nomination of Rots. The assembly elected MacLeod.

00-01T.1 [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee]: Madson placed the name of Pete Berlowitz in nomination for election to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee, class of 2012. Commissioner Wells Kilgore

nominated Ken McKenzie from the floor to replace the committee nominee and spoke to the nomination. Madson spoke to the nomination of Berlowitz. The assembly elected Berlowitz.

The report was arrested. [For remainder of report, see p. 49.]

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE GOVERNING BODY ISSUES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Cliff Lyda, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Middle Governing Body Issues, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved Item 04-06 as amended and with floor amendment. [To see floor amendments, see pp. 274–75.] The assembly answered Item 04-05 with its action on Item 04-06. The assembly voted to disapprove Item 04-02 with comment. The assembly disapproved Item 04-04; approved Item 04-01, Recommendations 1.–2. with amendment, referred Item 04-01, Recommendations 3.–4. to the Office of the General Assembly; and disapproved Item 04-03.

Lyda introduced James Belle, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Middle Governing Body Issues, to present a portion of the report.

The assembly approved Item 04-07 as amended and disapproved Item 04-08.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Middle Governing Body Issues and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Middle Governing Bodies

[Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign (\$).]

I. For Plenary Action

\$Item 04-06. On Appointing a General Assembly Commission on Middle Governing Bodies.

That the recommendation is approved with amendments. (See p. 274.)

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

“5. [~~In response to actions~~] [By direction] of the 219th General Assembly (2010), or upon request of the presbytery and synod, the commission is authorized to act as the General Assembly according to”

2. Add a Recommendation 7 to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[7. The actions of the commission shall require a two-thirds majority for approval.]”

[To see the floor amendments, see pp. 274–75.]

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$47,667; (2011) \$89,555; (2012) \$36,570—OGA—GAMC Per Capita]

Item 04-05. On Creating a Special Committee to Explore the Roles and Relationships of Synods and Presbyteries to Each Other, to the Agencies, and to Congregations.

That the recommendation is answered by action taken on Item 04-06. (See p. 272.)

Item 04-02. On Amending the *Book of Order* by Deleting Chapter 12 to Eliminate the Middle Governing Body of the Synod.

That the recommendation is disapproved with comment. (See p. 259.)

Comment: The commissioners are referred to the action taken on Item 04-06.

Item 04-04. On Amending G-11.0000 to Provide Flexibility in Presbytery Membership.

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 268.)

Item 04-01. On Amending G-12.0100 and D-5.0101 Regarding Synod Function.

That Recommendations 1 and 2 are approved with amendment; Recommendations 3 and 4, as amended, are referred to the Office of the General Assembly. (See p. 257.)

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

“2. Shall a new section, G-12.0104, be added to the Form of Government to read as follows:

“Two or more synods sharing common boundaries, with the approval of a two-thirds majority of the presbyteries in each of the synods, may share administrative services ~~[and form a shared permanent judicial commission, with the membership of the commission being proportional to the number of presbyteries within each participating synod. Each synod shall pay the costs for processing a judicial case arising within its bounds].~~”

2. Insert a new Recommendation 3 as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[3. That the following phrase ‘and form a shared permanent judicial commission, with the membership of the commission being proportional to the number of presbyteries within each participating synod. Each synod shall pay the costs for processing a judicial case arising within its bounds’ be referred to the Office of the General Assembly for revision and report back with recommendation to the 220th General Assembly (2012).]”

3. Refer current Recommendation 3 [amended to be Recommendation 4], to the Office of the General Assembly for revision and report back with recommendation to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

Item 04-03. On Amending G-12.0000 Regarding Creation of a “New Synod.”

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 262.)

Item 04-07. Report of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén in Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries (SCARB).

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 277.)

1. Amend Recommendation A.1. as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Create an administrative commission to oversee the work and mission of the Synod of Boriquén and the Presbyteries of San Juan, the Northwest, and the Southwest (the Synod) and, if necessary, to intervene in that work. [Should the assembly approve Item 04-06, the commission recommended in Item 04-06 shall be designated as the Administrative Commission for this recommendation.]”

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

“2. ~~[In creating an administrative commission, the 219th General Assembly (2010) authorizes the commission to designate a subcommittee composed largely of the current members of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén (SCARB), with the further ability to supplement that subcommittee with no more than two additional persons, bringing the composition of SCARB to no more than seven members, to work with the Synod in implementing the directions of the administrative commission and providing guidance to the administrative commission in its designated roles] [The charge for SCARB shall be extended for two years, and SCARB shall be reconstituted by the Administrative Commission as a subcommittee of the commission, and the commission shall be empowered to appoint current members of SCARB and sufficient additional members to meet the requirements of G-9.0501b. The subcommittee shall work with the Synod of Boriquen in implementing the directions of the Administrative Commission and shall provide guidance to the Administrative Commission in its designated roles.]~~”

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

“[1. The 219th General Assembly (2010) authorizes the administrative commission to dissolve the Synod of Boriquén and the Presbyteries of San Juan, the Northwest, and the Southwest (the Synod), if after further study, and before the next General Assembly, it determines such action to be appropriate.] [If, after further study, and before the next General Assembly, the Administrative Commission determines such action to be appropriate, the 219th General Assembly (2010) authorizes the Administrative Commission be granted the authority to assume original jurisdiction of the Synod of Boriquen for the limited purpose of taking actions necessary to merge the Synod of Boriquen with a synod of the PC(USA) on the mainland, including the authority to divide, unite, or otherwise combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries previously existing. G-12.0103k.]”

~~“[2. The 219th General Assembly (2010) authorizes the administrative commission to create a new governing body structure in the Commonwealth under the jurisdiction of a synod on the mainland of the United States of America, should the commission determine that the dissolution of the current governing body structure is no longer tenable or unable to effectively move into the future.]”~~

[Note: Recommendation B.2. is answered by the action taken on Recommendation B.)

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

~~“[The 219th General Assembly (2010) grants the administrative commission the authority to facilitate, direct, and oversee the process of identifying and nominating new, or renewed, leadership in the Synod, particularly the positions of stated clerks and synod executive, should it be determined to retain the current structure. Likewise, should the decision be to create a new middle governing structure, we recommend that the administrative commission be granted the authority to facilitate, direct, and oversee the process of identifying and nominating persons to fill the leadership positions of stated clerk(s) and executive(s), as appropriate; and, in either instance, further grant the commission the authority and latitude to designate a subcommittee to act on its behalf in these matters.] [The 219th General Assembly (2010) grants the Administrative Commission the authority to facilitate, direct, and oversee the process of identifying and nominating new or renewed temporary leadership in the Synod of Boriquen and/or its constituent presbyteries. In replacing current leadership, the Administrative Commission shall afford fundamental fairness and due process in the spirit of G-9.0705.]”~~

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

~~“[We recommend that the commission facilitate and oversee a canvass, poll, or survey to determine whether there exists a sufficient movement seeking disaffiliation from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [the PC(USA)]]. [Recommend that the Administrative Commission assess the degree of interest within the Synod of Boriquen and its constituent presbyteries and congregations in their continuing relationships with the PC(USA).]”~~

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

~~“The 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the PC(USA), as a structure, and primarily the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) [to] explore and develop ways for the denomination to [more effectively] relate with the Synod [of Boriquen and its presbyteries] and its congregations [in a more effective manner].”~~

Item 04-08. On Organizing a Non-Geographic Korean Language Presbytery.

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 288.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Bolbach called upon Stated Clerk Parsons for announcements. Parsons announced that the offering from the opening worship was \$33,189.58, to be shared among the Global Alliance Against Trafficking Women, the Human Trafficking Roundtable, and the Presbyterian Clearwater Forest.

CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator Bolbach called upon Donna Chavez, minister commissioner from the Presbytery of Heartland, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 12:15 p.m.

Thursday, July 8, 2010, 1:30 P.M.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Dakota Santana-Grace, young adult advisory delegate from the Presbytery of San Gabriel, led the assembly in the convening prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Moderator Bolbach recognized commissioner Heath Rada, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee.

The assembly amended the docket and suspended the Standing Rules to limit the length of speeches to two minutes.

Vice Moderator Landon Whitsitt assumed the chair.

SPEAK-OUT

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members were given an opportunity to speak out on issues outside the deliberative mode of the assembly for fifteen minutes, with one-minute limits on individual speeches. Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons instructed the assembly on the procedure to be followed during the time allotted for the speak-out. Vice Moderator Whitsitt then recognized persons, who spoke on various concerns.

UNICEF PRESENTATION

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Kate Weber, director of nongovernmental organizations, UNICEF U.S.A., to address the assembly in celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of UNICEF.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Michael Livingston, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved the consent agenda: Items 08-05 (approved), 08-11 (approved), 08-01 (approved). The assembly approved Items 08-07, and 08-10. The assembly approved Item 08-08 as amended, approved Item 08-06 as amended, and approved Item 08-02 as amended. The assembly approved Item 08-09 as amended and with comment, answered Item 08-03 with its action on Item 08-09, and approved Item 08-04 as amended.

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

Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

[Consent agenda items are indicated by an asterisk.]

***Item 08-05. Invitation to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 220th General Assembly (2012).**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 601.)

***Item 08-11. On Celebrating the Dedication of Clinica Tzeltal Momos de Christo in Chiapas, Mexico.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 629.)

***Item 08-01. On Referring the Covenant to Adopt the Lund Principle, and its Codicil, to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 575.)

Item 08-07. Dialogue with Seventh-day Adventists.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 613.)

Item 08-10. Full Participation in Christian Churches Together.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 627.)

Item 08-08. Review of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches/Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 614.)

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

“As WARC has affirmed these callings, [~~they are to~~] [the PC(USA) is to]”

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

“4. [~~Integrate and interpret~~] [Encourage a study of] the Accra Confession and the historic commitments, along with the life and work of the WCRC/CANAAC, throughout PC(USA), its congregations and presbyteries.”

Item 08-06. On Relationships Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 601.)

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

“5. Acknowledge the unique complexity of the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, given the fact that the ecclesial roots of many churches, members, and ministers [~~now in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church lie in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its antecedent denominations~~] [are historically interwoven between these congregations].”

2. Amend Recommendation 7 by striking the text and renumbering Recommendations 8–9 as 7–8 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“~~[7. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to develop resources to support presbyteries with congregations and/or ministers engaged in a process of discernment or undergoing the process of dismissal, in light of denominational learnings in the recent past.]~~

“~~[8.]~~ [7.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[9.]~~ [8.] [Text remains unchanged.]

Item 08-02. On Removing the Confusing and Theologically Incompatible Call for Presbyterians to Engage Other Faiths.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 577.)

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

“3. Build on this understanding by calling for further dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, viewing each other [~~as equals~~] [with equal respect], and learning from one another to”

2. Amend the fourth bulleted item of Recommendation 1 as follows:

“• recognize differences, ~~celebrate diversity~~ [respect diversity];”

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

“~~• To encourage congregations of these faiths to celebrate religious holidays together, setting aside days of worship during which there can be congregational suppers, and dialogue groups. [To encourage congregations of these faiths to set aside times to come together for meals, dialogues, and to plan ways they can work together (*Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 507*).]~~”

Item 08-03. Approve the Paper “Christians and Jews: People of God.”

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 08-09 of this report. (See p. 580.)

Item 08-04. Approve “Toward an Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations.”

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 589.)

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

“d. encouraging Presbyterians to come to know and befriend their Muslim neighbors, and to talk in-depth with them about matters of shared concern, life and faith, and the questions each has about the other[, to imple-”

ment a program of shared community experiences that might include sharing meals, cultural events, and activities in mosques and churches together, and to develop an educational program that includes inviting a Muslim leader to offer instruction in a church and a Christian leader to offer instruction in a mosque].”

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

“c. calling for the development, through this process, of a fuller study articulating a theological understanding of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to be presented for consideration of the 221st General Assembly (2014). This process shall include broad consultation including representatives of the national Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus and partner churches in majority Muslim countries [and other significant bodies both Muslim and Christian].”

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

“b. asking appropriate bodies of the church, and individual Presbyterians, to identify and speak out against bigotry[,] [~~and~~] prejudice[, discrimination, and violence] against Islam and Muslim peoples of all cultures, especially in the United States;”

Item 08-09. On Referring “Christians and Jews: People of God” and “Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations.”

That the recommendation is approved with amendment and with comment. (See p. 625.)

Recommendation:

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

“1. [~~Postpone the reports~~] [Refer the report] from the Offices of Interfaith Relations and Theology and Worship entitled: “Christians and Jews: People of God[;]’ [~~and “Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations” until such time as funding is provided by the General Assembly for the appointment of a special committee of the church, to be appointed by the moderator,~~ [back to the Office of Interfaith Relations and Theology and Worship] to rewrite [~~both~~] [the] report[s] after broader consultation to include the National Middle East Presbyterian Caucus, PC(USA) partner churches and agencies in the Middle East, relevant mission networks of the PC(USA), the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy.

“2. That correspondence about [~~these two~~] [this] report[s] between the National Middle East Presbyterian Caucus and the General Assembly Mission Council, and between the Israel-Palestine Mission Network and the General Assembly Mission Council be sent to [~~this special committee~~] [these offices and committee working on the revised paper].”

Comment: The committee endorses the intent of “Christians and Jews, People of God” enhancing Christian and Jewish relationships. We also encourage PC(USA) congregations to employ *A Theological Understanding of the Relationships Between Christians and Jews* (1987, OGA-88-071) as a resource until a better resource is perfected.

Moderator Cindy Bolbach assumed the chair.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDERS AND MINISTRY

Moderator Bolbach recognized Theresa Denton, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry, for a report from the committee.

Denton introduced K.O. Noonoo, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry, to present a portion of the report.

The assembly referred Item 06-19 to the Office of Vocation with a report deadline of at least 180 days before the 220th General Assembly (2012) and approved as amended Item 06-01.

Denton continued presentation of the report and moved the committee recommendation on Item 06-09. A minority report was introduced. The minority report was perfected. The main motion was perfected. Moderator Bolbach put the question to the assembly, “Shall the minority report become the main motion?” The minority report was defeated.

The assembly approved Item 06-09.

The report was arrested. [For the rest of the report, see p. 46.]

**REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES A:
THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Moderator Bolbach recognized Theresa Cho, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness, to present a portion of the report. [Note: Items 10-04 and 10-05 were moved to 11 Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues–B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World as Items 11-09 and 11-10.]

In response to Item 10-01, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. The assembly approved Item 10-09 as amended and approved Item 10-10 as amended.

Cho introduced John Arbuckle Jr., vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness, to present a portion of the report.

The assembly approved Item 10-08, approved Item 10-07 as amended, and approved Item 10-11 as amended and with comment.

Cho presented the remainder of the report.

The assembly approved Item 10-02 as amended, approved Item 10-06 as amended, approved Item 10-03 as amended, approved Item 10-14 as amended, approved Item 10-12 as amended, and approved Item 10-13 as amended.

Cho reported that the committee had taken final action on Item 10-A.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness

[Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign (\$).]

Item 10-01. On Protesting the Blatant Disregard for the Sanctity of Our Lord’s Name in Motion Pictures and Public Broadcasting.

In response to Item 10-01, the 219th General Assembly (2010) approved the following resolution: [See p. 725.]

“The General Assembly strongly condemns the gratuitous trivialization of the use of the name of the Lord in the media and directs MRTI to communicate this condemnation to any companies in which it owns stock that own media content or media distribution companies and asks the appropriate office of the General Assembly to make available materials for use by local congregations for conversations with children, youth, and adults to help them determine the effects of media content for their lives.”

Item 10-09. Living Through Economic Crisis: The Church’s Witness in Troubled Times: A Social Involvement Report for the 219th General Assembly (2010).

That the recommendation is approved as amended. [See p. 733.]

Amend Recommendations 1–3 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

“1. That the Stated Clerk be requested to send a copy of this social involvement report to each [~~pastor~~] [congregation] in the denomination.

“2. That the appropriate PC(USA) ministry area or areas, including the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), [~~the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns,~~] be directed to develop a study for the 220th General Assembly (2012) that assesses the long-term implications of our current economic trends and practices, including their impact on the church itself, and provides appropriate recommendations for consideration by members, congregations, presbyteries, and local, state, and federal government. This assessment should center on the role of fairness and justice in our economy, with particular attention to growing inequality, the decline of the middle class, the tax structure, the shifting makeup of the labor force and its effects on employee rights, the role of regulatory agencies in protecting the public interest, and access to environmental resources that is equitable and sustainable. [The study should also reflect the concern of the impact of the economic crisis on women and incorporate case studies of both women and men.]

“3. That congregations be invited to create within their midst ways of supporting ~~[individual, unemployed persons and, if appropriate, their families]~~ [persons and families impacted by unemployment, under-employment, and economic downturn].”

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$9,045; (2011) \$27,885; (2012) \$3,110 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Item 10-10. Neither Poverty Nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 742.]

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

~~“[e. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), as a matter of justice.]~~

~~“(1) —to implement in its personnel policies the directive to provide ratios between highest paid and lowest paid church employees, both salaried and non salaried, which was directed to the General Assembly Council by the 207th General Assembly (1995) in the policy statement, *God’s Work in Our Hands*, (IV. Implementation Action Plans, A.4.b.(1)) (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, p. 438); and~~

~~“(2) —to establish the goal of achieving, in a reasonable period of time, a 5:1 ratio between highest paid and lowest paid church employees beginning with new General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) positions, understanding this to be a partial return to earlier policy and a practical embodiment of missional solidarity.”~~

~~“[d.] [c.]~~ Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to convene the leadership of all six agencies related to the General Assembly to review together the fourteen current principles of compensation in the ‘Report from the General Assembly Advisory Committee on Church-wide Compensation’ (213th General Assembly (2001); *Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 558–59) and to explore the possibility of setting ratios for compensation ~~[in light of the 5:1 ratio recommended in 2.c.(2) (above)]~~ in order to promote greater covenantal unity within our one church and in our mission together.

~~“[e.] [d.]~~ Request the leadership of the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), as well as the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, to join in the interagency consultation of Recommendation 2.~~[d.] [c.]~~ above, and to consider the assembly’s action on compensation within their own boards, reporting on such consideration in their agency reports to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

~~“[f.] [e.]~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“[g.] [f.]~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“[h.] [g.]~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“[i.] [h.]~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“[j.] [i.]~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“[k.] [j.]~~ [Text remains unchanged.]”

Item 10-08. A Resolution Supporting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 732.]

Item 10-07. A Resolution to Explore the Intersection of Gender and Race.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 731.]

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

“The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) [direct the Office of General Assembly to] request that presbyteries explore local resources and conduct training in cultural proficiency on the intersection of race with gender, using as a resource the book, *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God*, in recognition of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s decade of hearing, singing, and celebrating the voices and contributions of women of color.”

Item 10-11. Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K–12).

That the recommendation is approved with amendment and with comment. [See p. 772.]

Amendment:

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

“a. Recommits the PC(USA) to the principle of equal educational opportunity for all children in the United States, [~~regardless of race, abilities and disabilities, gender, language or socioeconomic status~~] [different as each child may be], and affirms them all as our children, neighbors in our care.”

2. Insert a new Recommendation 4.n. and re-letter Recommendation 4.n. as Recommendation 4.o as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[n. That books and resources in school and classroom libraries reflect said multiculturalism in content to ensure fair representation and encourage cross-cultural understanding.]”

“~~[n.]~~ [o.] [Text remains unchanged.]”

3. Insert a new Recommendation 5.e. to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[e. To affirm the importance of the active participation of families in the education and development of children in their care.]”

Comment: The Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues (A) advises that the assembly address issues of systemic factors that undermine children’s education. These include:

- The destructive impact of generations of poverty that diminish expectations of success.
- The debilitating impact of socioeconomic conditions such as lead-paint poisoning, fetal alcohol syndrome, drug dependency, and nutritional deficiency.
- The lack of support for families trying to be involved in their children's education.
- The inapplicability of curriculum to the life-settings of those children.

Item 10-02. On Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the First Social Pronouncement of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 726.]

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

“The Presbytery of Chicago respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the first social pronouncement of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at the 1910 General Assembly. The social statement, based on the Social Creed of 1908 passed at the organizing of the Federal Council of Churches, called attention to fourteen social problems related to industrial issues facing the nation. In the light of this precedent, we call for the promotion and education within our congregations and presbyteries of the new Social Creed for the Twenty-first Century passed by our 218th General Assembly (2008), which calls attention to the twenty social problems related to globalization. [~~We also ask the assembly to direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to distribute the resource, *Connecting to the Creed*, to presbyteries and congregations. [We also ask for *Connecting the Creed* to be posted and provided in digital form by the Office of the General Assembly and printed in limited quantity for presbytery resource centers and other uses. Further, the General Assembly urges the General Assembly Mission Council to include a celebration of the *Social Creed for the Twenty-first Century* at the next Big Tent.]~~”

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$0; (2011) \$1,700; (2012) \$0 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Item 10-06. A Resolution to Study Violence Against Women and Children on the Mexico-U.S. Border.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 729.]

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

“1. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to create a study group to examine the issue of violence against women and children along the United States-Mexico border, and in particular the circumstances in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, in consultation with Presbyterian Border Ministries, the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, the Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus, Hispanic/Latino-a Congregational [Enhancement] [Support Office], Presbyterian Women, ACWC, and presbyteries along the border, seeking concrete actions that the PC(USA), its agencies, congregations and partners, both in the U.S. and in Mexico, can implement to effectively impact this tragic issue within our own church and culture, as well as our neighbors, in a timely manner.”

2. Add a new Recommendation 3 to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“3. Direct GAMC to continue their work on the border and denounce violence against women and children on the Mexican-United States border.”

[Financial Implications: (2010) \$10,980; (2011) \$24,470; (2012) \$0 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Item 10-03. On Urging the U.S. Congress to Cap Interest Rates on Credit Card Lending.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 727.]

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

~~“[The Presbytery of Salem respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to adopt a statement urging the United States Congress to pass a law to cap interest rates on credit card lending and direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to the president of the United States and the U.S. Congress.]”~~

“[The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urges the United States Congress to enact legislation to cap consumer credit interest rates governing credit cards, payday loans, auto title loans, home equity loans, and other frequently usurious practices, to support a consumer finance protection agency independent of banks and other financially interested parties to ensure that such legislation is implemented, and to encourage publicly-owned banks and credit unions to provide more consumer choice and more regional and local investment, and to direct the Stated Clerk and appropriate General Assembly Mission Council offices to communicate this action to the president of the United States, the U.S. Congress, and state governors and state banking commissions.

“[The 217th General Assembly (2006) of the PC(USA) approved a report, *A Reformed Understanding of Usury for the Twenty-First Century*, calling for measures including, but not limited to, ‘... efforts to provide more effective and less costly financial services to people who are now forced to utilize high-cost alternative financial resources...’ and advocate ‘... change of state and federal policies and legislation that allow lenders to take advantage of either the naïveté or financial plight of borrowers ...’ (Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 804–805).

“[The 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the ACSWP to produce print and interactive online resources (or make available existing resources) that can be used to educate consumers about predatory lending and encourage healthy borrowing practices and actively promote these resources throughout the church.

“[The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) urges the credit industry to develop specific credit products with low interest rates and appropriate maximums that extend credit and credit counseling to persons in poverty.]”

Item 10-14. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Usury.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 793.]

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

“The 219th General Assembly (2010) calls upon the PC(USA) and its corporate financial entities (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Board of Pensions, Funds of the General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Stated Clerk’s Office), [synods,

presbyteries,] its local congregations, and members to be a counter voice to usurious practices, and to prayerfully consider moving money out of the [~~large~~] financial institutions who exploit consumers and into [~~community banks~~] [financial institutions] that practice responsible consumer lending practices. We call upon MRTI to report on their evaluation of this strategy to the 220th General Assembly (2012). We believe that the standards for moving money include

“• clearly defined [~~interest~~][consumer credit] rate ceilings or caps (pegged to inflation, unemployment, and other factors, already agreed to, in principle, by one major financial institution);

“• reasonable and fully transparent limits on [~~credit card fees and charges~~] [financial products and services];”

Item 10-12. Commissioners' Resolution. On Ending Violence with Impunity Against Women and Girls.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 790.]

Amend Recommendations 2.–6. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“2. Commits to no longer responding with impunity when violence against women and girls occurs, whether clergy or laity perpetrates violence, and to first hold the perpetrator accountable rather than rush to forgiveness”~~ [holding perpetrators, whether clergy or laity, responsible for violence against women and girls, rather than rushing to forgiveness,] and encourages Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations, presbyteries, synods, and governing bodies to do likewise.

~~“3. Declares the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) a ‘Violence Free Zone for Women and Girls,’ and direct PC(USA) congregations, presbyteries, synods, and governing bodies to refer to domestic physical acts of violence against women and girls as ‘aggravated assault’ rather than “domestic violence.”~~

“[4.] [3.][Text remains unchanged.]

~~“[5.] [4.] Directs the General Assembly Mission Council’s (GAMC’s) Compassion, Peace and Justice ministry area, through the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network (PADVN), the Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, and other entities working on gender justice issues to join with the World Mission ministry area in engaging and collaborating with ecumenical and global partner churches [to establish guidelines for relationships that encourage equal participation of both men and women in ministry and leadership, making it clear]~~ at the same time [making it clear] that impunity from violence and abuse is not acceptable within related Reformed communities.

“[6.] [5.][Text remains unchanged.]”

Item 10-13. Commissioners' Resolution. On Renewing the Commitment to the Use of Inclusive and Expansive Language for God and the People of God.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 792.]

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

“The 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the [Office of Theology Worship and Education, the] Compassion, Peace and Justice ministry area[,] and the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women ministry area to renew efforts throughout the denomination to promote the use of inclusive and expansive language for God and the people of God and to ensure distribution, electronically or otherwise, of the brochure, “Well Chosen Words: Inclusive Language with Reference to the People of God—Expansive Language with Reference to God” (PDS #72-700-99-003).”

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

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

Item 10-A. Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Representation.

That the minutes are approved.

**REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES B:
THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD**

Moderator Bolbach recognized James Bender, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World, to present a report from the committee.

The assembly approved Item 11-01 as amended, approved Item 11-02, approved Item 11-03 as amended, and approved Item 11-04.

Bender introduced Kristen Gerling, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World, to present a portion of the report.

The assembly approved Item 11-06 as amended, disapproved Item 11-07 with comment, approved Item 11-08, and approved Item 11-09 as amended.

Bender resumed the presentation of the report. The assembly approved Item 11-10 as amended.

Bender moved the committee recommendation on Item 11-11. A minority report was introduced.

The report was arrested. [For the rest of the report, see p. 40.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Bolbach called upon Associate Stated Clerk Tom Hay for an announcement.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

Moderator Bolbach called upon Debbie Braaksma, area coordinator for Africa, to introduce an ecumenical greeting. The Reverend Francis Amenu from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana brought greetings to the assembly.

CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator Bolbach called upon the Reverend Festus Asana from the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 5:58 p.m.

Thursday, July 8, 2010, 7:30 P.M.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Elder Fares Dagher, ecumenical guest from the National Evangelical Synod of Syria, led the assembly in the convening prayer.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

Moderator Bolbach called upon Jon Chapman, area coordinator for Europe, to introduce an ecumenical greeting. The Reverend Siarehi Hardun from the Orthodox Church of Belarus brought greetings to the assembly.

**REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON
BILLS AND OVERTURES**

Moderator Bolbach recognized Aleida Jernigan, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee.

The assembly amended the docket and suspended the Standing Rules to limit the length of speeches to two minutes.

MEMORIAL MINUTE

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Theodore Wardlaw, president of Austin Theological Seminary, who presented a memorial minute for former moderator John F. Anderson Jr., Moderator of the 122nd General Assembly (1982) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Memorial Minute Tribute to John Franklin Anderson Jr.

Early in my ministry as president of Austin Seminary, I gave an address about the seminary to a sizable audience of Presbyterians in Dallas; and when that address was over, John Franklin Anderson Junior, by then a long-retired parish pastor and a former Moderator—in fact, the last Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and one of the architects of our reunited church—came up to me in that large room to offer a charge that I have not forgotten. He said, “Ted, the greatest challenge facing the clergy in this time is not heresy but boredom.” He said, “Go back down to Austin and send us preachers who aren’t boring.”

John Anderson—born in Dallas in 1920, educated at Austin College in Sherman, Texas; formed theologically at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary—was a lifelong testimony to faithful service. A World War 2 chaplain who served with the Second Marine Division in Japan, he came back to the United States at the end of his service and pastored the First Presbyterian Church of Tyler, Texas; the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas; and the First Presbyterian Church of Orlando, Florida, before becoming the executive secretary of the Board of National Ministries of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. In 1973, John accepted the call to return to the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas—a venerable and deeply-engaged leadership church in deep downtown Dallas composed of all sorts of people, from the highest stations of life to the most humble, from which for decades has emanated the ministry of proclamation and music and beauty and Christian formation and social witness, service and redemption. It was while John was pastor there that second time that he served as Moderator, and represented our communion in trips to Mexico and South Africa and Canada and Russia.

He was a beloved pastor and consummate churchman whose career coincided with some of the most significant social upheavals in the United States, and he shepherded his flocks through those changes with courage, wisdom, and grace. He was a sense-maker in contentious situations, and he lived up to that charge that he gave to me; for he himself was a preacher who was not boring. It is impossible to count the people invited into the faith by John’s pulpit ministry and through his witness in other arenas of engagement.

John and his dear wife Nancy, who was by his side throughout his ministry, were married in 1943, and raised three children—William, Paul, and Rebecca—and they enjoyed six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

In the Fall of 2009, just a short while after his death, Austin Seminary dedicated a new four-story apartment building named for John F. and Nancy Anderson. It had been my desire to have chiseled in stone across the main entrance of Anderson House the words with which John charged me on that day in Dallas. But other forces prevailed, and it was decided that we should choose a Latin inscription instead. And so we did, and now students enter and exit through a door crowned with these words: *Praedicatores Taediosi Nobis Non Mittendi Sunt*. It’s Latin for “Send Us Preachers Who Aren’t Boring.”

Thanks be to God for the life and witness of John Franklin Anderson Jr. “Christ is the Resurrection and the Life.”

Vice Moderator Landon Whitsitt assumed the chair.

**REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON
BOARD OF PENSIONS, FOUNDATION, AND PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING CORPORATION**

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Effie Bynum, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, for a report from the committee. Moderator Bynum moved Item 18-03, confirmation of Thomas Taylor as president and executive officer of the Presbyterian Foundation. At Moderator Bynum’s request, Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Eleanor Hite, chairperson of the Presbyterian Foundation Search Committee. Hite addressed the assembly and introduced Thomas Taylor. Taylor addressed the assembly briefly. The assembly approved Item 18-03. The report of the committee was arrested. [For the rest of the report, see p. 54.]

**REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES B: THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD**

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized James Bender, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World, to continue the report of the committee. [See p. 39 for first part of report.]

Bender reminded the committee that the consideration of Item 11-11 was in process. The minority report was perfected. The main motion was perfected. Moderator Bolbach put the question to the assembly, “Shall the minority report become the main motion?” The minority report was defeated.

The assembly approved Item 11-11 with a floor amendment to Recommendation 1 to strike “or non-PC(USA) conference centers” and approved Item 11NB with comment. [Note: There was no Item 11-05].

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World and the committee report is as follows:

**Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues B:
The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World**

[Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign (\$).]

Item 11-01. On Lifting up the “Call to Restore the Creation”.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 805.]

Amend Item 11-01 by adding new Recommendations 4., 5., and 6. to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[4. Affirm that concern for God's creation is, for every Christian, an essential way of living faithfully in Christ's world that will necessitate personal study of, attention to, and engagement with emerging and new environmental concerns that are persistent, acute, and pressing.]”

“[5. Affirm that the best available science should inform our care for God's creation, shaping the direction of responsible programming and policy, especially with respect to public witness concerning emergent environmental issues such as global climate change, desertification, and access to potable water, and wetlands/coastal erosion.]”

“[6. Affirm that all living creatures require potable water to live; that water, being essential to life, is a human right that must be accessible to all people.]”

Item 11-02. On Endorsing “The Charter for Compassion.”

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 808.]

\$Item 11-03. On Making Resources Available Regarding Destruction and Loss of Coastal Wetlands.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 810.]

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

“2. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Congregational Ministries Publishing, to work in conjunction with the Presbytery of South Louisiana to develop [~~curriculum~~] [resources] on the implications of coastal wetlands loss for God's creation and God's community.”

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

“4. Direct the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to examine the role of corporations and institutions in the destruction [and restoration] of the wetlands and report back to the 220th General Assembly (2012).”

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$0; (2011) \$28,100; (2012) \$53,100 (GAMC)]

Item 11-04. Human Rights Update (2010).

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 812.]

[Note: Item 11-05 became Item 10-11.]

Item 11-06. Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 830.]

1. Amend Recommendation 1 as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Encourage the church at every level—from individual member to congregation, presbytery, synod, and national church—to become informed and active in preventing gun violence, to provide pastoral care for victims of gun violence, and to seek a spiritual response of grief and repentance, grace and courage to resist that violence and celebrate the Lord and Giver of Life. [This proposal does not preclude the legal use of personal firearms for hunting or sports-related purposes.]”

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

“f. raise the age for handgun ownership to the ~~legal drinking~~ age of ~~(twenty-one)~~”; and”

“g. eliminate the Tiahrt Amendment to annual appropriations for the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) ~~[that forbids local law enforcement agencies from receiving any information from gun traces, and to keep data on background checks for at least ninety days for comparative purposes and assist enforcement of ‘11.a.’ above]~~ [that impedes local law enforcement agencies in their use of gun traces and requires the Justice Department to destroy within two hours the record of a buyer whose NICS (National Instant Criminal Background Check System) check was approved].”

Item 11-07. On Living a Human Life before God.

That the recommendation is disapproved with comment. [See p. 847.]

Comment: With thanksgiving for the diligence and hard work of the authors of the study paper, On Living a Human Life Before God, the original paper, The Nature and Value of Human Life (1981), is in many ways superior as a tool for moral discourse. Moreover, the concerns of the overture approved by the 212th General Assembly (2000), *Overture 00-95: On Gun Violence*, are more adequately addressed by Item 11-06 of this year’s report: “Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call.”

Item 11-08. On a National Moratorium on the Imposition of the Death Penalty.

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 855.]

Item 11-09. A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 857.]

1. Amend Recommendations 4.c.–d. as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“c. measurable targets and goals that integrate cultural proficiency policy, training and cultural sensitivity programs in areas of education for purposes of mobility and advancement, performance, recruitment, hiring, mentoring, and retention;

“d. production of biennial reports giving employment profile (salaries, occupations, separations, new hires, promotions, in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and disabilities).”

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

“7. Direct each entity ~~must~~ to demonstrate affirmative efforts to increase racial ethnic and female employee representation in the senior management categories. When filling vacancies at this level, there must be a racial ethnic person and a female among the final candidates. If they are not among the final candidates, the entity must explain why they were not considered.”

Item 11-10. On Forming a Committee to Study the Nature of the Church for the 21st Century.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 878.]

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

“As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) becomes an increasingly diverse and culturally rich membership, ~~the~~ the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to appoint a committee of ~~nine~~ eleven persons to study the Nature of the Church for the 21st Century. The intent of this study shall be to seek to increase understanding of the church from a Reformed and Presbyterian perspective and assist current and new members in forming faithful plans for our common future.”

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

“• ~~Four~~ Six persons at-large”

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

“The committee would be charged with bringing a report and making the appropriate recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012), and, if appropriate, preparing [~~a study guide~~] [practical resources] for individual and congregational use.”

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$21,730; (2011) \$34,895; (2012) \$13,665 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Item 11-11. *Commissioners’ Resolution. Regarding a Call to Stand with Immigrant Presbyterians in Their Hour of Need.*

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 879.]

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

“1. Refrain from holding national meetings [~~at hotels or non-PC(USA) conference centers~~] in those states where travel by immigrant Presbyterians or Presbyterians of color or Hispanic ancestry might subject them to harassment due to legislation similar to Arizona Law SB 1070/HB2162.

“[a. If individual congregations and camp & conference facilities deem it necessary, the PC(USA) and its staff will offer nonfinancial support for the creation of accompaniment programs to support persons of color who feel that they are at risk when attending church-sponsored worship or programs.

“[b. If such laws are passed in states where the PC(USA) camp & conference centers are located, the 219th General Assembly (2010) encourages those centers to develop ‘sanctuary’ responses that would create safe places for all participants, allowing the denomination to continue to support its own conference centers, and encourages the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program of the General Assembly Mission Council to offer support to partners across the denomination as they develop a process to train volunteers to document abuses and collect data on those abuses to share with the broader church.]

“2. [~~Direct the Office of Immigration to~~] [~~∅~~][d]evelop resources that educate Presbyterians about the history of [~~immigrant policies, the beneficial aspects of immigration in the United States as well as~~] official anti-immigration conduct [~~in the United States~~], [~~including, but not limited to~~] [such as] the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that was not repealed until 1943; the forced migration of persons of Mexican descent from California between 1929 and 1939, 60 percent of whom were U.S. citizens; and the forced relocation of Japanese Americans to detention camps during World War II.

“3. [~~Direct the Office of Immigration to~~] [~~∅~~][d]evelop resources that educate Presbyterians about the origins of this most recent legislation, with a special focus on those states that are considering enactment of copycat legislation.

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

“5. Empower the Immigration Office of the PC(USA) to [~~legally~~] [provide a legal] resource [to] PC(USA) congregations in states experiencing the introduction of SB 1070 copycat legislation.”

3. Add a new recommendation 6 to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[6. Directs the Stated Clerk to ask the National Council of Churches to request the churches of North America to join our sister churches in Europe in a common day of prayer to commemorate those migrants who have died on their journey.]”

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$2,000; (2011) \$4,000; (2012) \$4,000 (OGA-Per Capita)]

Item 11 New Bus. Recommendations Regarding Deep Water Horizon Oil Disaster.

That the recommendation is approved with comment. [See p. 881.]

Recommendation:

In response to the Deep Water Horizon Oil disaster, the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues—B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World respectfully recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) take the following actions:

1. Direct the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to send condolences to each of the families of the workers who lost their lives from the Deep Water Horizon oil rig explosion.

2. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to work in partnership with local impacted communities, and to initiate and support an ecumenical, long-term response to the Deep Water Horizon oil disaster. This response may include

- a. developing sustainable subsistence food supplies;
- b. developing a peer-to-peer counseling program;
- c. equipping community members with the knowledge and technology to monitor water, air, and soil quality and water currents;
- d. cross-country monitoring of the effects on migratory birds that fly through the Gulf Coast during their migration;
- e. supporting the creation of sustainable green jobs for those who have lost their livelihoods due to the oil disaster; and
- f. supporting an ecumenical, locally based series of summits to discuss issues of dislocation, relocation, and resettlement as a result of communities becoming uninhabitable due to toxins in the environment.

3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to make a one-time, special fundraising appeal to support the long-term recovery of communities impacted by the Deep Water Horizon oil disaster.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to write a letter to the chief executive officer of BP, urging BP to ensure the safety of all workers, including oil industry workers and oil cleanup workers, through training, equipping, and monitoring of safety guidelines in compliance with OSHA.

5. Direct the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI) to communicate with oil and natural gas companies engaged in offshore exploration, drilling, and production urging them to conduct a thorough review of their operations to make certain that they are in compliance with their own health, safety, and environmental standards and all governmental regulatory requirements so that the general public can be assured that similar disasters will be prevented.

6. Direct the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., to:

- a. Communicate with Congress and the Executive Branch the need to reconstitute a robust program of oversight and compliance to ensure that health, safety, and environmental standards are followed to protect workers, communities, and the environment.
- b. Urge Congress and the Executive Branch to hold BP and other responsible parties morally and financially accountable for this disaster and for the socioeconomic and environmental recovery.

Comment: It is impossible to express adequately the outrage felt by Presbyterians and others at the enduring tragedy unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico region today. While the long-term socioeconomic and spiritual effects of the Deep Water Horizon oil disaster are yet to be determined, urgent action by the PC(USA) is our Christian responsibility.

Moderator Cindy Bolbach assumed the chair.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CIVIL UNION AND MARRIAGE ISSUES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Rick Nutt, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues, for a report from the committee.

Nutt moved the committee recommendation on Item 12-12. A minority report was introduced. The minority report was perfected with the following floor amendment: to insert in section 1 “and the majority report,” after the phrase “minority report,” so that it reads: “Approve the minority report and the majority report.” The main motion was perfected with the following floor amendment: to insert in Recommendation 1.a.: “and the minority report from the committee” after the phrase “commend the committee’s report,” so that it reads: “commend the committee’s report and the minority report from the committee to the sessions and presbyteries.” Moderator Bolbach put the question to the assembly, “Shall the minority report become the main motion?” The minority report was defeated.

The assembly approved Item 12-12 as amended, and answered Item 12-13 with its action on Item 12-12. The assembly disapproved Items 12-01, 12-05, and 12-11. A floor motion “that the action taken on Item 12-12 be considered the response to all pending items coming from Committee 12” was approved.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues

[There are no recommendations contained in this report that will be moved as part of a consent agenda. There are no recommendations contained in this report that have financial implications.]

Item 12-12. The Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 909.]

1. Amend the fourth paragraph of I. Introduction (in the Rationale) as follows:

“In many ways, life in the body of Christ is not unlike a marriage: In the course of our life together, we have good days and bad days, good times and challenging times, great joy and wrenching pain. We talk, we laugh, we cry. We agree and disagree. Occasionally, we get angry and are tempted to walk away. But like Christian marriage, in the body of Christ we know that the One who holds us together is more important than the arguments that threaten to tear us apart. That One is Jesus Christ, who said, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn. 13:34–35). [Included in the mandate of this special committee was a directive that the PC(USA) constitutional definition of Christian marriage not be changed. In our confessions, marriage is consistently defined as a lifelong covenant between God, a man and a woman, and the community of faith.]”

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

“The early Christian church was an underground and often persecuted movement with little ability to influence official policies in the Roman Empire on matters like marriage. Nevertheless, theologians showed a vital interest in the understanding and practice of marriage in the early Christian community. When Christianity became ~~[the official]~~ [a legal] religion of the Roman Empire in 313, laws enacted under Constantine and his successors began to reflect the influence of Christian views about marriage. [Text continues unchanged.]”

3. Amend the second paragraph of Section III as follows:

[As noted above,] ~~[I]~~[i] included in the mandate of this special committee was a directive that we were not to change the *Book of Order*’s definition of marriage. [Text continues unchanged.]

4. Amend Recommendation 1.a. by inserting “and the minority report from the committee” after the words “commend the committee report” so that it reads as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“a. commend the committee’s report [and the minority report from the committee] to sessions and presbyteries, and urge them to engage in study of the issues presented in the report.”

Item 12-13. Minority Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 926.]

Item 12-01. On Affirming the Biblical Teaching on the Topic of Marriage.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 883.]

Item 12-05. On Marriage.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 898.]

Item 12-11. On Reaffirming the Historic Teaching of the Church on the Topic of Marriage.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 908.]

Item 12-06. On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 900.]

Item 12-08. On Approving an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Uphold Session and Pastoral Discretion in Their Responsibility and Accountability for Worship.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 904.]

Item 12-09. On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation Regarding Marriage.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 905.]

Item 12-04. Recommendations 1.–4. On Amending the Directory for Worship ... to Support Equal Protection and Foster Greater Inclusiveness.

That the recommendations are answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 896–97.]

Item 12-04. Recommendation 5., On Amending the ... Rules of Discipline to Support Equal Protection and Foster Greater Inclusiveness.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 896–977.]

Item 12-02. On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 890.]

Item 12-03. On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 894.]

Item 12-07. On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 902.]

Item 12-10. On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 12-12 of this report. [See p. 907.]

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDERS AND MINISTRY

Vice Moderator Whitsitt assumed the chair.

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Theresa Denton, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Church Orders to continue the report. [For the first part of the report, see p. 33.]

The assembly approved Items 06-02, 06-03, 06-04, 06-05, 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-10, 06-11, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, 06-17, 06-18 on the committee's consent agenda (all answered by action taken on Item 06-09). Item 06-20 was removed from the consent agenda. Item 06-20 was moved by Denton to be answered by action taken on Item 06-09. A substitute motion was made to approve Item 06-20. The substitute motion was perfected. Vice Moderator Whitsitt put the question to the assembly, "Shall the substitute motion become the main motion? The substitute motion was disapproved. Item 6-20 was answered by the action taken on Item 06-09.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry

[Consent agenda items are indicated by an asterisk. Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign (\$).]

Item 06-19. On Establishing a Process to Evaluate the Current Call System

That the recommendation is referred to the Office of Vocation with a report deadline of at least 180 days before the 220th General Assembly (2012). [See p. 477.]

Item 06-01. On Amending G-11.0407 and G-14.0730 to Affirm the Role of Certified Christian Educators.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 423.]

1. Amend the second paragraph of Recommendation 1 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline; text that had been stricken in the original item of business but retained in the assembly committee action is shown with brackets and with a gray screen background.]

“ ‘The stated clerk shall maintain [~~five~~] [four] rolls, one listing the names of all the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are active members, one listing the names of all the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are members-at-large, one listing the names of all the ministers of Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are inactive members, one listing all Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only, [and, in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote,] [at all presbytery meetings, during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery,] [~~and, in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote,~~] and a fifth roll listing those who have been deleted from the other rolls. On or before December 31 of each year, the presbytery shall determine the category of membership of each continuing member in accordance with the relevant sections of this chapter and cause appropriate record of such determination to be made.’ ”

2. Amend the second paragraph of Recommendation 2 as follows:

“b. provide the following support to the [e][C]ertified Christian [e][E]ducators: service of recognition that shall include the constitutional questions at W-4.4003 (G-11.0103n); establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits (G-11.0103n); and access to the committee on ministry (G-11.0503). ~~The presbytery may grant the privilege of the floor to the Certified Christian Educator at all its meetings with voice only, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote under the provisions of G-11.0101b, during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery. (G-11.0407)~~ In accordance with G-11.0407, [e][C]ertified Christian [e][E]ducators are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote [during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery].”

Item 06-09. On Amending G-6.0106b.

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 454.]

*Item 06-04. On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0106.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 427.]

*Item 06-02. On Calling for a Moratorium Until 2012 for Requests to Change, Alter, or Remove the Current Standards of Ordination.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 425.]

*Item 06-03. On Declaring a Season of Rest by Taking No Action Modify or Eliminate G-6.0106b for Not Less Than Two Years.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 426.]

*Item 06-05. On Homosexual Practice and the Church: An Authoritative Interpretation.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 439.]

***Item 06-06. On Amending G-6.0106b, G-14.0240, and G-14.0450 Regarding Requirements for Ordained Office.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 447.]

***Item 06-07. On Deleting G-6.0106b.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 449.]

***Item 06-08. On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 452.]

***Item 06-10. On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 458.]

***Item 06-11. On Amending G-6.0106b to give Broader But Specific Scope to the Ordination Standard.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 459.]

***Item 06-12. On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 463.]

***Item 06-13. On Amending G-6.0106b.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 465.]

***Item 06-14. On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 466.]

***Item 06-15. On Amending G-6.0106b of the *Book of Order*.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 468.]

***Item 06-16. On Amending G-6.0106b and G-14.0450 Regarding Requirements for Ordained Office.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 470.]

***Item 06-17. On Deleting G-6.0106b and Substituting New Text.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 471.]

***Item 06-18. Overture on Behavioral Standards for Ordained Office.**

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 475.]

Item 06-20. On Calling All Individuals in the Majority and Minority to Wait Actively Upon the Lord in a Season of Fasting and Forbearance.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. [See p. 478.]

DISSENT

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 06-09 of the Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry: Ryan Balsan, Presbytery of New Brunswick; David A. Bell, Presbytery of East Tennessee; William Connolly, Presbytery of St. Andrew; Stephen Eyre, Presbytery of Cincinnati; Barry W. Garrison, Presbytery of Charlotte; Mark Inouye, Presbytery of San Jose; Julia Leeth, Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Tim Leslie, Presbytery of Foothills; Larry Lindsay, Presbytery of Santa Barbara; JoAnna McDonald, Presbytery of Philadelphia; J. David Moody, Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois; Jeffrey Ogden, Presbytery of Stockton; Daniel L. Packer, Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic; W. Jeff Pinkston, Presbytery of Charlotte; Jerry Porter, Presbytery of San Gabriel; Carolyn Poteet, Presbytery of Western North Carolina; Kevin Pound, Presbytery of St. Augustine; Greg Prow, Presbytery of San Jose; Hector Reynoso, Presbytery of Mission; Mark Ruppert, Presbytery of Eastminster; Donnie Shrum, Presbytery of Charlotte; D. Matthew Stith, Presbytery of Northern

Plains; Alan Stones, Presbytery of Santa Barbara; John Sweet, Presbytery of Philadelphia; Charlie L. Warren II, Presbytery of Philadelphia; and Elizabeth A. Williamson, Presbytery of Charlotte.

RECESS

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Margaret Mitsuyasu, theological student advisory delegate from Princeton Theological Seminary, who led the assembly in prayer. The assembly recessed at 10:52 p.m. to reconvene at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, July 9.

Friday, July 9, 2010, 9:30 A.M.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Therese Miller, ecumenical guest from the Religious Society of Friends, led the assembly in the convening prayer.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

Moderator Bolbach called upon the Reverend Leo Walsh from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, who brought greetings to the assembly.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Heath Rada, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee.

The assembly amended the docket and suspended the Standing Rules to limit the length of speeches to one and one half minutes.

The assembly approved Items 02-11, 02-12, and 02-13 [see page 188].

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Moderator Bolbach called on Patricia Valentine, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report on financial implications.

Valentine reported that the total financial implications to per capita budget of actions approved on Thursday were \$121,467 for 2010; \$256,580 for 2011; and \$83,500 for 2012. The total financial implications of actions recommended by assembly committees, but not yet considered by the assembly, amounts to: \$19,808 for 2010; \$124,648 for 2011; and \$13,378 for 2012.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Moderator Bolbach called on Julia Henderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, for a report on financial implications.

Henderson reported that the total financial implications to per capita budget of actions approved on Wednesday were zero for 2010; \$33,100 for 2011; and \$53,100 for 2012. The total financial implications to mission budget of actions recommended by assembly committees, but not yet considered by the assembly, amounts to: \$52,087 for 2010; \$262,761 for 2011; and \$154,583 for 2012.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Bolbach recognized Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons for an announcement.

GROWING CHRIST'S CHURCH VIDEO

Moderator Bolbach recognized Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council, to introduce a video on *Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide*.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Stated Clerk Parsons reviewed the Standing Rules for nomination from the floor and outlined the procedure for considering the nominations Moderator Bolbach recognized Jim Madson, moderator of the General Assembly Nominating Committee, for a report from the committee. [The first part of the report can be found on p. 27.]

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Madson recommended approval of Items 00-01M.4 and 00-01M.5, which had been withheld from the prior report of the committee. The assembly approved Items 00-01M.4 and 00-01M.5.

Moderator Bolbach recognized Byron Wade, vice moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008), to place in nomination the slate of nominees for election to the General Assembly Nominating Committee. The assembly approved the Item 00-03. [See p. 99.]

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

The assembly defeated a motion to reconsider its action on items answered by Item 12-12. These were Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-06, 12-07, 12-08, 12-09, 12-10, 12-12, and 12-13 (Assembly Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues).

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST PEACEMAKING ISSUES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Karen Dimon, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved Item 14-07 as amended by the committee and with floor amendment to insert “Commend the practical and proactive initiatives of the Iraqi churches to serve their neighbors and contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq and” at the beginning of Recommendation B.2., approved Item 14-03, and answered Items 14-01 and 14-02 with its action on Item 14-03. The assembly approved Item 14-08 as amended.

The report was arrested. [See the bottom of this page for the rest of the report.]

CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator Bolbach closed this session of the General Assembly by having those present join in singing *I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art*.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 12:05 p.m.

Friday, July 10, 2010, 1:30 P.M.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Reverend Noe Bernier, ecumenical advisory delegate from the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti, led the assembly in the convening prayer.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

Moderator Bolbach called upon Maria Arroyo, area coordinator for the Caribbean and Latin America, to introduce an ecumenical greeting. The Reverend Enoc Teixeira Wenceslu from the United Church of Brazil brought greetings to the assembly.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Moderator Bolbach recognized commissioner Aleida Jernigan, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee.

The assembly amended the docket.

SPEAK-OUT

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members were given an opportunity to speak out on issues outside the deliberative mode of the assembly for seven minutes, with one-minute limits on individual speeches. Moderator Bolbach recognized persons, who spoke on various concerns.

Vice Moderator Landon Whitsitt assumed the chair.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST PEACEMAKING ISSUES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Karen Dimon, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues, to continue the report from the committee. [See top of this page for first part of the report.]

Dimon introduced Laurie Anderson, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues, to present the remainder of the report.

The assembly voted to answer Items 14-04, 14-05, and 14-06 with the action taken on Item 14-08. [Note: the answer to 14-04 included a comment.] The assembly voted to approve Items 14-09 and 14-10.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues

Item 14-07. On Iraq.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 1018.)

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

“2. [Commend the practical and proactive initiatives of the Iraqi churches to serve their neighbors and contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq and] Presbyterian Women for ~~[designating the Kirkuk Church Kindergarten and Child Care Center as a recipient of the 2010 Birthday Offering grant]~~ [helping to provide education for children in Iraq];”

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

~~“[E. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to study and report back to the General Assembly the relationship between the expenditures for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the economic conditions in the U.S., including those who benefit from these expenditures, those sectors that are disadvantaged, and providing a theological and practical discussion from the Reformed perspective.*]”~~

“[*These assume no additional budget is needed, and that the activities will reflect the priorities of the General Assembly.]”

~~“[F.]~~ [E.] Direct the Stated Clerk to call upon the church, its congregations and presbyteries to:

“1. pray for the effectiveness of our national leaders in making peace;

“2. encourage presbyteries to develop linkages between their congregations and agencies that assist in the relocation of Iraqi refugees in the United States;

“3. commend the U.S. government for ~~[taking necessary steps to protect noncombatant Kurdish and other civilians in Northern Iraq from Turkish and Iranian military action that has resulted in damage to property and persons in that region.]~~

“[a. responding to the massive Iraqi refugee situation;

“[b. taking steps to return troops from combat;

“[c. giving support to returned troops and their families;

“[d. giving political and economic support toward rebuilding Iraq as an independent nation.]”

“4. urge the U.S. government to maintain its commitments to:

“a. withdraw all U.S. combat troops from Iraq by August 31, 2010;

“b. withdraw all U.S. armed forces and defense contractors from Iraq no later than December 31, 2011;

“c. ensure that the U.S. not establish permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq;

“d. make available sufficient U.S. funds for the repatriation and resettlement of Iraqi refugees and for the postwar reconstruction of Iraq;

“e. reduce the time that it takes to process refugees coming to the U.S.; ~~[and]~~”

“f. ensure that sufficient funds are provided for medical and psychological treatment of returning military personnel[~~]~~ [~~]~~]

“[g. protect civilian populations from harm, particularly in the northern part of Iraq, due to long-standing hostilities among militant, governmental, economic, ethnic, and religious groups; and carry out its stated policy of engaging all sides involved in a conflict by following that policy in order to find peaceful ways to resolve their differences.]”

“~~[G-]~~ [E.] Direct the Stated Clerk to send this overture to the synods, presbyteries, and churches in the most practical manner as soon as possible, requesting their concurrence and active participation in these ministries, especially in association with ecumenical and interfaith partners.”

Item 14-03. MRTI Report of Its Engagement with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 985.)

Item 14-01. On Divestment from Caterpillar, Inc.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 14-03. (See p. 981.)

Item 14-02. On Divestment from Caterpillar, Inc.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 14-03. (See p. 983.)

Item 14-08. “Breaking Down the Walls.”

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 1021.)

1. Add a new Recommendation 2.b. and reorder Recommendations “2.b.–j.” as “2.c.–k.” as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[b. the reaffirmation of Israel’s right to exist as a sovereign nation within secure and internationally recognized borders in accordance with United Nations resolutions.]”

“~~[b-]~~ [c.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[c-]~~ [d.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[d-]~~ [e.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[e-]~~ [f.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[f-]~~ [g.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[g-]~~ [h.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[h-]~~ [i.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[i-]~~ [j.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[j-]~~ [k.] [Text remains unchanged.]”

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

“b. Authorizes the creation of a Monitoring Group on the Middle East for the next two years that will consist of ~~[the members of this study committee]~~ [seven people appointed by the current and immediately past Moderators in consultation with the GAMC staff persons responsible for global mission in the Middle East and for Inter-religious Affairs] to assist the appropriate General Assembly Mission Council offices and the Middle East staff team in monitoring progress and guiding actions to ensure adequate implementation of policy directions approved by this General Assembly, given the growing complexity and interrelatedness of issues in the region. (It is the understanding that the group would be convened, as necessary and helpful, via teleconferencing or other means incurring minimal expense.) [This committee shall be appointed by the end of August 2010. The monitoring group shall include at least one but no more than two members of the existing Middle East Study Committee (MESCC). New appointees shall be chosen on the basis of demonstrated experience with and knowledge of the

complex dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the larger concerns of the Middle East, and shall together comprise an authentic balance representing the fullness of the spectrum of commitments within the PC(USA) toward the people and issues in the region.]”

3. Strike the current text of Recommendation 3.f. and insert the following: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“f. [Endorses the Kairos Palestine document (“A Moment of Truth”) in its emphases on hope for liberation, nonviolence, love of enemy, and reconciliation; lifts the document up for study and discussion by Presbyterians; and directs the creation of a study guide for the document through the appropriate channel of the General Assembly Mission Council.] [Commends for study the Kairos Palestine document (“A Moment of Truth”), and endorses the document’s emphases on hope for liberation, nonviolence, love of enemy, and reconciliation. We lift up for study the often neglected voice of Palestinian Christians. We direct the monitoring group for the Middle East to create a study guide for the document].”~~

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

~~“h. Encourages Presbyterians to travel to the region, especially Israel/Palestine, and when doing so to worship and visit with [fellow] [Palestinian] Christians, support Christian businesses, [seek to understand the range of narratives] [engage Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs, and Palestinian Muslims], and spend dedicated time in Israel and Palestine.”~~

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

~~“b. Calls on the U.S. government to exercise strategically its international influence, including [the possible withholding of military aid as a means of bringing Israel to] [making U.S. aid to Israel contingent upon Israel’s] compliance with international law and peacemaking efforts.”~~

6. Strike the current text of Recommendation 4.d. and insert new text to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“d. [Calls on the Israeli government to end immediately its blockade of Gaza, and on the U.S. government to end any support it is giving to the blockade, and also calls on the Egyptian government to facilitate the passage of humanitarian supplies into Gaza as well as consumer goods from the strip.] [Calls on the Israeli and Egyptian governments to limit their blockade of Gaza solely to military equipment/devices and to guarantee adequate levels of food, medicine, building supplies, and other humanitarian items, and to allow free commercial exchange in and out of Gaza, and calls on the U.S. government to end any support for the blockade that interferes with the adequacy of such items or such exchange.]”~~

7. Strike the current text of Recommendations 8.a.–c. and insert new text to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“[a. Approves Part One of the report (Introduction; Letters to Our Church, Partners, and Engaged Parties; Biblical Theological Reflections; ‘What We Have Seen and Heard’).~~

~~“[b. Receives Part Three (I. Notes from a Humanistic, Liberal Zionist: A Personal Narrative; II. A Plea for Justice: A Historical Analysis; and the Appendixes) and commends it to the church for study.~~

~~“[c. Authorizes the creation of a study guide by the monitoring group (see Recommendation 3.b.);]~~

“[a. Receives Part One of this report (Introduction; Letters to Our Church, Partners, and Engaged Parties; Biblical Theological Reflections; ‘What We Have Seen and Heard’) as rationale for recommendations only, not as policy.

“[b. Delete Part Three, Items A and B (A. Notes from a Humanistic, Liberal Zionist: A Personal Narrative; B. A Plea for Justice: A Historical Analysis), and replace with a series of eight narratives of comparable length, four arising from the range of authentically Palestinian perspectives (including both Christian and Muslim), and four arising from the range of authentically Israeli perspectives, along with an annotated bibliography for additional understanding about the breadth and depth of both authentically Palestinian and Israeli spectrum of perspectives

but above all authentically pro-justice and pro-peace. These narratives and the bibliography will be collected and approved by the Monitoring Group on the Middle East.]”

Item 14-05. On Commending “A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith and Hope from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering” as an Advocacy Tool.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 14-08 of this report. (See p. 1006.)

Item 14-04. On Recognition that Israel’s Laws, Policies, and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against the Palestinian People.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 14-08 of this report with comment. (See p. 994.)

Comment: While we are deeply concerned with the policies implemented by Israel in relation to the Palestine territories and Palestinians under its jurisdiction, we believe that dialogue is hampered by words like “apartheid.”

Item 14-06. On Middle East Peacemaking.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 14-08 of this report. (See p. 1016.)

Item 14-09. On Seeking Compliance to U.S. Government Policy in the Use of Military Aid by All Parties in the Middle East.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1120.)

Item 14-10. Toward Peace and Reconciliation in the Middle East.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1123.)

DISSENT

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 14-08 of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues: Rosanna P. Anderson, Presbytery of Monmouth; Joel Davies, Presbytery of Monmouth; Kirk McCormick, Presbytery of Tropical Florida; and John Sweet, Presbytery of Philadelphia.

The following commissioner filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 14-09 of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues: John Sweet, Presbytery of Philadelphia.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BOARD OF PENSIONS, FOUNDATION, AND PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING CORPORATION

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Effie Bynum, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, for a report from the committee. [See p. 40 for the first part of the report.]

Bynum reported that the committee took final action on Items 18-A, 18-B, 18-C, 18-D, and 18-E with comment. The assembly approved the consent agenda: Items 18-02 (approved), 18-04 (approved), 18-05 (approved), 18-08 (approved), 18-09 (approved), 18-10 (approved), and 18-11 (approved).

Bynum introduced Donna Misterly, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing, to present a portion of the report. Misterly introduced the committee recommendation on Item 18-06. A minority report was introduced. The main motion was perfected. The minority report was perfected. Vice-Moderator Whitsitt put the question to the assembly, “Shall the minority report become the main motion?” The minority report was defeated. In response to Item 18-06, the assembly approved an alternate resolution with comment.

The assembly disapproved Items 18-01. Bynum presented the remainder of the report. Item 18-07 was disapproved. In response to Item 18-12, the assembly approved an alternate resolution.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, & Presbyterian Publishing

[There are recommendations contained in this report that were moved as part of a consent agenda. Such items are marked with an asterisk (“*”).]

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

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

Item 18-A. Report Regarding Amendments to the Benefits Plan.

That the report is approved. [See p. 1316.]

Item 18-B. Committee on Review of Whole of the PC(USA).

That the report is approved. [See p. 1319.]

Item 18-C. Minutes, Board of Pensions.

That the minutes are approved.

Item 18-D. Minutes, Foundation.

That the minutes are approved.

Item 18-E. Minutes, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

That the minutes are approved with comment.

Comment: Three pages from the minutes of the March 2–3, 2009, meeting were not in the reviewer’s copy, but it has been confirmed that those pages are in the permanent copy.

I. For Plenary Action

***Item 18-02. Gifts program and Wills Emphasis.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1296.)

***Item 18-04. On Evaluating the Future Use of El Sombroso Oaks.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1297.)

***Item 18-05. Report of the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1298.)

***Item 18-08. Regarding Review and Revision of the *Organization for Mission* Regarding Responsibilities of the GAMC and Its Executive Director, and the OGA and the Stated Clerk**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1309.)

***Item 18-09. Regarding the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1310.)

***Item 18-10. Regarding Future Reviews of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Six Agencies.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1311.)

***Item 18-11. Regarding the Review of Biennial Assemblies.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1312.)

Item 18-03. Confirm Tom Taylor as President and Chief Executive Officer.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 1296.)

Item 18-01. On Directing the Board of Pensions to Extend Benefits to Same-Gender Spouses and Domestic Partners.

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 1291.)

Item 18-06. On Directing the Board of Pensions to Extend Benefits to Same-Gender Spouses and Domestic Partners.

In response to Item 18-06, the assembly approved an alternate resolution with comment. (See p. 1301.)

Alternate Resolution:

That the 219th General Assembly (2010):

1. Urge the Board of Pensions to adopt amendments to the Benefits Plan to extend eligibility for spousal and dependent benefits under the Plan to Benefits Plan members, their same-gender domestic partners, and the children of their same-gender domestic partners, on the same basis as, and equivalent to, benefits made available to Benefits Plan members, their spouses, and the children of their spouses.

2. Approve an increase in dues for the Benefits Plan of up to 1 percent, effective January 1, 2012, to be allocated among the plans of the Board of Pensions, including but not limited to the Pension Plan, as the Board, in its sole discretion, deems necessary to fund the cost of the additional benefits. Should the Board not implement these benefits for any reason, approval of the increase in dues is rescinded.

Comment: That the Board of Pensions be highly urged to provide relief of conscience, to be implemented simultaneously with these actions, for those congregations for whom these actions cause a moral dilemma.

Item 18-07. On the Medical Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church and Medications Requiring Pre-Authorization.

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 1305.)

Item 18-12. Commissioner's Resolution. On Discontinuing Payment for Abortion as a Covered Benefit in the Board of Pensions Medical Benefits Plan.

In response to Item 18-12, the assembly approved the following alternate resolution: (See p. 1313.)

The 219th General Assembly (2010) urges the Board of Pensions to develop a plan to ensure that funds from any Relief of Conscience churches do not go to fund abortions through any avenue.

DISSENT

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 18-06 of the Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing: George Antonakos, Presbytery of Baltimore; Marie A. Bowen, Presbytery of Pittsburgh; David M. Demarest, Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley; Mark Inouye, Presbytery of San Jose; Tim Leslie, Presbytery of Foothills; David McFarlan, Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley; David J. Miller, Presbytery of Cherokee; J. David Moody, Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois; Jeffrey Ogden, Presbytery of Stockton; Carolyn Poteet, Presbytery of Western North Carolina; Hector Reynoso, Presbytery of Mission; Mark Ruppert, Presbytery of Eastminster; Michael Shealy, Presbytery of Cherokee; Stephen K. Stelle, Presbytery of Shenango; D. Matthew Stith, Presbytery of Northern Plains; Alan Stones, Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Robert Titus, Presbytery of Pittsburgh; and John Wamsley, Presbytery of South Louisiana.

The following commissioner filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 18-12 of the Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing: Kirk McCormick, Presbytery of Tropical Florida.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Patricia Valentine, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved the consent agenda as follows: Item 03-03 (disapproved), Item 03-05 (disapproved), Item 03-06 (disapproved), Item 03-07 (disapproved), Item 03-09 (disapproved), Item 03-10 (referred to the Biennial Review Committee), Item 03-11 (disapproved), Item 03-12 (approved as amended), Items 03-13 (approved), 03-14 (approved), 03-15 (approved), Item 03-16 (approved as amended), Item 03-18 (approved as amended), Item 03-19 (disapproved), Item 03-21 (approved as amended), Item 03-22 (approved), Item 03-23 (approved), Item 03-24 (approved as amended), Item 03-25 (approved as amended on Saturday, July 10), Item 03-26 (approved as amended and with comment); Item 03-27 (approved), Item 03-28 (approved), Item 03-29 (approved); Item 03-31 (disapproved).

The assembly disapproved the following items: Item 03-02, Item 03-04, and Item 03-08.

The assembly referred Item 03-17, Recommendation 1 to the General Assembly Mission Council, and Item 03-17, Recommendation 2 to the Biennial Review Committee.

Valentine introduced Olanda Carr Jr., vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, to present a portion of the report.

The assembly disapproved Items 03-20 and 03-30.

The report was arrested. [For the rest of the report, see p. 76.]

Moderator Cindy Bolbach assumed the chair.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY

Moderator Bolbach recognized Anne Epling, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity, for a report from the committee.

Epling reported that the committee took final action on Items 05-A, 05-B, 05-C, 05-D, 05-E, 05-F, 05-G, 05-H, 05-I, 05-J, 05-K, 05-L, 05-M, 05-N, 05-O, and 05-P.

The assembly approved the consent agenda: Item 05-01 (disapproved), Item 05-05 (approved), Item 05-06 (approved as amended), Item 05-08 (disapproved), 05-09 (disapproved), Item 05-13 (approved), Item 05-14 (approved as amended), Item 05-15 (approved), Item 05-16 (approved), Item 05-18 (approved), Item 05-20 (approved), Item 05-23 (approved), Item 05-25 (Recommendations 1–3) (approved), Item 05-25 (Recommendation 4) (authoritative interpretation approved with comment), Item 05-26 (approved). Items 05-02, 05-10 were removed from the consent agenda. Item 05-02 was approved; and Item 05-10 was disapproved.

The assembly approved Item 05-19 with comment, approved Item 05-17, disapproved Item 05-03, approved Item 05-04 as amended and with comment, disapproved Item 05-07, approved Item 05-27 as amended, and approved Item 05-12 with comment.

Epling introduced the committee recommendation on Item 05-21. A minority report was introduced. The main motion was perfected. The minority report was perfected.

Moderator Bolbach recessed the assembly for twenty minutes.

Moderator Bolbach put the question to the assembly, “Shall the minority report become the main motion?” The minority report was defeated. The assembly approved Item 05-21 as amended.

The assembly disapproved Item 05-11 and Item 05-24, answered Item 05-28 with its action on Item 05-21, and approved Item 05-22.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Church Polity

[There are recommendations contained in this report that were moved as part of a consent agenda. Such items are marked with an asterisk (“*”). There are recommendations contained in this report that have financial implications and are indicated with a “\$” sign next to the item.]

I. For Plenary Action

***Item 05-01. On Amending D-6.0101 and D-10.0101 Regarding Conciliation and Mediation—From the Presbytery of Northern Kansas.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 307.)

***Item 05-02. On Restoring Previous Provisions of D-13.0102 and D-13.0106 to Deny the Prosecuting Committee the Ability to Appeal a Verdict of “Not Guilty”—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 309.)

***Item 05-05. On Amending G-13.0108 and G-13.0111a. Regarding Nominations Process—GANC.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 318.)

***Item 05-06. On Amending G-9.0801, G-13.0108, and G-13.0000 Regarding Participation and Representation—GACOR.**

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 320.)

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

“a. Each presbytery and synod shall elect a nominating committee broadly representative of the member churches of the presbytery or presbyteries, with a membership of [~~equal numbers of~~] one-third ministers of the Word and Sacrament, one-third laywomen, and one-third laymen and elders, women and men [in numbers as nearly equal as possible]. ...”

2. Strike the text of Recommendations 2.–4 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

“[2. Shall G 13.0108 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“[~~The General Assembly shall establish a permanent Committee on Representation as required by G 9.0105, which shall advise the General Assembly Nominating Committee of any need for nominations in particular categories needing increased representation. The Committee on Representation shall report to each meeting of the General Assembly (other than special or adjourned meetings) regarding progress toward fair representation of the categories of persons listed in G 4.0403. The committee shall consist of members equal in number to the synods of the church, each member resident in a different synod, and members distributed so that there are equal numbers of ministers and elders, women and men one third ministers (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen.~~”

“[3. Shall G 13.0111a be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“[~~a. To ensure careful nomination of members of such boards, agencies, and committees as the General Assembly shall from time to time designate, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose nominees to the General Assembly for such bodies. Consideration shall be given to the nomination of equal numbers of ministers and church members (both women and men), laymen, and laywomen. The nominating committee shall consist of members equal in number to the synods of the church, each member resident in a different synod, and members distributed so that there are one third ministers (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen ministers and elders (both women and men) in numbers nearly as equal as possible. (G 9.0801, G 11.0501, G 12.0102d, G 13.0202) [The rest of the paragraph remains unchanged.]”~~

“[4. Shall the third sentence of G 13.0202b be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“[~~... It will also follow the provisions of G 9.0104, G 9.0105, and G 13.0111 and shall ensure that, exclusive of the Moderator and predecessor Moderators, one third of the members are consideration be given that membership have equal numbers of ministers of the Word and Sacrament [(both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen and elders, women and men....]”~~

***Item 05-08. On Amending G-14.0480 Regarding Ordinations—From the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 324.)

***Item 05-09. On Amending G-5.0300 and G-10.0302a to Include the Designation of Associate Member—From the Presbytery of Mackinac.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 325.)

***Item 05-10. On Amending G-5.0101 Regarding Covenantal Membership—From the Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 327.)

***Item 05-13. Pandemic Provisions—From the Director of Operations, Office of the General Assembly—ACC.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 331.)

***Item 05-14. Authoritative Interpretation—Officer, Moderator, or Stated Clerk Fails to Carry Out Duties of Office, What Recourse Does Governing Body have to Address the Problem?—Member of the Presbytery of New York City—ACC.**

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 333.)

Amend the third paragraph of Recommendation 1 as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“ **b.** The clerk of the session shall be an elder elected by the session for such term as it may determine. The clerk of a presbytery, a synod, and the General Assembly shall be called stated clerk, shall be elected by the governing body for a definite term as it may determine, and must be eligible for membership in the governing body. *A stated clerk may be removed from office prior to completion of his or her term of service through the use of the process outlined in G-9.0705.’ ”*

***Item 05-15. Interpretation (G-13.0112c) Re: Renunciation—From the Stated Clerk, Synod of Lincoln Trails—ACC.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 335.)

***Item 05-16. Ethical and Polity Implications of Financial Gifts Made Directly by Individuals to Ministers—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy—ACC.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 336.)

***Item 05-18. Is a Session Bound to Consider Only Those Items Published in the Call for a Called/Special Meeting—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of New Covenant—ACC.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 337.)

***Item 05-20. D-10.0303, Reviewing Work of Investigating Committee—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Seattle—ACC.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 340.)

***Item 05-23. Work within Bounds—From Manager, Polity Guidance and Training—ACC.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 344.)

***Item 05-25. Amendments to the Rules of Discipline—OGA.**

That Recommendation 1 is approved. (See p. 347.)

That Recommendation 2 is approved. (See p. 347.)

That Recommendation 3 is approved. (See p. 347.)

In response to Item 05-25, Recommendation 4, the 219th General Assembly (2010) approved the following authoritative interpretation of D-2.0203b with comment: (See p. 348.)

Authoritative Interpretation: “An offense does not include the act of participating in deliberations and decisions ultimately made by a committee or commission of a governing body or of the governing body.”

Comment: An offense does not include the mere act of participating in deliberations and decisions ultimately made by a committee or commission of a governing body of the governing body.

***Item 05-26. Amendment to D-6.0103—OGA.**

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 349.)

Item 05-19. Definition of Youth, Overture 90-18—From the Manager, General Assembly Nominations—ACC.

That the recommendation is approved with comment. (See p. 339.)

Comment: The 219th General Assembly (2010) advises that the General Assembly Committee on Representation should be asked to study the current age groups and nomenclature in order to have consistency among all

Presbyterian documentation and for the General Assembly Committee on Representation to make recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

Item 05-17. Interpreting G-14.0440 Regarding Circulation of Personal Information Forms by Candidates—From Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Columbia Theological Seminary, Presbytery of St. Augustine—ACC.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 337.)

Item 05-03. On Amending G-14.0560 Expanding the Role of the Commissioned Lay Pastor—From the Presbytery of South Louisiana.

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 312.)

Item 05-04. On Amending G-11.0407 and G-4.0560, and Adding a New G-11.0408b. Regarding Commissioned Lay Pastors—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment and with comment. (See p. 315.)

Amendment:

1. Amend the second paragraph of Recommendation 1 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline; text that had been stricken in the original item of business but retained in the assembly committee action is shown with brackets and with a gray screen background.]

“The stated clerk shall maintain four ~~five~~ rolls, one listing the names of all of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are active members, one listing the names of all of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are members-at-large, one listing the names of all of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are inactive members, *and one listing all Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, and a fifth roll listing those who have been deleted from the other rolls.* On or before December 31 of each year, the presbytery shall determine the category of membership of each continuing member in accordance with the relevant sections of this chapter and cause appropriate record of such determination to be made. *The stated clerk shall also maintain two registers, one listing all Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, and one listing all Commissioned Lay Pastors within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice and vote at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in a church or other validated ministry.*”

2. Strike Recommendations 2 and 3 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

~~“[2. Shall G 14.0560 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]~~

~~“[G 14.0560 — Commissioned Lay Pastor~~

~~“[The commissioned lay pastor is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service. This commission is valid only in one or more congregations, new church development, or other validated ministries of the presbytery designated by the presbytery. Such an elder is selected by and receives training approved by the presbytery. The elder shall be instructed in Bible, Reformed Theology and Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching. The elder shall be examined by the appropriate committee of presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction mentioned previously. An elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in a particular congregation or validated ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions of a commissioned lay pastor again until appointed to a particular congregation or validated ministry by the presbytery.]”~~

~~“[3. Shall G 11.0408 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]~~

~~“[G-11.0408a.—Validated Ministries~~

~~“[A minister of the Word and Sacrament who is an active member of presbytery may be engaged (1) in a validated ministry within congregations of this church, (2) in a validated ministry in other service of this church, (3) in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of this church, or may be (4) honorably retired.~~

~~“[G-11.0408b. Kinds of Validated Ministries of Commissioned Lay Pastors~~

~~“[A commissioned lay pastor may be engaged in a validated ministry within congregations or governing bodies of this church. [Current Sections G-11.0408b–c shall be re-lettered as G-11.0408c–d. The text of these sections remains unchanged.]”~~

Comment: That the Office of the General Assembly is instructed to devise a means of discovery and reporting the work of all commissioned lay pastors in the presbyteries and that all references in the *Book of Order* be updated to reflect this.

Item 05-07. On Amending G-14.0553c to Allow an Interim Associate Pastor to Become the Next Installed Associate Pastor with Two-Thirds Vote—From the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley.

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 322.)

Item 05-27. On Adopting a Gracious Dismissal Policy—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 351.)

Amend the recommendation by adding a new Recommendation to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[4. Instruct the Office of the General Assembly to invite other presbyteries who have established gracious dismissal policies to submit their policy to be posted on the middle governing bodies website along with the San Francisco policy.]”

Item 05-12. On Amending G-7.0400, Articles of Incorporation Be Provided to Presbytery—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Western North Carolina—ACC.

That the recommendation is approved with comment. (See p. 330.)

Comment: Please make the following editorial change: Recommendation 1 remains as it is and Recommendations 2–5 should be listed as sub-items a.–d. under Recommendation 1.

Item 05-21. Responsibility of General Assembly to Provide Authoritative Interpretations of *Book of Order* (G-13.0103r)—From Member, Presbytery of St Augustine—ACC.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 341.)

Amend the recommendation by striking the tenth paragraph, which reads as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

~~“[More subtle, however, is the question of whether the act of interpreting *wording* of the Constitution changes the *meaning* of the Constitution. In truth, any interpretation of a text shapes the meaning of that text by addressing its provisions to circumstances perhaps not anticipated when the text was created. It is for this reason that we regard the church’s Constitution as a living document, in that by the act of interpretation we mold the meaning of our Constitution to fit the ever-changing landscape of the church’s life and witness. This interpretive work is therefore essential to the vitality of the church, lest the Constitution become a lifeless conglomeration of words without reference to reality.]”~~

Item 05-11. On Amending G-13.0103r to Reduce Vexatious and Improper Litigation in the Church—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 328.)

Item 05-24. On Amending G-13.0103r. to Clarify the Role of the General Assembly and its Permanent Judicial Commission—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.

That the recommendation is disapproved. (See p. 345.)

Item 05-28. On Amending G-13.0103r Regarding Authoritative Interpretations.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 05-21 of this report. (See p. 356.)

Item 05-22. Section G-7.0306. Pastor Moderator of All Meetings of Congregation—From the Stated Clerk, Synod of Southern California & Hawaii—ACC.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 343.)

[Item 05-29 became Item 07-12. There is no Item 05-29.]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

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

Item 05-A. Minutes, Synod of Alaska-Northwest

That the 2008 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

1. Names of members of commissions, committees, and similar groups, including those groups existing only during a synod meeting are not listed.
2. Treasurer's full annual review and a report of the results of the audit were not included.
3. There is no indication that the minutes have been read and approved by the synod by its authorized committee.
4. The review of the records of presbyteries, including exceptions taken, was not included.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

No record that July 2009 minutes were approved. There is not a specific approval of synod vote that the synod council could approve.

Item 05-B Minutes, Synod of the Covenant

That the 2008 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with the following exception:

The roster of former permanent judicial commission members is not included.

Item 05-C Minutes, Synod of Lakes and Prairies

That the 2008 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

Item 05-D Minutes, Synod of Lincoln Trails

That the 2008 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

Item 05-E Minutes, Synod of Living Waters

That the 2008 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with the following exception:

The names of corresponding members, along with the name of their governing body, conference, or classes, are not included.

Item 05-F Minutes, Synod of Mid-America

That the 2008 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

1. The decision of one of the permanent judicial commission cases is not included.
2. The attestation that the minutes of the most recent session are not included.
3. The bylaws and standing rules of the synod are not included.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

Item 05-G Minutes, Synod of Mid-Atlantic

That the 2008 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

1. There is no report of the committee on representation.
2. The decisions of the permanent judicial commission cases are not included.
3. The review of presbytery minutes is not included.
4. The minutes from the November 28, 2008, meeting are missing.
5. The minutes or acts from some of the executive sessions were not reported.
6. A nomination taken did not indicate who was elected. There was also no indication that nominations were taken from the floor.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

Item 05-H Minutes, Synod of the Northeast

That the 2008 minutes are approved with the following exception:

There is no report from the committee on representation.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

Item 05-I Minutes, Synod of the Pacific

That the 2008 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

1. The minutes do not indicate that the corresponding members were seated by vote of the body.
2. There is no record of the review of presbytery minutes.
3. There is no record that the February minutes were approved.
4. A report of property and liability insurance carried by the synod is not included.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

1. There was no title page with attestation referencing the peer review.
2. There was no indication of nominations from the floor in the minutes of the nominating report.
3. The name of the governing body was not indicated when the persons were seated.

Item 05-J Minutes, Synod of Puerto Rico

That the 2008 minutes are approved with the following exception:

The business conducted went beyond the call for the meeting.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

1. There is no index contained in the minutes.
2. The name of the governing body was not indicated when the corresponding members were seated.
3. An indication of the number specified as quorum was not indicated in two sets of minutes.
4. The roster of former permanent judicial commission members is not included.

5. A report of property and liability insurance carried by the synod is not included.
6. The members of the nominating committee may not be members of the committee on representation.

Item 05-K Minutes, Synod of the Rocky Mountains

That the 2008 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

Item 05-L Minutes, Synod of South Atlantic

That the 2008 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

1. The record from finance and audit was incomplete.
2. The roster of former members for the last six years of the permanent judicial commission was not listed by classes.

Item 05-M Minutes, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii

That the 2008 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

Item 05-N Minutes, Synod of the Southwest

That the 2008 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

1. The roster of former members of the permanent judicial commission is incomplete.
2. The report of the committee on representation showing implementation of the principles of participation and inclusiveness in order to assure fair representation in decision making is incomplete.

Item 05-O Minutes, Synod of the Sun

That the 2008 minutes are approved with the following exception:

The council reported that the same persons were nominated and elected to the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the Committee on Representation.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

Item 05-P Minutes, Synod of the Trinity

That the 2008 minutes are approved with the following exceptions:

1. The index is incomplete and should be expanded to include information on the checklist and guidelines.
2. The listing of corresponding members is inconsistent.

That the 2009 minutes are approved with no exceptions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Bolbach called upon Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons for an announcement.

CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator Bolbach called upon Eric Hinderliter, missionary advisory delegate serving in Lithuania, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 6:05 p.m.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Landon Whitsitt, Vice-Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Darlene Figgs, theological student advisory delegate from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, led the assembly in the convening prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Vice-Moderator Whitsitt recognized Heath Rada, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee.

BIG TENT PROMOTION

Vice-Moderator Whitsitt recognized Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council, and Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, who shared information about the next Big Tent event and introduced a video.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized George Lynch, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved Item 13-10 and approved Item 13-04 as amended. The assembly approved Item 13-02 as amended and with the following floor amendments:

To amend Recommendation 2 by inserting a new “c” and re-lettering “c.-g” as “d.-h.” The new “c.” reads as follows: “encourage congregations and individual Presbyterians to pray for the people who lost loved ones in the attacks of September 11, 2001, and to pray for those first responders and volunteers who are ill as a result of their service and dedication.”

To add a preamble before Item 13-02: “We of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have deep appreciation for the patriotic loyalty of our nation’s citizens and service personnel for the extreme sacrifice they paid and will continue to pay to support our effort to achieve peace and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to protect the citizens of our nation. However, we believe further sacrifices and services will not serve the purposes for which we have been engaged. Therefore, the Peacemaking and International Issues Committee recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010).”

The assembly answered Items 13-01, 13-03, and 13-09 with its action on Item 13-02.

The assembly approved Item 13-11 as amended and with comment and answered Items 13-06 and 13-07 with its action on Item 13-11.

Moderator Lynch introduced Sue Trei-Conrad, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues to continue the report. The assembly approved Item 13-13 as amended, approved Item 13-12 as amended, approved Item 13-08 as amended, approved Item 13-05 as amended, and approved Item 13-14 as amended.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues

[There are recommendations contained in this report that have financial implications and are indicated with a “\$” sign next to the item.]

I. For Plenary Action

Item 13-10. Commitment to Peacemaking.

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 965.]

Item 13-04. On Partnering for Peace in Sudan.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 952]

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

“1. Support intercessory prayer and advocacy by the churches regarding (a) renewed international commitment to the full and timely implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 (CPA)[, including international protection in Southern Sudan for the referendum on whether to secede]; (b) increased private investment for the economic development of Southern Sudan and other areas affected by conflict; (c) increased development assistance by the United States government, including assistance in restoring security for the citizens of Southern Sudan and other areas affected by violence and proliferation of arms; and (d) renewed efforts by all parties to end hostilities in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan, including full access by humanitarian organizations to provide care and resettlement assistance to refugees and the internally displaced, all for the purposes of the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God and the promotion of social righteousness.”

“2. Support the formation of new covenant-based partnerships by PC(USA) presbyteries with presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS) or the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC), making arrangements through the PC(USA) [~~Sudan Mission Network~~] [General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), World Mission ministry area], with presbyteries reporting results to the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council by July 1, 2011, for review by the General Assembly Mission Council and thereafter, publication on appropriate web sites, all for the purposes of the proclamation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of humankind, the preservation of the truth, and the maintenance of divine worship.”

Item 13-02. On the War in Afghanistan.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 946.]

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

“1. Call upon the United States government to

“a. [~~take only non-combative actions in vigorous pursuit of~~] [pursue non-combat actions that will support] stability, prosperity, and peace in Afghanistan and [~~in~~] the [surrounding] region;

“[b. cease direct combat operations, except those to protect coalition troops remaining, Afghani security force troops, and humanitarian efforts;]

“~~[b.]~~ [c.] cooperate with the United Nations and the neighbors of Afghanistan in the stabilization process;

“~~[e.]~~ [d.] cooperate with the United Nations in providing and overseeing greatly expanded aid to Afghanistan for the delivery of humanitarian and economic development assistance;

“[e. engage directly with and among the Afghani people in a process of peacemaking by¹

“[(1) creating a multilevel, participatory, consensus building process that seeks input from every sector and level of society and does not exclude from participation any group of stakeholders;

“[(2) building a broad base of civil support that makes peacemaking cost-effective;

“[(3) engaging in a public process involving consultation with leaders of civil society, a representative process, and open media communication among the populace;

“[(4) incentivizing peace by focusing on security, economic stability and justice, political access and participation, and identity associated with territory through both culturally identified internal and external incentives;

“[(5) practicing consistent and intensive diplomatic engagement at multiple levels that is culturally knowledgeable and sensitive, language fluent, and skilled in mediation; and

“[(6) allocating resources that link mediation with implementation.]”

[1. These principles are modified from the 3D Security Initiative: Development, Diplomacy, Defense; Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University.]

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

“a. communicate to the United States president and Congress [~~the position of this General Assembly as set forth in Recommendation 1. Above~~] [that the PC(USA) opposes the war in Afghanistan]

“b. further urge the president of the United States and Congress to commit the U.S. government to the use of peaceful means in the pursuit of national interests, concentrating upon diplomacy, international collaboration, [interfaith dialogue,] material aid for education, reduction of poverty, and the broadening of political enfranchisement in Afghanistan [~~and elsewhere~~];”

3. Amend Recommendation 2.g. by striking the current text and inserting new text in its place to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline; text added by plenary is shown with brackets and with a gray screen background.]

~~“g. [direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to convene a seminary and college wide review of peace studies, including peacemaking opportunities focusing on the need to demilitarize U.S. international relations, and to report the results of this study to the 221st General Assembly (2014)] [recognize the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence as a weapon of war and affirm the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stress the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution].”~~

4. Amend Recommendation 2 by inserting the following as a new d. following c. (and renumbering subsequent sections: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with underline.]

“[d. encourage congregations and individual Presbyterians to pray for the people who lost loved ones in the attacks of September 11, 2001, and to pray for those first responders and volunteers who are ill as a result of their service and dedication.]”

5. Add a preamble before Item 13-02 to read as follows:

“[We of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have deep appreciation for the patriotic loyalty of our nation’s citizens and service personnel for the extreme sacrifice they paid and will continue to pay to support our effort to achieve peace and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to protect the citizens of our nation. However, we believe further sacrifices and services will not serve the purposes for which we have been engaged. Therefore, the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010)]”

Item 13-01. On the War in Afghanistan.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 13-02 of this report. [See p. 943.]

Item 13-03. On the War in Afghanistan.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 13-02 of this report. [See p. 949.]

Item 13-09. On the War in Afghanistan.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 13-02 of this report. [See p. 963.]

Item 13-11. On Strengthening the Peacemaking Program.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment and with comment. [See p. 966.]

Amendment:

Strike the existing text and insert new text to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“[The Presbytery of Pittsburgh respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to strengthen the Peacemaking Program by the following actions:~~

~~“[1. Recognize and celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* and the Peacemaking Program.~~

~~“[2. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACWSP) to create a nine person task force (as specified below) to~~

~~“[a. review *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* and its action recommendations and report the results to the 220th General Assembly (2012), with the intent of updating the engagement of Presbyterians in peacemaking; and~~

~~“[b. prepare a resolution for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to forward to the 220th General Assembly (2012) on the dangers of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and responses to this proliferation in light of Christian ethics, the impact of ongoing wars, and previous General Assembly policies.~~

~~“[3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, with the advice of the Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to create an advisory committee of six expert persons to meet quarterly to counsel the Peacemaking Program on issues regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and other emerging issues.~~

~~“[4. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to convene a seminary and college wide review of peace studies and peacemaking opportunities appropriate to the major shifts in the approach of the United States international relations and to report the results of the study to the 220th General Assembly (2012). The goal of the review is to engage students in active peacemaking and to share the wisdom of faculty among our church related educational institutions.]”~~

“[Lifting the example of Jesus as the model of our behavior and beliefs in love and peacemaking exemplified in Luke 6: 27–38 as our policy for Presbyterians now and in the future, the 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the General Assembly Mission Council, through the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and the Peacemaking Program, to appoint a five-person steering team, at least one of whom shall be a college student or other young adult, to work with ACSWP and Peacemaking Program representatives to design and implement a broadly participatory four-year process to do the following:

“[1. Seek clarity as to God’s call to the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war;

“[2. Identify, explore, and nurture new approaches to active peacemaking and nonviolence, reporting to the 221st General Assembly (2014) with recommendations for policy and action. This process shall include the following elements:

“[a. Build upon “Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling” (1980), “Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age” (1988), “Just Peacemaking and the Call for Intervention for Humanitarian Rescue” (1998), and other policies related to just war, just peacemaking, and nonviolent principles and issues of peace and justice approved by past General Assemblies, culminating in updated policies on nonviolence and peacemaking.

“[b. The steering team is encouraged to consult with ministries of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), particularly Compassion, Peace and Justice, World Mission, and Presbyterian Women; Office of the General Assembly; college chaplains and campus ministers; middle governing body staff; and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship in the design and implementation of the proposed policies and process.

“[c. The steering team is encouraged to consult with national and international ecumenical and interfaith partners and draw on the experience and learnings from the International Ecumenical Peacemaking Convocation of the World Council of Churches (2011), and other initiatives of the broader Christian and interfaith community.

“[d. The process shall help Presbyterians on all levels of the church to recognize and focus upon updated policies and actions that

“[(1) consider the new realities, challenges, and opportunities for working for peace and seeking justice, including the dangers currently posed by weapons of mass destruction, globalization, pluralism, the implications of U.S. foreign policy (including two current wars), impact of climate change, and an increasing competition for natural resources by developing nations as they affect the worldwide mission of the church and promotion of peacemaking;

“[(2) explore new thinking on nonviolence, reconciliation (including the role of truth-telling, forgiveness, confession, and public apology), human rights, security strategies, genocide and terrorism prevention, economic conversion, development, and the violence of poverty;

“[(3) explore new models for engaging in active peacemaking and working for justice, including new technology for advocacy and organizing, communication and decision-making, accompaniment, conflict-resolution, artistic expressions, church-based community organizing, and nonviolent direct action;

“[(4) respond to and prevent violence on the local level (e.g., action and advocacy concerning gang violence, gun violence, and family violence), the national level (e.g., action and advocacy on budget priorities, and decisions about investments in dependent industries), and the international level (e.g., action and advocacy on issues of war and peace) through prayer, direct action, and advocacy; and

“[(5) address sexism, racism, and other patterns of oppression as tasks of peacemaking and justice seeking.

“[e. The steering team shall

“(1) consider at least two gatherings of individuals who are engaged in action and reflection on peacemaking and justice seeking, including faculty and students from Presbyterian colleges, universities, and seminaries (“... to engage students in active peacemaking and to share the wisdom of faculty among our church-related educational institutions”), activists, individuals engaged in nonviolent witness, grassroots persons working for justice and peace, and others engaged in peacemaking in congregations, middle governing bodies, Presbyterian Women, and other Presbyterian-related entities;

“(2) invite Presbyterians, individually and corporately, across the church into a time of study and reflection on the root causes of violence and responses to it, and on peace, justice, and ministries of peacemaking and justice—seeking that honor the gospel, the history of the church, and the movement of the Holy Spirit as the church attempts to live out Christ’s command to love one another, even those we call our enemies; and

“(3) create new resources or identify existing resources, working ecumenically when appropriate, that will help Presbyterians pray and study Scripture for guidance about how to respond faithfully to Jesus’ call to be peacemakers in this time.

“[f. The steering team, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and Presbyterian Peacemaking Program staff, would recruit additional writer(s) or team members as necessary to help create a report with recommendations to bring to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

“[g. An interim report shall be made to the 220th General Assembly (2012). The interim report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) will include specific recommendations of strategy and policy to invite the broader church into the time of discernment, framing the conversation, naming the best partners, and laying out a process to help our congregations to wrestle with these important ethical questions.

“[h. The steering team will offer its recommendation for action to the 221st General Assembly (2014), asking for that assembly to receive the report for a two-year period of study before final action in 2016.]”

Comment: The committee advises that the funding of Item 13-11 be shared equally between the GAMC and the per capita budgets. This action also answers Items 13-01 (Recommendation 3.g.), 13-02 (Recommendation 2.g.), 13-03 (Recommendation 3.g.), 13-06, 13-07, and 13-09 (Recommendation 3.g. [now 3.h.]).

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$2,088; (2011) \$68,598; (2012) \$4,643 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$2,087; (2011) \$68,597; (2012) \$4,642 (Mission—GAMC)]

Item 13-06. On Entering a Six-Year Term of Discernment to Seek Clarity on Whether God is Calling Us to Embrace Nonviolence as Our Response to War and Terror.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 13-11 of this report. [See p. 956.]

Item 13-07. Twenty-first Century Peacemaking and Seminaries, Colleges, and Congregations.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 13-11 of this report. [See p. 959.]

Item 13-13. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Appealing for Peace and Reconciliation in Korea.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 976.]

Amend the recommendation by adding a new Recommendation 7 to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[7. Directs the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to convey our convictions to the president of the United States, the Congress, the United Nations, the governments of North and South Korea, the Presbyterian Churches of Korea, and our ecumenical partners.]”

Item 13-12. Commissioners’ Resolution. On the Restoration of Sustainable Agriculture in Haiti.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 973.]

Amend Recommendations 1–6 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. [~~Call upon the leadership of the church and particularly on~~] [Direct] the Stated Clerk and ~~on~~ the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to write

~~“[a.]~~ to the administrator of ~~[the]~~ United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to convey the ~~[concerns]~~ ~~[reservations]~~ of Presbyterians regarding the ~~[vision and initiatives of]~~ [strategy adopted by] USAID ~~[in relation with plans for the restoration of sustainability]~~ [to restore sustainable] agriculture in Haiti, and to request that USAID (i) involve hired Haitian horticultural students, Haitian farmers, and small farmer associations in the planning of local agricultural projects; and (ii) prioritize support to grassroots farmers’ associations, including women’s associations, designed to establish a sustainable small farm agriculture in preference to the introduction of commercial and/or industrial farming practices;

~~“[2.] [b.]~~ ~~[Call upon the leadership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to contact]~~ [to] former President Bill Clinton ~~[and Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive]~~ to request that the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti (ICRH) adopt more transparent ~~[and accountable]~~ [and greater accountability] ~~[in relation]~~ to the people of Haiti; ~~and that the Haitian people deserve no less than to be consulted systematically before developing]~~ [including systematic consultation with the Haitian people regarding development] plans that will affect their lives and the future of ~~[the]~~ [their] country.

~~“[3. Call upon the leadership of PC(USA) to request from USAID that support be given to efforts by grassroots farmers associations towards strengthening sustainable agriculture in the context of subsistence farming instead of focusing principally on introducing commercial and/or industrial farming practices to Haiti.]”~~

~~“[4.] [2.] [Alert]~~ [Inform] the PC(USA) membership and the leadership of the church to the [potentially] problematic nature of agro-business initiatives ~~[aimed at using]~~ [being planned for] Haitian land, including so-called marginal land, ~~[in]~~ [based on] bio-fuel production schemes, especially [those] relying on foreign hybrid and/or GMO seeds, ~~[and]~~ [or] the [unproven] industrial plantation of Jatropha ~~[or any other agro-business export schemes].~~

~~“[5.] [3.] [Urge]~~ [Request] the Executive Director of the GAMC to ~~[commit Presbyterian responses to post-earthquake reconstruction in Haiti not only to emergency assistance but also to]~~ [solicit supplemental funds to complement emergency assistance by supporting] medium and long-term development ~~[assistance]~~ [efforts] to strengthen Haitian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots farmers’ groups ~~[and enable them to]~~ [so that they can] implement and manage rehabilitation programs of their own conception and design, including small scale, sustainable ~~[agriculture]~~ [agricultural] activities, and to provide them with short- and long-term technical assistance ~~[in the form of mission personnel]~~ to help them upon request.

~~“[6.] [4.] [Commit]~~ [Direct] the PC(USA) to work collaboratively with other ~~[churches]~~ [denominations] and ecumenical institutions ~~[in ensuring]~~ [to ensure] that

“a. Haiti is [increasingly] able to feed itself ~~[first];~~

[b. the value of reinstating tariffs as transitional protection for recovering local agriculture is given due consideration;]

~~“[b.] [c.] exports are secondary to creating viable food economies for Haitians; [and]~~

[d. emergency food aid to Haiti is monitored and managed in such a way that it provides incentives (and not disincentives) for local food production;]

~~“[e.] [c.] [platforms are secured]~~ [mechanisms are created] for Haitian farmers to ~~[get]~~ [make] their voices heard as they advocate ~~[before]~~ [for themselves to] the Haitian government, the ICRH, USAID, and other international organizations [that are directly involved in the Haitian reconstruction].”

Item 13-08. On Assisting with a Process for Negotiation of a Peace Accord in Colombia.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 960.]

1. Amend the first bulleted item of Recommendation 1 as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“• increase violence [and displacement] within Colombia, and be perceived by many Colombians as a violation of Colombia’s national sovereignty; and”

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

~~“2. [Request that]~~ [Direct] the Stated Clerk ~~[ask]~~ [to request] President Barack Obama and the Congress to assist with a process for the negotiation of a peace accord in Colombia ~~[instead,]~~ in order to end Colombia’s internal armed conflict which has lasted more than fifty years and which is a threat to the entire Andean region.”

3. Add a new Recommendation 5 to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[5. Direct appropriate offices of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to work with ecumenical partners to monitor and post periodic updates on the impact of United States military use of seven military bases in Colombia.]”

Item 13-05. On Protecting Christians in the Muslim World.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 954.]

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

“On [~~Protecting Christians in the Muslim World~~] [the Protection of Religious Minorities]—From the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.”

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

“The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010), through its proper offices singly, or in conjunction with other denominations and faiths, through our appeal to them, to jointly encourage the United Nations to use its valuable influence, and through its diplomatic channels, to exhort the religious and political leaders of [~~Muslim nations~~] [nations with Christian and other religious minorities] to moderate extreme behavior and protect its religious minorities from such harm, and encourage [mutual respect and forbearance] [~~brotherly harmony between each other~~].”

Item 13-14. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Restoration of Democracy in Madagascar and Honduras.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 977.]

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

“~~[a. not recognizing military or other “coup d’etats”];~~

“~~[b.]~~ [a.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[e.]~~ [b.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[d.]~~ [c.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[e.]~~ [d.] [Text remains unchanged.]

“~~[f.]~~ [e.] [Text remains unchanged.]”

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

“c. press for the release of political prisoners; the end of intimidation, harassment, and violence against opponents of the new regime; and the free use of airwaves by church-related and other radio stations. [~~(The FJKM radio station, Radio Fahazavana, was closed and key staff arrested.)~~]”

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Vice Moderator Whitsitt recognized Julia Henderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, to continue the report from the committee. [For the first part of the report, see p. 18.]

The consent agenda was approved (09-12, 09-13, 09-14, 09-21 [Recommendations a.1., b., c.1., and c.2.]). The assembly disapproved Items 09-02 and 09-03.

Henderson introduced Robert Baker, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, to present a portion of the report.

Baker introduced Hunter Farrell, director of World Mission for the General Assembly Mission Council, who spoke briefly about the work of Presbyterian mission worldwide. Farrell introduced a video to the assembly.

The assembly approved Item 09-04 as amended and disapproved Item 09-05.

The assembly approved Item 09-07 as amended and with the following floor amendment: To insert in Recommendation 2 after the words “as an entity of networks”: “[and report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) the results]” and to insert a new Recommendation 3, and re-number current “3” as “4”, to read: “[3. That an extra commitment opportunity fund account be earmarked to provide salary and support for the position of executive director of PHEWA as described in the historic covenant of shared ministry partnership agreement that outlines our collaborative ministry.]”

The assembly approved Item 09-06, approved Item 09-09 as amended, approved Item 09-NB, approved Item 09-08 as amended, and approved Item 09-11.

Henderson continued presentation of the report. The assembly approved Item 09-15 as amended, approved Item 09-16 as amended, approved Item 09-17, approved Item 09-19 as amended, and approved Item 09-20 as amended.

The report was arrested. [For the rest of the report, see p. 80.]

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH ISSUES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Wells Kilgore, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Health Issues, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved Item 19-01 as amended. The assembly approved Item 19-05 as amended and with the following amendment from the floor: To insert as a new Recommendation 3 (and renumbering the following sections): “[3. Encourage the PC(USA) to advocate on behalf of, create, and engage in educational programs that reduce the stigma, discrimination, and fear of persons who have been diagnosed as HIV positive as a method to encourage honest disclosure and prevent the further spread of the virus.]”

The assembly voted to answer Item 19-02 with its action on Item 19-05. In response to Item 19-03, the assembly approved an alternate resolution.

Kilgore introduced Bonnie Brown, vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Health Issues, to present a portion of the report.

The assembly approved 19-04 as amended and approved Item 19-06 and Item 19-07 with a floor amendment as follows: “[Future editions of resource materials on the subject of reproductive options will be revised by the Office of Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries to include additional related and appropriate scriptural references to assist those using the resources to be guided into prayer and discernment for faithful life decisions.]”

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Health Issues and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Health Issues

[There are recommendations contained in this report that have financial implications and are indicated with a “\$” sign next to the item.]

I. For Plenary Action

Item 19-01. On Designating May 1 Every Year as a Day of Prayer for Healing.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 1361.]

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

“The Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to set aside [~~May 1st~~] every year [~~as~~] a day of prayer for healing [and wholeness and suggests that this be done in conjunction with the day currently designated on the Presbyterian Planning Calendar as Health Awareness Sunday]. Local churches and communities are encouraged to gather together and offer prayer for the discovery of ever more effective means of treatment. These gatherings may be an occasion to give thanks for the lives of saints who have died; prayers for healing for those who are currently receiving treatment; as well as prayers for doctors, nurses, and scientists who are seeking to bring healing and hope.”

\$Item 19-05. Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [Text added by plenary action is show with brackets, with an underline, and with a gray screen background.] [See p. 1370.]

1. Insert as a new Recommendation 3 (and renumber the following recommendations) to read as follows:

“[3. Encourage the PC(USA) to advocate on behalf of, create, and engage in educational programs that reduce the stigma, discrimination, and fear of persons who have been diagnosed as HIV positive as a method to encourage honest disclosure and prevent the further spread of the virus.]”

2. Amend current Recommendation 3.a.(1) (new Recommendation 4.a.(1)) as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“(1) knowledgeable about the root causes and social determinants of HIV and AIDS risk and vulnerability, including encouraging all Presbyterians, especially ministers of Word and Sacrament and church leaders, to be tested in order to be a visible example to all people and help eliminate the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS testing);

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$10,000; 2012: \$0 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

3. Strike current Recommendation 3.g. (new Recommendation 4.g.) and re-letter current Recommendations 3.h.–k. as 3.g.–j. (new recommendations 4.h.–k. as 4.g.–j.); [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text added by plenary is shown with brackets and with a gray screen background.]

~~“[g. Urge the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to critically assess the profit margins of drug companies that develop drugs for treating HIV and AIDS and include in its report to the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) a recommendation on appropriate percent margins the church may want to consider when investing its resources with companies that profit from drugs designed to treat HIV and AIDS.]”~~

[4. Strike “HIV and AIDS” and insert “HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C” wherever it appears in the text of the recommendation.]

Item 19-02. On Encouraging All Presbyterians to Know Their HIV Status.

That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 19-05 of this report. [See p. 1362.]

Item 19-03. On Making a Statement Regarding Violence Against Pregnant Women.

In response to this overture, the 219th General Assembly (2010) approved the following alternate resolution: [See p. 1363.]

“The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms females’ right and capacity to make responsible decisions regarding their sexual lives, including the right to use contraception, to reject sexual activity, to continue a pregnancy, or when necessary to end a pregnancy; condemns the injustice of any force, coercion, or violence against females to compel pregnancy, the continuation of pregnancy, sterilization, or abortion; commends and encourages those who provide shelter, medical care, and counseling for females subject to domestic violence and coercion in reproductive issues; and instructs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate this concern and commitment to the Congress of the United States and the state legislatures, urging them to expand support for women’s shelters and transitional housing for women and children fleeing domestic and all other acts of violence, and to adopt legislation that provides adequate means of prosecuting those who perpetrate violence against females.

“In light of the many forms of violence perpetuated against women, the 219th General Assembly (2010) condemns violence against women in all forms and under all circumstances as violations of God’s will for women and men, whether that violence is perpetuated by a stranger or by an intimate partner, and commends and encourages all persons who provide shelter, counseling, and other forms of assistance for women experiencing coercion and violence.”

Item 19-04. On Taking a Stand Against Forced and Coerced Abortions—**Decisions on Ending or Continuing a Pregnancy**].

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 1369.]

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

“The Presbytery of Prospect Hill overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) to declare that we stand with all women against the injustice of any forced or coerced abortions [and the injustice of any forced or coerced decisions to carry a pregnancy to term].”

Item 19-06. On Full Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Services in U.S. Correctional Facilities.

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 1405.]

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$36,000; 2012: \$0 (Unrestricted—GAMC)]

Item 19-07. Congregational Resource Materials on the Subject of Reproductive Options.

That the response is approved with amendment. [See p. 1406.]

Amend the response by adding the following text: [Text to be added by floor amendment is shown with brackets, with an underline, and with a gray screen background.]

“[Future editions of resource materials on the subject of reproductive options will be revised by the Office of Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries to include additional related and appropriate scriptural references to assist those using the resources to be guided into prayer and discernment for faithful life decisions.]”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Bolbach called upon Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons for announcements.

At Parsons’ recommendation, the assembly dismissed three special committees or task forces: the Form of Government Revision Task Force, the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage, and the Middle East Study Committee, with the grateful thanks of the 219th General Assembly (2010).

CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator Bolbach called upon Doris Mabrey, commissioner from the Presbytery of National Capital, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 10:35 p.m.

Saturday, July 10, 2010, 9 A.M.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010), in Hall B of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Michel Nseir, program executive for the Middle East with the World Council of Churches, led the assembly in the convening prayer. Nseir then brought greetings to the assembly.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Moderator Bolbach recognized Heath Rada, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee.

The assembly approved Items 02-14, and 02-15. [See p.189.]

Minutes of later business sessions will be approved by a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Protests found to be in decorous language are recorded in the *Minutes* as follows:

Protest of assembly action on Item 06-09—From Tim Leslie, commissioner from the Presbytery of Foothills: “The Assembly action on item 06–09 sending a proposed change to the *Book of Order* which seeks to radically change the language contained in the section is an affront to the express witness of the Scriptures which specifically call all disciples of Christ to sexual purity, ‘It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God ...’ (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5, NIV). This action will threaten the peace and unity of the church.”

Protest of assembly action on Item 06-09—From Marie A. Bowen, commissioner from the Presbytery of Pittsburgh; Harry W. Hughes, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Castle; Darryl Evans, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Hope; David A. Bell, commissioner from the Presbytery of East Tennessee; L. Raymond Cobb II, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Hope: “I (we—others join me in this protest) protest the adoption of the change in G-6.0106b which would remove the biblical and confessional, historical requirement of fidelity in the marriage of a man and a woman and chastity in singleness. I (we) find the 219th General Assembly in grave error. We join our voices with the whole church everywhere and always and with all who have voted in their presbyteries four times to establish and uphold the standard.”

Protest of assembly action on Item 06-09—From Barry W. Garrison, commissioner from the Presbytery of Charlotte: “I wish to protest the adoption change in G–6.0106b to remove our ordination standards. Our God is not honored when we remove our biblically centered fidelity and chastity standards. May God forgive us.”

Protest of assembly action on Item 06-09 and Item 18-06—From Rosanna P. Anderson, commissioner from the Presbytery of Monmouth: “I am not in agreement with the actions of the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the decision to reverse G-6.0106b which uphold the biblical and confessionally bold standards of fidelity in the covenant of marriage and chastity in singleness for all ordained leaders in the church. I am also in disagreement with the 219th GA’s approval of the extension of medial/pension benefits to same-sex partners of PC(USA) church employees. I do

not believe that the church is in agreement about this issue according to the witness of scripture and the historic confessions and the presbyteries will not have the opportunity to ratify this mandate or register their disapproval.”

Protest of assembly actions on Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-06, 12-07, 12-08, 12-09, and 12-10—From Jeff Falter, commissioner from the Presbytery of Geneva: “I protest the blanket action of the General Assembly in responding to Items 12-02, 03, 04, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10. The report adopted as Item 12-12 does not address the issues presented in these items, nor offer guidance in states where same-sex marriage is now legal. Further, parliamentary procedure was used to silence people’s voices, mine included. (While the motion to end debate may have been technically correct, it was used inappropriately to silence people.) As I read Acts 15, the leaders of the church did not discern God’s will by silencing debate but by hearing all voices, then discerning God’s spirit through those voices. Stifling debate does not promote justice, nor further the spirit of ‘mutual forbearance’ called for in the marriage report. The action of the assembly claims to answer the above-mentioned items with the marriage report by violating that very same report. (I intended to file this as a dissent, but missed the deadline.) Thank you for the opportunity to file this protest.”

Protest assembly action on Item 18-06—From Marie A. Bowen, commissioner from the Presbytery of Pittsburgh; Harry W. Hughes, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Castle; Darryl Evans, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Hope: “I protest the approval by the 219th General Assembly of the PC(USA) of same sex benefits (both pension and medical) through the Benefits Plan of the PC(USA). I object to participate both financial and moral in providing coverage of persons not eligible under the biblical and constitutional standards of the PC(USA). Through the offerings in our churches the adopted provision coerces the unwilling acceptance of sexual relationships outside the bounds of the marriage of a man and a woman. We (others join me in this protest) find this action repugnant to our theological convictions and a Christian practice and corrosive of relations within the PC(USA).”

Protest assembly action on Item 18-06—From L. Raymond Cobb II, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Hope: “I protest the approval by the 219th General Assembly of the PC(USA) of both pension and medical benefits to same sex couples through the Benefits Plan of the PC(USA). I object to participation, both financial and moral, in providing coverage of persons not eligible under the biblical and constitutional standards of the PC(USA). Through the offerings in our churches the adopted provision requires the unwilling participation in accepting of sexual relationships which fall outside the bounds of the biblical standard of marriage between a man and a woman. This action goes against my theological convictions and sense of Christian practice observed through the ages and will create further division in the PC(USA).”

Protest of assembly action on Item 18-06—From Tim Leslie, commissioner from the Presbytery of Foothills: “The Assembly action on item 18-06 providing benefits to same sex partners through the Pension Board of the PC(USA) is an affront to the Scriptures which do not sanction such sexual relationships or identify such relationships as equal to marriage. ‘Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.’ (Romans 1: 24–27, NIV) This action will add to the actions this Assembly has taken which threaten the peace and unity of our beloved church.”

Protest of assembly action on Item 18-06—From Hector Reynoso, commissioner from the Presbytery of Mission: “I lovingly want to express my protest on the actions taken by the GA on the above overture. Granting benefits to same sex couples is a violation of our constitution since it takes for granted that a marriage can be between 2 people and not between a man and a woman. Furthermore it ignores our confessions on this issue. Finally, it is an imposition on our congregations with a financial strain in time of great financial difficulty.”

Protest of assembly action on Item 18-06—From Barry W. Garrison, commissioner from the Presbytery of Charlotte: “I would like to protest our recent action in approving same sex benefits, pension, and medical, through the Benefits Plan in PC(USA). I do this on both financial and especially moral grounds. I am literally sickened to see how far from our Presbyterian roots we have fallen.”

Protest assembly action on Item 18-06—From J. David Moody, commissioner from the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois: “I protest the approval of same sex benefits (both medical & pension) through the benefits plan of the PC(USA) by the 219th General Assembly. In the strongest way possible I object to participating both financially & ethically in providing coverage for persons not eligible for leadership under the biblical and constitutional standards of our denomination. This mandate is coercive to our churches—requiring their participation through their offerings to unwillingly accept sexual relationships outside the bonds of marriage between a woman and a man. I think this action is unjust, forcing congregations to participate in something contrary to deeply held theological & Christian convictions. I also think it corrodes even further the tenuous relationships we hold together as a covenant community.”

Protest assembly action on Item 18-06—From Carolyn Poteet, commissioner from the Presbytery of Western North Carolina: “I am writing to protest the decision made on overture 18-06 during the 219th General Assembly of the PC(USA). As I

said in my testimony on the floor of plenary, I believe that for churches who would like to provide benefits for domestic partners, they have the means. Because we have passed this overture, the cost will be borne by our smallest churches, who will no longer have the means to support full-time ordained ministers of word and sacrament. For my own congregation, this will also present a grievous violation of conscience. Although the Board of Pensions speaks of 'relief of conscience' provisions, they were not able to offer specifics. In addition, when asked in private, one BOP staff person said he could not absolutely guarantee that our money would not be comingled with funds for domestic partner benefits. I would implore the BOP to find a middle way. One possibility would be to develop an official relationship with another insurance provider, through which churches could get insurance for domestic partners. This would provide BOTH justice AND guaranteed relief of conscience. Let us all pursue, with all our hearts, all possible means to stay together, to bless each other, and to glorify God forever. Amen."

FINAL REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Moderator Bolbach called on Patricia Valentine, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, to continue the report. [See p. 56 for the first part of this report.]

Valentine reported that the total financial implications to the per capita budget of actions approved to date by the assembly were \$141,275 for 2010; \$381,228 for 2011; and \$96,878 for 2012.

The assembly approved Item 03-25 (Recommendations 2.a., 2.a.(1), 2.c, and 3.) as amended.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures

[There are recommendations contained in this report that were moved as part of a consent agenda. Such items are marked with an asterisk ("*"). There are recommendations contained in this report that have financial implications and are indicated with a "\$" sign next to the item number.]

I. For Plenary Action

***Item 03-03. On Stewardship of Time During Plenary Sessions of the General Assembly.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 192.]

***Item 03-05. On Eliminating G-13.0103q Concerning the Responsibilities of the General Assembly.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 196.]

***Item 03-06. On Amending G-18.0301c. and d. to Require Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 198.]

***Item 03-07. On Amending Standing Rule A.3. by Outlining a Procedure for Dealing with Overtures That Request Amendment to the *Book of Order* That Have Been Dealt with By One of Two Previous GAs.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 200.]

***Item 03-09. On Amending Standing Rule K.1.b. Regarding Special Committees.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 202.]

***Item 03-10. On Amending the Standing Rules Regarding GA Timelines.**

That the recommendation is referred to the Biennial Review Committee (see committee action on Item 03-18). [See p. 202.]

***Item 03-11. On Adding Standing Rule F.5.h. Regarding Timing of Committee Reports.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 204.]

***Item 03-12. On Amending Standing Rule E.2.e.–g. Regarding Privilege of the Floor.**

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 205.]

1. Amend proposed changes to E.2.e.(4) as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.] And retain paragraph (g) as amended.

~~“(4) Overture advocates and signers of commissioners’ resolutions (see below in this standing rule) who [shall be entitled to] speak [address the background and intent of an overture or resolution when the overture or resolution or response to the referral of an overture is first considered by the committee and may be asked to provide additional information to the committee to correct misunderstandings or to clarify]; and then shall have the same privilege of the floor as other persons with special expertise listed in Standing Rule E.2.e.(3) above;~~

2. Retain paragraph g as amended: [Original recommendation asked to have the section deleted. Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline; text deleted in original recommendation and retained in the assembly committee action is shown in brackets and with a gray screen background.]

“[Responsibilities of Overture Advocate

~~“[g. Overture advocates who have been designated by their presbytery or synod to speak to the response from a General Assembly entity to a referral of an overture shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by the assembly committee considering the response. The overture advocate shall be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture] immediately after the motion is made and seconded, placing the response to the referral of the overture on the floor of the committee or subcommittee, or immediately after any motion that might logically be expected to affect the response is moved and seconded, and during debate of such motions to correct misunderstandings or to clarify. [or as asked for clarification by the committee concerning the original intent of the overture].~~

***Item 03-13. On Amending Standing Rule B.2. and D.1.g. Regarding Floor Access and TSAD and YAAD Deadlines.**

1. That recommendation 1. is approved. [See p. 207.]

2. That recommendation 2. is approved. [See p. 207.]

3. That recommendation 3. is approved. [See p. 207.]

***Item 03-14. On Amending SR K.1.c., Commission and Special Committees.**

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 208.]

***Item 03-15. On Amending IV.C.1. of the Organization for Mission to Correct and Clarify.**

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 209.]

***Item 03-16. Amend IV.C.7. of the *Organization for Mission* Regarding the Committee on Ecumenical Relations.**

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 209.]

Amend paragraphs 7.d.(12) and (14) as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“(12) Select three religious traditions to be invited to send representatives to the General Assembly as inter-faith [representatives] [observers](see Standing Rule B.2. [5]f.);~~

~~“(13) (14) Give guidance to General Assembly agencies on new opportunities to strengthen the relationships with other faith communities and on strategies for fulfilling the General Assembly mandates on [interfaith] [interreligious] relationships;~~

***Item 03-18. On Expanding the Scope of the Review of Biennial Assemblies.**

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 215.]

Amend Item 03-18 with the addition of the following after the paragraph beginning “In appointing the members of the special task group or committee...” [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[Five additional persons will be added to the Review Committee as outlined in the 2002 action, three of whom will be commissioners or advisory delegates from the 219th General Assembly (2010) under the age of 40, and two from the church at large.]”

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$17,720; 2011: \$26,705; 2012: \$8,735 (Per Capita-OGA)]

*Item 03-19. On Accountability for Presbyterian Organizations at General Assembly Sponsored Meetings and Events.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 217.]

*Item 03-21. A Resolution to Adapt the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR).

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 220.]

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

“Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to incorporate into the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR) specifically by name the categories of [African,] African American, Black, and Middle Eastern.”

*Item 03-22. Election of Associate Stated Clerks.

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 221.]

*Item 03-23. Election of Persons to the Board of the Presbyterian Historical Society.

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 222.]

*Item 03-24. On Amending the “Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies”.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 222.]

1. Amend, under the section “The Role of the Committee”: [Text committee recommends to be added by or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The General Assembly Nominating Committee will nominate to *each meeting of* the General Assembly for election *two* a committees and its moderators *for each committee* to review the work of one of the agencies of the General Assembly based on a six-year schedule. The *agency* review committee’s responsibility is to provide an objective report to the General Assembly as to the *agency’s* agencies’ compliance to the standards of review and the quality and acceptability of the agencies’ self-study. The *agency review* committee may provide advice on areas of program improvement. The *agency review* committee’s role will be to examine the agencies’ *agency’s* church relations, its policies and practice, *history of collaboration with other agencies*, and its program effectiveness], and to consult with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding representation of employees. The *agency review* committee will review the agencies’ *agency’s* self-study report and other documents. [The rest of the paragraph remains the same.]

2. Amend, under “Standards,” Section B.3., the following: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“3. The agency exhibits full compliance with all appropriate external regulatory and accrediting agencies [2 including consultation and review with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding principles of participation and representation in the employment of personnel, and conformity with ‘A Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action’ or subsequent guidelines].”

*Item 03-25. Per Capita Budget.

1. That Recommendation 1 is approved. [See p. 225.]

2. That Recommendation 2 is approved with amendment. (See pp. 225–26.)

3. That Recommendation 3 is approved with amendment. [See p. 226.]

4. That recommendation 4 is approved. [See p. 226.]

***Item 03-26. Sexual Misconduct Policy.**

That the recommendation is approved with amendment and with comment. [See p. 227.]

Amendment:

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

“2. ~~[Strongly] [U] [u]rge all [employees] [employers] of governing bodies and related entities to update or establish policies, procedures, and practices related to sexual misconduct using the guidelines set out in the following Sexual Misconduct Manual, published by the Office of the General Assembly.”~~

2. Add a new Recommendation 3 to read as follows:

“[3. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

“[Insert a new paragraph G-9.0404e to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[‘e. All governing bodies shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy.’]”

Comment: The General Assembly strongly recommends that prior to vote on this amendment, presbyteries take time to educate the presbytery on the reasons for and value of a sexual misconduct policy. Resources are available on the PC(USA) Web site.

***Item 03-27. Invitation for next GA.**

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 239.]

***Item 03-28. Regarding Per Capita.**

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 240.]

***Item 03-29. Changes to the Session Annual Statistical Report.**

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 241.]

***Item 03-31. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Ministries Honored at General Assemblies.**

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 244.]

[Item 03-01 became Item 05-28]

Item 03-02. On Amending Standing Rule H.2.b.(4) Regarding Provisions for the Election of the Stated Clerk.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 191.]

Item 03-04. On Amending G-13.0102b Concerning the Number of General Assembly Commissioners.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 194.]

Item 03-08. On Amending Standing Rule C.4.a. to Give Priority to Controversial Items.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 201.]

Item 03-17. On Establishing an Annual General Convocation Meeting and Moving Meetings of the General Assembly to Every Six Years.

That Recommendation 1. On Establishing an Annual General Convocation Meeting, is referred to the General Assembly Mission Council for future consideration. [See p. 211.]

That Recommendation 2. On Moving Meetings of the General Assembly, is referred to the Biennial Review Committee. [See p. 211.]

Item 03-20. On Young Adult Advisory Delegate Participation.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 218.]

Item 03-30. Commissioners' Resolution. On Theological Diversity General Assembly Nominations.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 241.]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

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

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

That the minutes are approved.

Item 03-B. Minutes, Presbyterian Historical Society.

That the minutes are approved.

FINAL REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Moderator Bolbach called on Julia Henderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, to continue the report. [For the first part of the report, see pp. 18, 71.]

Henderson reported that the total financial implications to the mission budget of actions approved to date by the assembly were \$52,087 for 2010; \$295,861 for 2011; and \$207,683 for 2012. Upon the recommendation of the General Assembly Mission Council, the Mission Coordination Committee now recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the 2011 General Assembly Mission Budget and Program in the total amount of \$82,097,234 and the 2012 General Assembly Mission Budget and Program in the total amount of \$80,550,613.

[The charts that are found in Budget Charts A-2.pdf under "Additional Resources" show the 2011 and 2012 General Assembly Mission Budget and Program. See pp. 710–13.]

The Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination further recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the General Assembly Mission Council to make the adjustments necessary to incorporate into the General Assembly Mission budgets for 2010, 2011 and 2012 the items with financial implications that have been approved by the 219th General Assembly. The necessary adjustments may include identifying additional sources of revenue, redirecting existing budget, or a combination of both.

The assembly rejected a motion to rescind its previous action on Item 11-03 and rejected a motion to reconsider its previous action on Item 11-03.

The assembly approved Item 09-21 as amended.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and the committee report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination

[There are recommendations contained in this report that were moved as part of a consent agenda. Such items are marked with an asterisk ("*"). There are recommendations contained in this report that have financial implications and are indicated with a "\$" sign next to the item.]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

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

Item 09-A. Audit.

That the audit is received. [For a copy of the audit, see p. 1495.]

Item 09-B. Minutes, GAMC.

That the minutes are approved with comment.

Comment: General Assembly Mission Council Minutes: Pages are not numbered; blank spaces aren't crossed out consistently; on May 6, 2008 meeting, GAC and GAMC were used inconsistently; no indication was made about absences—unclear whether that meant no one was absent; December 3, 2008 "Appendix" was labeled "Attachment." April 23, 2008, under action 12, the MRTI was not defined. GAMC Executive Committee Minutes: never note whether a quorum was present; no mention of members present, absent, or excused: were there no persons absent or excused?; a little hard to determine when previous minutes were approved.

Item 09-C. Minutes, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corp.

That the minutes are approved with comment.

Comment: No page numbers. Members absent or excused were not noted (were there none?) Blank spaces aren't crossed out consistently.

I. For Plenary Action

***Item 09-12. Communications and Funds Development Recommendation for Approval of Revised Criteria and Guidelines for Special Offerings.**

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 674.]

***Item 09-13. Approve the Update on the Mandate of the Presbyterian Self-Development of People.**

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 675.]

***Item 09-14. Covenant Between Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA), Inc. and the GAMC of the PC(USA).**

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 677.]

***Item 09-21. Budgetary and Financial Concerns—Mission Budget.**

1. That Recommendation A.1. is approved. [See p. 693.]

2. That Recommendation B. is approved. [See p. 694.]

3. That Recommendation C.1. is approved. [See p. 695.]

4. That Recommendation C.2. is approved. [See p. 695.]

[Item 09-01 became Item 13-11.]

Item 09-02. On Considering That All Undesignated Funds from the Foundation to the GA Level Be Allocated Directly to Individual Presbyteries.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 651.]

Item 09-03. On Amending the Process for Forming Social Witness Policy Approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993).

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 651.]

Item 09-04. On Support of Missionary Funding.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 654.]

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

~~[The Presbytery of Shenango overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to]~~ [That the 219th General Assembly (2010)] instruct the General Assembly Mission Council to continue to make missionary support among the highest priorities in the 2011 and 2012 budgets ~~[to the end that the long-awaited reversal in the numbers of mission personnel may be sustained]~~ [in order to sustain the long-awaited reversal in the numbers of mission personnel, the 219th General Assembly (2010) invites each presbytery to participate in sharing the costs of one mission co-worker during 2011 and 2012].

Item 09-05. On Amending the Manual of the GAMC to Require Certain GAMC Staff to Actively Participate in the Work/Worship of a Congregation.

That the recommendation is disapproved. [See p. 656.]

\$Item 09-06. On Reestablishing an Office of Collegiate Ministries as a Vital Part of Ministry and Mission.

That the recommendation is approved. [See p. 658.]

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$68,391; 2012: \$70,168 (GAMC)]

\$Item 09-07. On Affirming the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 660.]

1. Amend Recommendation 2 as follows: [Text added by plenary is shown with brackets, with underline, and with a gray screen background.]

“2. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to develop and apply a funding strategy for the continuing life of PHEWA before the end of the fiscal year 2012 so that it may continue to implement GA-mandated ministries as an entity of networks and report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) the results]; and”

2. Strike the current text of Recommendation 3 and insert new text as follows as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text added by plenary is shown with brackets, with underline, and with a gray screen background.]

~~“3. Direct that an impact study be conducted before the next General Assembly, in 2012, to ascertain whether the GAMC termination strategy (due to lack of funding) has had a disproportionate impact on programs and structures within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that served the value of justice; and if so a method of remediation be designed, and that such study be reported in full to the commissioners of the 220th General Assembly (2012) for their consideration, recommendation, and action.”~~ “That an extra commitment opportunity fund account be earmarked to provide salary and support for the position of executive director of PHEWA as described in the historic covenant of shared ministry partnership agreement that outlines our collaborative ministry.””

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$50,000; 2011: \$25,000; 2012: \$25,000 (GAMC)]

Item 09-08. On Supporting Mission and Ministry in North Korea.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 662.]

Amend the recommendation with the following changes: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

~~“4. Affirm the work of the Lighthouse Foundation, which was established in 2004 by U.S. Presbyterian mission personnel, including PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker Sue Kinsler, to spread God’s love to the impoverished and suffering in North Korea and other nations.~~

~~“5. Instruct the GAMC, in its strategy to minister to the vulnerable population in North Korea, to continue its cooperation with the Lighthouse Foundation, whose programs of providing food for orphans and others at risk from hunger and providing rehabilitative services to persons with disabilities have proven remarkably successful in what is considered a “closed” country, and through whom the PC(USA) contributed emergency food aid in 2008.~~

~~“6. Commend Sue Kinsler as she continues ministry in North Korea through the Lighthouse Foundation. Sue has provided visionary leadership and been the primary force for ministry through the Lighthouse Foundation. In this ministry, she has earned a special trust and privilege in North Korea, making her one of the most effective agents for God’s work in this mission field.~~

~~“7. Support the Lighthouse Foundation by setting a goal of raising \$150,000, outside of the budget, to match the \$150,000 being provided by Pyongyang Presbytery (Presbyterian Church of Korea), which has an international partnership with the Presbytery of Cayuga Syracuse. This would be done by appropriately appealing to congregations, presbyteries, synods, and entities such as the Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Medical Benevolence Foundation, and Presbyterian Women.~~

~~“[8.] [4.]~~ Inform the PC(USA)’s national and global ecumenical partners of this action and encourage them, and PC(USA) congregations and entities, to participate in praying for, raising awareness of, and contributing funds ~~[for this ministry]~~ to feed the hungry and bring hope to the disabled in this reclusive country.”

Item 09-09. On Reinstating “Criminal Justice Sunday” in the PC(USA) Calendar, and Establishing an Office of Criminal Justice Issues.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. [See p. 666.]

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

“1. Reinstates Criminal Justice Sunday (~~is second~~) [a] Sunday ~~[of]~~ [in] February) in the *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Planning Calendar*, and within all calendar and schedule instruments.”

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$4,773; 2012: \$4,773 (GAMC)]

~~“[2. Create an Office of Criminal Justice Issues, informed by the example of the Office of Immigration Issues—in its education and networking function, and located in the appropriate mission area, e.g. Compassion, Peace, and Justice. This office is to be staffed by at least one full-time staff person. The responsibilities of this office would be to:~~

~~“[a. Educate members of our churches and presbyteries concerning the criminal justice crisis in the United States—the U.S. incarcerates a larger percentage of its population than any other country in the world, and incarcerated individuals come from disproportionately large percentages of communities of color. Content of this education would include (but not be limited to):~~

~~“[~~a~~—current trends in criminal justice in the United States: patterns of incarceration, sentencing, probation, and parole; the role of race in the exercise of criminal justice policies in the United States; the role of for-profit prisons in the formation of criminal justice policies in the United States;~~

~~“[~~a~~—models for ministry to currently and formerly incarcerated people—including those ministries oriented towards helping formerly incarcerated people find sufficient support and resources for life after incarceration such that they do not return to prison;~~

~~“[~~a~~—policy engagement in areas that impact the lives of people living in prison, and those who have come home—at the federal, state, county, and local levels—such as those related to judicial discretion, alternatives to incarceration, parole reform, and housing and employment policies that apply to formerly incarcerated people.~~

~~“[b. Educate members of our churches and presbyteries concerning Presbyterian positions—dating back to 1959—on various aspects of criminal justice, including restorative justice, particularly as outlined in the paper, *Resolution on Restorative Justice*, passed by the 214th General Assembly (2002); in the *Resolution on the Abolition of For-Profit Prisons*—approving the *Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Prisons*, passed by the 217th General Assembly (2006); and in repeated resolutions in opposition to the death penalty, summarized in *On Seeking an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions in All Jurisdictions That Impose Capital Punishment*, approved by the 212th General Assembly (2002).~~

~~“[c. Link synods, presbyteries, and churches to ecumenical and civil society organizations that are working on criminal justice issues, services, and policies, in a manner that reflects the values of restorative justice as outlined in the *Resolution on Restorative Justice* passed by the 214th General Assembly (2002).~~

~~“[3. Formulate an initial funding strategy for the Office of Criminal Justice Issues with consultation from all appropriate parties within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as identified by the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). While the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has faced financial difficulties and these seem likely to continue, the incarceration crisis in the United States must prey upon our conscience, our hearts, and our spirits—as it has for many years, as visible in the many criminal justice resolutions passed since before reunion. If need be, after two or more years of initial funding, this office may be required to raise its own budget: through use of designated giving; appeals to synods, presbyteries, churches, and individuals; and through foundations.]”~~

Item 09-New Bus. Convocation on Criminal Justice.

That the following recommendation is approved. [See p. 705.]

That the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provide up to \$10,000 in 2011 to support a broad convocation of interested individuals, to be called by PHEWA, to consider and propose the creation of a Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) network on criminal justice for education and advocacy ministries to the 220th General Assembly (2012) and recommend a funding strategy.

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$10,000; 2012: \$0 (GAMC)]

Item 09-10. Confirm the Election of Linda B. Valentine.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 670.)

Item 09-11. Mission Partnership Funds to End December 31, 2013.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 671.)

Item 09-15. On a Task Force to Review Mission Funding.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 679.)

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

~~“[The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to appoint a task force of nine to review mission funding and the development of new ways to raise and sustain for the mission of the whole church.~~

~~“[The task force shall consist of the following:~~

~~“[~~Three persons from the racial ethnic and emerging communities and networks;~~~~

~~“[~~Two persons from the stewardship/mission funding programs in presbyteries;~~~~

~~“[~~One person from a synod stewardship/mission funding program;~~~~

~~“[~~One person from the 219th General Assembly (2010) Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination;~~~~

~~“[~~Two persons at large.~~~~

~~“[This task force would be staffed by one (1) person from the Mission Funding area of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).]~~

“[Advise GAMC and the Presbyterian Foundation to consult with ACREC and its constituencies to develop new ways to raise and sustain mission funding.]”

Item 09-16. Extension of Time Regarding Renaming ACREC.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 681.)

Amend Recommendations 2 and 3 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“[2. Enable ACREC to form a special study group of five people that includes ACREC member(s), a theologian, and a sociologist who have a deep understanding on racial, cultural, ethnic, and growing diverse demographic issues in the United States and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).]~~

~~“[~~3.] [2.] Request that ACREC bring a report [on the study] and recommendation of a new name of ACREC to the 220th General Assembly (2012).”~~~~

\$Item 09-17. That Unused Funds Designated for the Status of Women Task Force Be Re-designated.

That the recommendation is approved. (See p. 682.)

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$19,345; 2012: \$0 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Item 09-18. WITHDRAWN-5/11/10

Item 09-19. Report of the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee.

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See pp. 682–83.)

Amend the recommendation by deleting Recommendation 4 as follows, and renumbering Recommendations 5–9 to 4–8: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

~~“[4. Direct the GAMC to amend its policy on closed meetings (GAMC Manual of Operations, Appendix 1) to provide that corresponding members to the GAMC from the advisory and advocacy committees be included in all closed sessions of the GAMC with the understanding that they are bound by confidentiality.]”~~

\$Item 09-20. On Supporting Young Adults in Mission and Leadership Development in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

That the recommendation is approved with amendment. (See p. 691.)

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

“The Presbytery de Cristo overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the General Assembly Mission Council to provide budgetary support in the amount of [\$100,000 (\$50,000 for 2011 and \$50,000 for 2012) for scholarships for] [\$10,000 for each] Young Adult Volunteer[s], above and beyond currently budgeted support for the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program, for the costs of their service internationally and nationally through the Young Adult Volunteer Program (YAV) of the World Mission Office. These funds would help cover the cost of living expenses for [each] YAVs, which include housing and utilities, health insurance, and stipends for food and local transportation. (YAVs would continue to raise support for their year of service at a lesser, more attainable amount.)

~~“[This request for funds is for up to 100 volunteers per year, not to exceed \$1,000,000 total per YAV calendar term (August-August). The GAMC should review and evaluate this funding mandate every second General Assembly year (every fourth year).~~

“[Site coordinators should be treated as mission coworkers and GAMC should invite presbyteries to financially support them.]”

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$50,000; 2012: \$50,000 (GAMC)]

Item 09-21. Budgetary and Financial Concerns—Mission Budget [as reported on Saturday, July 10, 2010].

That Recommendation A.2. is approved with amendment. [See p. 693.]

EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Moderator Bolbach recognized young adult advisory delegates from the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, to offer the appreciation of the assembly to the Committee on Local Arrangements.

Moderator Bolbach recognized Assistant Stated Clerks Deborah Davies and Kerry Rice to make a presentation to the Committee on Local Arrangements from the Presbyteries of the Twin Cities Area, Northern Waters, and Minnesota Valleys, and the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF PITTSBURGH COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Moderator Bolbach introduced a video welcoming the church to Pittsburgh, host city for the 220th General Assembly (2012).

THANKS TO STAFF

Moderator Bolbach called upon Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons for a moment of personal privilege, in which he expressed his appreciation to OGA staff, volunteers, vendor staff, elected members and staff of other General Assembly agencies, student assistants, and others.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Bolbach called upon Stated Clerk Parsons for announcements on various topics.

CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator Bolbach called upon Leslieanne Braunstein, minister member of the Presbytery of National Capital, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT

The assembly was adjourned at 10:15 a.m., to be dissolved upon the convening of the 220th General Assembly (2012) on June 30, 2012, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

SECTION TWO

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

Item 00-01

[The assembly approved Item 00-01 with amendment. See pp. 27, 50.]

General Assembly Nominating Committee 2010 Nominations

The General Assembly Nominating Committee recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) elect the following nominees:

Key for the General Assembly Nominating Committee Report

Mariana Pardo (D) (YA) HFE 26-35 Milwaukee LAK AL NEW
 ③ ④ ② ① ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨

means

Mariana Pardo (person living with a disability) (Young Adult) Hispanic/Latina, Female, Elder, 26-35 years old, Milwaukee Presbytery, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, At-large position, New (first term) nomination.

Key:

① Gender and Ordination designation:

FC—Female Minister of the Word and Sacrament
 FE—Female Elder
 FL—Female Church Member
 MC—Male Minister of the Word and Sacrament
 ME—Male Elder
 ML—Male Church Member

② Racial/Ethnic designation:

A—Asian American
 B—African American/Black
 H—Hispanic/Latina/Latino
 M—Middle Eastern
 N—Native American
 O—Other
 W—Caucasian

Combination of letter codes may be used when applicant indicates more than one racial/ethnic category (bi-racial or multi-racial) i.e. B/N = African American and Native American.

③ Person living with disability designation:

D—Disability (persons with self-identified disability)

④ Youth/Young Adult designation:

Y—Youth (GA Committee on Representation; 25 years and younger when nominated)
 YA—Young Adult (35 years and younger when nominated)

⑤ Age Range:

25- (25 years old and younger); 26-35 years old; 36-45 years old; 46-55 years old; 56-65 years old; and 65+ (66 years old and older)

⑥ Presbytery

⑦ Synod:

ANW—Alaska Northwest; BPR—Borinquen en Puerto Rico | Puerto Rico; COV—Covenant; LAK—Lakes and Prairies; LIN—Lincoln Trails; LW—Living Waters; MAM—Mid-America; MAT—Mid-Atlantic; NE—Northeast; PAC—Pacific; ROC—Rocky Mountains; SA—South Atlantic; SCH—Southern California and Hawaii; SUN—Sun; SW—Southwest; TRI—Trinity

⑧ Membership:

ACE=Associate Pastor of Christian Education
 AL =At-Large
 COGA=Committee on the Office of the General Assembly
 DCE=Director of Christian Education
 FND=Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation
 GAMC=General Assembly Mission Council
 HC =Hispanic/Latina/Latino Caucus
 NA =Native American At-Large
 NC =Native American Caucus
 P =Presbytery
 PTI =Presbyterian Theological Institution
 S =Synod
 WCL =Woman Church Lay Employee

⑨ Nomination Category:

NEW =New Nomination
 REC=Re-classified
 REN=Re-nominated
 † =Appointed by General Assembly Moderator*

[*Any vacancy in a position for which the General Assembly Nominating Committee makes nominations may be filled until the next succeeding General Assembly by appointment of the Moderator of the General Assembly upon advice by the nominating committee that the committee has decided to present the name of the appointee to the next session of the General Assembly as its nominee for the position.” (*Manual of the General Assembly*, 2010, *Organization for Mission*, p. 12, IV.C.1.H.)]

A. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

GANC Nomination—Class of 2016

1.	Stewart Pollock	WMC	46–55	Pittsburgh	TRI	AL	REN
2.	Therese Howell	WFE	46–55	Middle Tennessee	LW	AL	NEW
3.	Linda Therien	WFE	56–65	San Diego	SCH	AL	NEW

B. Advisory Committee on Litigation

GANC Nomination—Class of 2012

1.	Matthew R. Hall	WML	36–45	St. Andrews	LW	AL	NEW †
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2016

2.	William Reid Dalton	WMC	46–55	Salem	MAT	AL	REN
3.	Timothy T. Read	WMC	46–55	Greater Atlanta	SA	AL	REN

C. Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

GANC Nomination – Class of 2012

1.	David Cortes-Fuentes	HMC	46–55	San Gabriel	SCH	AL	NEW †
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GANC Nomination – Class of 2014

2.	Gloria Albrecht	WFC	56–65	Detroit	COV	AL	REN
3.	Craig Howard	BMC	46–55	John Knox	LAK	AL	NEW
4.	Kathryn Poethig	WFL	46–55	New York City	NE	AL	NEW
5.	Raafat Zaki	MMC	36–45	Grace	SUN	AL	NEW
6.	Arthur Canada	BMC	56–65	Charlotte	MAT	GAMC	NEW
7.	Roger J. Gench	WMC	46–55	National Capital	MAT	GAMC	NEW

D. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns

GANC Nomination—Class of 2012

1.	Debbie Battiste-Kleinman	NFE	46–55	New Covenant	SUN	NA	NEW
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

2.	Noushin Framke	MFE	36–45	Newark	NE	AL	REN
3.	Buddy D. Monahan	NMC	36–45	Santa Fe	SW	NC	REN
4.	Patricia Morse	BFL	46–55	National Capital	MAT	AL	REN
5.	Paul Hoang	AMC	26–35	New Covenant	SUN	AL	NEW
6.	Carmen M. Rosario	HFC	56–65	New York City	NE	HC	NEW

E. Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns**GANC Nomination – Class of 2014**

1.	Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty	WFC	36–45	Mid-Kentucky	LW	AL	REN
2.	Belinda Rice	BFE	46–55	Charlotte	MAT	WCL	REN
3.	Barbara Adams-Smelter	BFE	56–65	Philadelphia	TRI	AL	NEW
4.	Samuel Chung	AMO	36–45	The Pacific	SCH	AL	NEW
5.	Joann Haejong Lee	AFC	26–35	Chicago	LIN	AL	NEW

F. Audit Committee**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Gordon Nielsen	WME	65+	Eastern Oklahoma	SUN	AL	REN
2.	Richard Allen Turpen	WME	56–65	Sheppards and Lapsley	LW	AL	NEW

G. Board of Pensions**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Michael Neal	WML	56–65	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM	AL	REN
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

2.	Brian Ellison	WMC	26–35	Heartland	MAM	AL	REN
3.	Samuel D. Kim	AMC	56–65	Eastern Korean	NE	AL	REN
4.	Claude Lilly	WML	56–65	Foothills	SA	AL	REN
5.	Thomas Paisley, Jr.	WME	56–65	Lehigh	TRI	AL	REC
6.	Carol Sheffey Parham	BFL	56–65	Baltimore	MAT	AL	REN
7.	Stephen Proctor	WME	46–55	Carlisle	TRI	AL	REN
8.	Paul Volker	WME	46–55	North Central Iowa	LAK	AL	REN
9.	Lawrence Wright	WME	56–65	New Covenant	SUN	AL	REN
10.	Jesse Butler	BME	65+	Heartland	MAM	AL	NEW
11.	Lindley DeGarmo	WMC	46–55	Baltimore	MAT	AL	NEW
12.	Bradley Fowler	WME	56–65	Seattle	ANW	AL	NEW
13.	John Hamm	WME	56–65	Grace	SUN	AL	NEW
14.	John A. Huffman	WMC	65+	Los Ranchos	SCH	AL	NEW
15.	Jacqueline Jenkins	WFE	46–55	Newark	NE	AL	NEW
16.	Peter Kalan	WMO	46–55	Denver	ROC	AL	NEW
17.	Angelica Michail	AFE	56–65	San Gabriel	SCH	AL	NEW

H. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**GANC Nomination – Class of 2012**

1.	Cynthia Bolbach	WFE	56–65	National Capital	MAT	GA Moderator	NEW
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GANC Nomination – Class of 2014

1.	Dennis Hughes	WMC	56–65	Seattle	ANW	AL	REN
2.	Jerrod Belton Lowry	BMC	26–35	New Hope	MAT	AL	REN
3.	Chris Rhodes	WME	46–55	Redwoods	PAC	AL	REN
4.	John Wilkinson	WMC	36–45	Genesee Valley	NE	AL	REN
5.	Carol McDonald	WFC	56–65	Wabash Valley	LIN	AL	NEW
6.	Marcia Mount Shoop	WFC	36–45	New Hope	MAT	AL	NEW
7.	Alejandra Spir-Haddad	H/MFE	46–55	Ohio Valley	LIN	AL	NEW

I. Committee on Theological Education**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Mindy Adams	WFC	36–45	Salem	MAT	AL	NEW†
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

2.	Alan Bancroft	WMC	26–35	Middle Tennessee	LW	AL	NEW
3.	Matthew Miles	WMC	26–35	Tres Rios	SUN	AL	NEW
4.	Mary Elva Smith	WFE	56–65	Mid-Kentucky	LW	AL	NEW
5.	Chandler Stokes	WMC	46–55	Lake Michigan	COV	AL	REN
6.	K. Nicholas Yoda	AMC	26–35	Cincinnati	COV	AL	REN

J. Educator Certification Council**GANC Nomination – Class of 2014**

1.	Debbie Hough	WFL	56–65	Carlisle	TRI	DCE	REN
2.	Craig Foster	WMC	26–35	Foothills	SA	ACE	NEW
3.	Donald Griggs	WMC	65+	San Francisco	PAC	AL	NEW
4.	Medora Hix	WFE	56–65	New Hope	MAT	AL	NEW

K. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations**GANC Nomination—Class of 2014**

1.	Scott Anderson	WME	46–55	John Knox	LAK	AL	REN
2.	Krystin Granberg	WFC	46–55	New York City	NE	AL	REN
3.	Damayanthi Niles	AFC	36–45	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM	AL	REN
4.	Judy Angleberger	WFC	65+	Beaver Butler	TRI	AL	NEW
5.	Gun Ho Lee	AMC	36–45	New Hope	MAT	AL	NEW
6.	Paul Rader	WMC	46–55	East Tennessee	LW	AL	NEW

L. General Assembly Committee on Representation**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Angela L. Battle	BFE	46–55	Western North Carolina	MAT	AL	NEW†
2.	Hector M. Rivera-Velez	HMC	46–55	Mission	SUN	AL	NEW

3.	Issa Sayar	MME	65+	Greater Atlanta	SA	AL	NEW
4.	Cliff Yang	AME	56–65	San Gabriel	SCH	AL	NEW

GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

5.	Deborah Fair	BFE	56–65	Detroit	COV	AL	REN
6.	Cindy Lou Ray (D)	WFE	56–65	Des Moines	LAK	AL	REN
7.	Amy Mendez	HFC	46–55	Denver	ROC	AL	NEW
8.	Martha Ross-Mockaitis (D)	WFC	46–55	Chicago	LIN	AL	NEW
9.	Heather Walchar	WFC	26–35	Heartland	MAM	AL	NEW
10.	Dora V. Martinez	HFE	65+	Santa Fe	SW	AL	NEW
11.	Patrick Nelson	WME	25-	Albany	NE	AL	NEW
12.	Kenneth Bartlett-Preston	BML	25-	San Francisco	PAC	AL	NEW

M. General Assembly Mission Council**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Philip L. Hougen	WMC	56–65	Evangelical Lutheran Church of America		Ecumenical Advisory	REN
2.	Michael Kinnamon	WMC	46–55	Christian Church Disciples of Christ		Ecumenical Advisory	REN

GANC Nomination – Class of 2014

3.	Cynthia Bolbach	WFE	56–65	National Capital	MAT	219 th GA Moderator	NEW
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2016

4.	Olanda Carr Jr.	BME	36–45	Charlotte	MAT	Commissioner/219th GA	NEW
5.	Heath K. Rada	WME	56–65	Western North Carolina	MAT	Commissioner/219th GA	NEW
6.	Rob Brink	WME	56–65	Sacramento	PAC	Synod Staff	NEW
7.	William W. Capel	WME	65+	Southeastern Illinois	LIN	Presbytery	NEW
8.	Dhyan Cassie	WFE	65+	West Jersey	NE	Presbytery	NEW
9.	Nancy Caudel	WFE	56–65	Foothills	SA	Presbytery	NEW
10.	Jan Dowlearn	WFE	46–55	Indian Nations	SUN	Presbytery	NEW
11.	Rachel Mihee Kim-Kort	AFC	26–35	Lehigh	TRI	Presbytery	NEW
12.	Kears Pollock	WME	65+	Pittsburgh	TRI	Presbytery	NEW
13.	Noelle Royer	WFE	26–35	The Pacific	SCH	Young Adult	NEW
14.	Glen Snider	WME	56–65	deCristo	ROC	Presbytery	NEW
15.	Connie M. Tubb	WFE	56–65	Grace	SUN	Presbytery Staff	NEW

Does not include Moderators and Ecumenical Advisors

N. General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Rebecca New	WFC	56–65	Southern Kansas	MAM	AL	NEW†
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

2.	Pending				BPR	AL	NEW†
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GANC Nomination – Class of 2016

3.	A. Bates Butler III	WME	56–65	deCristo	SW	AL	REN
4.	Barbara A. Bundick	WFC	46–55	Chicago	LIN	AL	NEW
5.	Jay Lewis	WMC	56–65	Pittsburgh	TRI	AL	NEW

6.	Jeana Lungwitz	WFE	36–45	Mission	SUN	AL	NEW
7.	Arnold Rots [Margaret (Peggy) MacLeod]	WME [WFE]	56–65 [65+]	Boston [Boston]	NE [NE]	AL	NEW

O. Mission Development Resources Committee

GANC Nomination—Class of 2012

1.	Robert D. Bidwell	WMC	56–65	Maumee Valley	COV	S	NEW†
2.	Jane L. Searjeant Watt	WFC	65+	Albany	NE	FND	NEW

GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

3.	Ellen Marquardt	WFC	56–65	Long Island	NE	AL	REN
4.	Valerie J. Putnam	WFC	56–65	South Dakota	LAK	S	REN
5.	Jack Schutte	WMC	65+	Riverside	SCH	AL	REN
6.	Wayne A. Steele	BMC	46–55	Mid-Kentucky	LW	S	REN
7.	Marcus Barber	WMC	56–65	Eastern Oklahoma	SUN	AL	NEW
8.	MaryAnn Farnsworth	WFC	46–55	Heartland	MAM	S	NEW

P. Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee

GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

1.	George Parks	WME	46–55	Abingdon	MAT	AL	NEW
2.	George Philips	AME	56–65	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM	AL	NEW

Class	Male Minister	Female Minister	Male Church Member	Female Church Member	Asian American	African American	Hispanic Latina Latino	Middle Eastern	Native American	Other	Caucasian	Disability	Young Adult
2012	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2014	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0

This chart only includes the 3 At-Large nominations

Q. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

GANC Nomination – Class of 2014

1.	Roscoe Overton	BME	65+	Mission	SUN	AL	REN
2.	Jane L. Searjeant Watt	WFC	65+	Albany	NE	AL	REN
3.	James Welch	WMC	36–45	Tampa Bay	SA	AL	REN
4.	Harry Bartel	WME	65+	Grace	SUN	AL	NEW
5.	Steven Bass	WME	56–65	Seattle	ANW	AL	NEW
6.	Robert Crist	WME	56–65	Seattle	ANW	AL	NEW
7.	Elizabeth Dunning	WFE	56–65	Utah	ROC	AL	NEW
8.	Marilee K. Hopkins	WFL	56–65	Chicago	LIN	AL	NEW
9.	Robert Olcott	WMC	36–45	National Capital	MAT	AL	NEW

R. Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People

GANC Nomination—Class of 2012

1.	Carolyn Ashe (D)	BFE	65+	Long Island	NE	P	NEW†
2.	Cynthia Hayes	BFO	46–55	Non-Presbyterian		AL	NEW†
3.	Johnetta Marshall	BFE	65+	Mid-Kentucky	LW	AL	NEW†
4.	Cathryn Surgenor	WFC	46–55	Hudson River	NE	AL	NEW†

GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

5.	Paul Bayerl	WMC	46–55	Cherokee	SA	AL	REN†
6.	Cornelius Blanding	BML	36–45	Non-Presbyterian		AL	REN
7.	Michael Fagans	WML	36–45	San Joaquin	PAC	AL	REN
8.	Susan Freed-Held (D)	NFE	56–65	Cascades	PAC	AL	REN
9.	Dianne Kareha	WFC	46–55	Lehigh	TRI	AL	REN
10.	Reginald Ragland	BME	36–45	Grand Canyon	SW	S	REN
11.	John Herndon	BMC	65+	North Alabama	LW	P	NEW
12.	Joseph Johnson	WMC	65+	South Alabama	LW	P	NEW
13.	Sister Teresa McElwee	NFO	65+	Non-Presbyterian		AL	NEW
14.	Carline Seide-Murphy	BFL	46–55	Albany	NE	AL	NEW
15.	Maria Williams	BFE	56–65	Long Island	NE	AL	NEW
16.	Sarah Jane Moore	WFE	56–65	Chicago	LIN	P	NEW
17.	Faye Chiou	AFL	36–45	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAN	AL	NEW
18.	Lisa Leverette	BFL	36–45	Detroit	COV	AL	NEW
19.	Johnnie Monroe	BMC	65+	Pittsburgh	TRI	AL	NEW

S. Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel**GANC Nomination—Class of 2014**

1.	Albert Hockaday	BMC	65+	Mission	SUN	AL	REN
2.	Sidney Leak (D)	WMC	46–55	South Alabama	LW	AL	NEW
3.	Jeffrey Mercer (D)	WMC	46–65	Heartland	MAM	AL	NEW
4.	Bill Nisbet	WMC	56–65	Greater Atlanta	SA	AL	NEW

T. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee**GANC Nomination – Class of 2012**

1.	Pete Berlowitz	WME	46–55	Baltimore	MAT	AL	NEW
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

2.	Max Messman	WML	46–55	Olympia	ANW	AL	REN
3.	James W. Pellot	WME	56–65	St. Augustine	SA	AL	REN
4.	Renato J. Suntay	AML	46–55	Chicago	LIN	AL	REN

U. Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Diane Waddell	WME	56–65	Heartland	MAM	AL	NEW †
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

2.	Harold Johnson	WME	65+	Grace	SUN	AL	REN
3.	Margaret Kennerly	WFE	56–65	Western North Carolina	MAT	AL	REN
4.	Janice Richardson	BFE	56–65	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM	AL	REN
5.	Lucy Janjigan	MFE	65+	Palisades	NE	AL	NEW
6.	Jeff Kackley	WMC	46–55	Peaks	MAT	AL	NEW

V. Presbyterian Men**GANC Nomination – Class of 2012**

1.	David Caves	WMC	56–65	Kiskiminetas	TRI	AL	REN
2.	George Goodman	BMC	65+	Peaks	MAT	AL	REN

W. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Board of Directors**GANC Nomination—Class of 2014**

1.	John M. Buchanan	WMC	65+	Chicago	LIN	AL	REN
2.	Valire Carr Copeland	BFL	46–55	Pittsburgh	TRI	AL	REN
3.	Laura S. Mendenhall	WFC	56–65	Mission	SUN	AL	REN
4.	Jesse G. Hite Jr.	WME	56–65	Charlotte	MAT	AL	NEW
5.	Olivia Hudson Smith	BFE	56–65	Denver	ROC	AL	NEW

X. Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee for Examination of Candidates**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Steven Ranney	WMC	46–55	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM	AL	NEW †
2.	Margaret Aymer Oget	BFC	36–45	Greater Atlanta	SA	PTI	NEW
3.	Paul Galbreath	WMC	46–55	The James	MAT	PTI	NEW

GANC Nomination—Class of 2014

4.	Moongil Cho	AMC	46–55	New Hope	MAT	AL	REN
5.	Margaret Gillespie	WFC	46–55	Northumberland	TRI	AL	REN †
6.	Kang Na	AMC	36–45	Shenango	TRI	PTI	REN
7.	Jane Roger Vann	WFE	56–65	The James	MAT	AL	REN†
8.	Cornell A. Edmonds	BMC	46–55	New York City	NE	AL	NEW
9.	Jose R. Irizarry	HMC	46–55	Suroeste	BPR	PTI	NEW

Y. Review Committee on the Presbyterian Investment and Loan, Inc.**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	B. Jack Miller	WML	56–65	Southern New Eng-land	NE	Agency	NEW
2.	Martha P. Farmer	WFE	65+	Transylvania	LW	Agency	NEW
3.	Judy D. Lussie (D)	AFE	65+	San Francisco	PAC	Agency	NEW
4.	Cathy Ulrich	WFC	46–55	Arkansas	SUN	Agency	NEW
5.	Clemente H. Anzaldúa	HME	56–65	Mission	SUN	At-Large	NEW
6.	Gregory C. Gibson	WMC	56–65	Miami	COV	At-Large	NEW
7.	Gregory B. McLean	WME	46–55	Utica	NE	At-Large	NEW
8.	Efrain Rivera Vega	HFE	56–65	San Juan	BPR	At-Large	NEW
9.	Barbara Campbell-Davis, Moderator	BFE	56–65	New Hope	MAT	Commissioner	NEW
10.	Spencer C. Lawrence	WMC	65+	Blackhawk	LIN	Commissioner	NEW
11.	Chuck Sparks	WME	56–65	Denver	ROC	Commissioner	NEW
12.	Wayland Wong	AMC	65+	Los Ranchos	SCH	Commissioner	NEW

Z. Review Committee on the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Karen E. Dimon	WFC	46–55	Cayuga-Syracuse	NE	Agency	NEW
2.	Allison K. Seed	WFC	46–55	Heartland	MAM	Agency	NEW
3.	David Olson	WME	56–65	South Dakota	LAK	Agency	NEW
4.						Agency	NEW
5.	Jose Luis Casal	HMC	56–65	Tres Rios	SUN	At-Large	NEW
6.	David H. Hintz	WME	56–65	Heartland	MAM	At-Large	NEW
7.	Rodger Y. Nishioka	AME	46–55	Greater Atlanta	SA	At-Large	NEW
8.	Marvin L. Roloff	WMC	65+	Ecumenical		At-Large	NEW
9.	Melva Wilson Costen	BFE	65+	Greater Atlanta	SA	Commissioner	NEW
10.	Mary Gene Boteler, Moderator	WFC	46–55	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM	Commissioner	NEW
11.	Ernest E. Ettlich	WME	65+	Cascades	PAC	Commissioner	NEW
12.	Carolyn K. Heyward	BFC	56–65	Charleston-Atlantic	SA	Commissioner	NEW

AA. Stated Clerk Nomination Committee**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Melissa Kirkpatrick	WFE	56–65	National Capital	MAT	Elder Commissioner	AL	NEW
2.	Reid Beveridge	WME	65+	New Castle	MAT	Elder Commissioner	AL	NEW
3.	Judith Wellington	NFC	36–45	Santa Fe	SW	Minister Commissioner	AL	NEW
4.	Dan Krebill	WMC	46–55	Yellowstone	ROC	Minister Commissioner	AL	NEW
5.	Terry Epling	WMC	46–55	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM	MGB Stated Clerk	AL	NEW
6.	Dennis Hughes, Moderator	WMC	56–65	Seattle	ANW		COGA	NEW
7.	Eileen Lindner	WFC	46–55	Palisades	NE		COGA	NEW
8.	Vincent A. Thomas	BME	46–55	Twin Cities	LAK		COGA	NEW
9.	Matthew Schramm	WMC	26–35	Lake Huron	COV		GAMC	NEW

BB. Stewardship Committee**GANC Nomination—Class of 2012**

1.	Jack D. Shelver	WME	65+	San Diego	SCH	AL	REN
2.	Rebecca Cook	WFE	46–55	deCristo	SW	AL	NEW

Item 00-02

[The assembly approved Item 00-02. See p. 2.]

Proposed Committee Structure—From the Office of the General Assembly.

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following assembly committee structure [a brief list of the business to be referred to that committee follows the committee title]:

01 BUSINESS REFERRALS:

The moderators and vice moderators of the assembly committees, as a group, shall function as the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall function as the moderator and vice moderator of this committee as well. This committee shall report to the assembly for its action at the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

02 BILLS AND OVERTURES:

Docket of the assembly and referrals of business to assembly committees after commencement of General Assembly (Standing Rules C.4. b.); appeal of persons denied the right to speak at a public hearing (Standing Rule E.5.b.); review requests for distribution of material to commissioners (Standing Rule E.6.c.); review requests from agencies to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings during assembly meeting (Standing Rule E.6.d.); recommend approval of time limits on debate (Standing Rule F.1.b.); review and recommend approval of General Assembly Minutes (Standing Rule F.1.c.); requests for presentations to the assembly (Standing Rule F.1.d.); review protests, determine if entered in the Minutes, prepare response if needed (Standing Rule F.1.e.); report on assembly committee requests for establishment of special committees or commissions (Standing Rule K.1.a.–b.).

03 GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES:

Consider matters related to: meetings of the assembly; per capita budget; Standing Rule amendments; operation of the Office of the General Assembly; statistics; publishing of reports; General Assembly Nominating Committee process; special committees; commissioners and advisory delegates credentials/leaves of absence.

04 MIDDLE GOVERNING BODY ISSUES:

Consider matters related to: amendments to Chapters IX–XII of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; MGB boundaries; MGB-related referrals.

05 CHURCH POLITY:

Consider matters related to: amendments to Chapters I, III–V, VII–VIII, XII–XIV, XVI–XVIII of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; amendments to the Rules of Discipline with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice. Advisory Committee on Litigation.

06 CHURCH ORDERS AND MINISTRY:

Consider matters related to: Amendments to Chapter VI of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; recruiting, enlistment of persons to service of church. Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

07 FORM OF GOVERNMENT REVISION:

Consider matters related to: The report of the General Assembly Task Force on the revision of the Form of Government.

08 ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS:

Consider matters related to: amendments to Chapter XV of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; matters dealing with relationships with, and attitudes toward, other religious movements or bodies including papers on Christian/Jewish and Christian/Muslim relations; conversations with other Presbyterian denominations; nominations for ecumenical advisory delegates; nominations for delegations to corresponding churches; reports of corresponding bodies.

09 MISSION COORDINATION:

Consider matters related to: Mission programs authorized by General Assembly; PC(USA) vision and mission goals; *Organization for Mission* and General Assembly Mission Council Manual of Operations; mission budget; audits; consult with Committee 10 Social Justice Issues A regarding the Fair Compensation Paper.

10 SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES—A: THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS:

Consider matters related to: Concerns of church in national affairs; national military matters; matters relating to righteousness and justice of persons/organizations. General Assembly Committee on Representation. Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns; consult with Committee 09 Mission Coordination regarding the Fair Compensation Paper.

11 SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES—B: THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD :

Consider matters related to: Concerns of church in national affairs; national military matters; matters relating to righteousness and justice of persons/organizations. General Assembly Committee on Representation. Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

12 CIVIL UNION AND MARRIAGE ISSUES

Consider matters related to: Report of the Civil Unions Task Force; amendments to the Form of Government, Rules of Discipline and Directory for Worship related to marriage and civil unions; referrals defining marriage.

13 PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Consider matters related to: Peacemaking, international military affairs, and the arms race except matters touched upon by the Middle East Special Committee; consult with the Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues; international matters; human rights; plight of refugees worldwide; international economic justice; global evangelism and education.

14 MIDDLE EAST PEACEMAKING ISSUES

Consider matters related to: Peacemaking, international military affairs and the arms race primarily involving the nations of the Middle East; consulting with the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues concerning the Middle East; the report of the Middle East Special Committee; MRTI recommendations concerning Middle East nations.

15 CHURCH GROWTH, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & PILP

Consider matters related to: Items concerning evangelism, outreach, and church growth as they relate to congregations and governing bodies of the church; higher education; matters relating to Christian education; church transfers; Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP).

16 THEOLOGICAL ISSUES AND INSTITUTIONS

Consider matters related to: Amendments to *The Book of Confessions*, the Directory for Worship and Chapter II of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; authority and interpretation of Scripture; theological institutions; celebration of Lord's Supper requests.

17 REVIEW OF GA PERMANENT COMMITTEES

Consider matters related to: Review of the work of the General Assembly Permanent, Advocacy, and Advisory Committees as Scheduled [2010: COTE, GANC, GACER, ACSWP] (See *Organization for Mission*, Section IV.D.2.).

18 BOARD OF PENSIONS, FDN, PPC

Consider matters related to: Report of Board of Pensions; business related to the church's pension, annuity, and medical plans; other forms of such programs, including government or private retirement programs; business related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation; report of the Special All Agency Review Committee.

19 HEALTH ISSUES

Consider matters related to: Health, managed care, disabilities, abortion.

Item 00-03

[The assembly approved Item 00-03. See p. 50.]

Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) Nominations for Members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008), places in nomination the following persons for election to the General Assembly Nominating Committee:

<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Diversity</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Synod of Residence</i>
<i>Class of 2016</i>			
Tully M. Fletcher (YA)	WMC	26–35	Synod of the Southwest
Jack Jenkins (YA)	WML	25–	Synod of the Northeast
Amy Kim Kyremes-Parks (YA)	H/NFL	26–35	Synod of Rocky Mountains
J. Evelyn Orr	WFL	36–45	Synod of Lakes and Prairies
Robert Riggs	WME	46–55	Synod of Mid-America

Rationale

The *Book of Order* (G-13.0111) mandates the following for the General Assembly Nominating Committee: "... The committee shall consist of members equal in number to the synods of the church, each member resident in a different synod, and members distributed so that there are one third ministers (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen. ... Within thirty days prior to the regular meeting of the General Assembly, the Moderator of the preceding General Assembly shall [nominate] persons for election by the General Assembly to fill the vacancies occurring at the adjournment of the ensuing General Assembly. ..."

There are five vacancies on the General Assembly Nominating Committee. This slate of nominees represents the greater diversity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as mandated by G- 4.0403 in the *Book of Order*.

If this slate is elected, the full membership of the General Assembly Nominating Committee will consist of 5 female church members, 5 male elders or church members, 6 ministers of the Word and Sacrament (2 female and 4 male).

The racial ethnic breakdown will be: 2 Asian Americans, 2 African Americans, 2 Hispanics/Latinas/Latinos, 1 Latina/Native American, 9 Caucasians.

One member of the General Assembly Nominating Committee is living with a disability.

Key to abbreviations:

H/NFL=Latina/Native American Female Church Member
WFL=Caucasian Female Church Member
WMC=Caucasian Male Minister of the Word and Sacrament
WME=Caucasian Male Elder
WML=Caucasian Male Church Member
YA=Young Adult

Item 01-01

[The assembly approved Item 01-01. See p. 2.]

Proposed Docket of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the proposed docket as follows:

**Proposed Docket
219th General Assembly (2010)
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Friday, July 2

1:00–9:00 p.m. Form of Government Revision Assembly Committee meets

Saturday, July 3:

8:30–12:00 Riverside Conversations: Preassembly Work-shops for Commissioners/Advisory Delegates

Lunch Break

1:30p.m. **219TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONVENES**

Worship

Commissioning Service

2:30 p.m. **BUSINESS MEETING 1**

- Stated Clerk’s Orientation
- Committee on Local Arrangements
- Moderator’s Report
- GAMC Report
- GANC Report
- Assembly Committee on Business Referrals

Announcements

Closing Prayer

Recess

5:30 p.m. Commissioner and Advisory Delegate Orientation to the Six Agencies
(in the Exhibit Hall with a Group Dinner)

7:00 p.m. Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 2

Moderator’s Election

Sunday, July 4:

10:00–Noon Opening Worship Service—Convention Center, Hall D

Noon Group Lunch

1:30 p.m. New Business Deadline

1:30–4:30 *Committee Meetings I*

5:00 p.m. Moderator’s Reception—Nicollet Island

Free Evening and July 4th Fireworks on Nicollet Island

Monday, July 5:

7:00 a.m. OGA Breakfast with Worship – Convention Center, Hall D. Speaker Phyllis Tickle

9:00 a.m. *Committee Meetings II*

Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. *Committee Meetings III*

Dinner Break

7:30 p.m. *Committee Meetings IV*

Tuesday, July 6:

8:30 a.m. Worship—Auditorium

9:30 a.m. *Committee Meetings V*

Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. *Committee Meetings VI*

Evening Committees meet as needed

(it is anticipated that all committees will be finished with business by 5:00 p.m.)

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

Wednesday, July 7:

8:30 a.m. Ecumenical Worship Service
Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. Opening Prayer
BUSINESS MEETING 3

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Stated Clerk's Orientation II
- Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements

5:30 p.m. Closing Prayer
Recess
Dinner Break

7:30 p.m. Opening Prayer
BUSINESS MEETING 4

- Speakouts
- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Confirmation of Linda Valentine, GAMC Executive Director
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess

Thursday, July 8

8:30 a.m. Worship—Auditorium

9:30 a.m. Opening Prayer
BUSINESS MEETING 5

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
- General Assembly Nominating Committee
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess

1:30 p.m. Lunch Break
Opening Prayer
BUSINESS MEETING 6

- Speakouts
- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements
Closing Prayer

6:00 p.m. Recess

7:30 p.m. Group Dinner
Opening Prayer
BUSINESS MEETING 7

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Confirmation of Tom Taylor, President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess

Friday, July 9:

8:30 a.m. Worship—Auditorium

9:30 a.m. Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 8

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
- GANC Report Continued
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements

Closing Prayer

Recess

Group Lunch

1:30 p.m.

Opening Prayer

1:30 p.m.

BUSINESS MEETING 9

- Speakout
- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements

Closing Prayer

Recess

Group Dinner

6:00 p.m.

Opening Prayer

7:30 p.m.

BUSINESS MEETING 10

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements

Closing Prayer

Recess

Saturday, July 10

9:00 a.m.

Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 11

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
- Introduction of Presbytery of Pittsburg Committee on Local Arrangements

Closing Worship in Plenary

11:00 a.m.

Item 01-02

[The assembly approved Item 01-02 as amended. See p. 2.]

I. REFERRALS IN PROGRESS**A. Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy**

1. *2008 Referral: Item 9-14. Report, Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform, Recommendation 2.c.5. Call on ACSWP and Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries-Presbyterian Women, in Consultation with ACREC, to Sponsor Regional Conferences on the Electoral Process and People of Color, Antiracism Issues and Systemic Discrimination—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 977–94).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

2. *2008 Referral: Item 09-15. Report, Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future, Recommendation 9. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Review the Provisions of "Building Community Among Strangers" and Other Policies Involving Urban Congregations and Populations in Light of the Patterns of Enduring Poverty in Most Major U.S. Cities, and to Study with Urban Presbyteries Ways That Public Policies May Assist the Redevelopment of Communities and Congregations—From the Advocacy for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 994–1009).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

B. Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

1. *2008 Referral: Item 09-13. Report, Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies, Recommendation 3. Direct Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) to Create a Permanent Joint Working Group on Women of Color in the Church, to Be Made Up of Two Members of ACREC, Two Members of ACWC, Appointed by the Leadership of Each Committee—From the Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 964–77).*

Progress Report: The permanent working group was charged with the following recommendations:

- a. In addition to the ACWC and ACREC members, the working group may appoint two to four members at-large, one of which should be a young woman of color between the ages of 18–35, to provide representation and expertise, as needed.
- b. The ACWC and ACREC shall meet jointly at least once a year, at which time an extra meeting day will be provided for the joint working group.
- c. The joint working group shall monitor the church's response to issues and concerns raised in the initial Women of Color Consultation, advise ACREC and ACWC on new and emerging issues impacting women of color, and consult with the General Assembly [Mission] Council in planning for future consultations. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 964–65)

The Permanent Joint Working Group on Women of Color in the Church, made up of two members of ACREC and two members of ACWC (appointed by the leadership of each advocacy committee) plus three other racial ethnic women (two of whom are ages 18–35), had their first meeting in July of 2009 in conjunction with a joint meeting of ACWC and ACREC. They met again in January 2010, and have begun and continue to do the work of monitoring the church's response to issues and concerns raised in the initial Women of Color Consultation.

While the Permanent Joint Working Group on Women of Color in the Church has felt some frustration at the lack of or inadequate responses to their referral monitoring inquiries, they continue to be diligent in the task assigned them by the 218th General Assembly (2008). The group has several recommendations coming to the 219th General Assembly (2009) via ACWC and ACREC that pertain particularly to concerns of women of color in the church. With the help of the advocacy committees, they have also requested that the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and the Moderator and Stated Clerk of the General Assembly make a stronger effort to publicize the fact that the church is now in the decade of "Hearing and Singing New Songs to God," lifting up and celebrating the voices and contributions of women of color in the church (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 964).

With the help of Research Services of the GAMC, the joint working group created a survey to collect disaggregated data within the six entities of the GAMC on age, gender, race/ethnicity, and level of employment. With the information gathered, the group hopes to move forward advocating for women of color in positions of leadership, especially younger women of color. The group has begun and hopes to continue to work in collaboration with the Office of Cultural Proficiency of the GAMC, as well as the Women of Color Consultation Committee.

2. *2004 Referral: Item 05-03. Recommendation 4. That the General Assembly Request the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, Following Review of Resources Currently Available to Meet the Needs of Clergywomen in the Call Process and in Pastorates, to Make Recommendations That Contribute to a Pro-active, Health-giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2004, Part I., pp. 77, 38990).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

C. General Assembly Mission Council

1. *2008 Referral: Item 09-12. Resolution to Explore the Study of the Status of Women at All Levels in the PC(USA), Recommendation 1. Create a Task Force to Design a Mechanism for the Study of the Status of Women at All Levels in the Church That Will (a) Assess the Presence, Participation, and Effectiveness of Women at All Levels of the PC(USA), Both Elected and Employed, (b) Explore and Analyze Attitudes About Women in Leadership, and (c) Describe the Treatment of Women in Leadership Positions, Including How They Are Compensated as Compared with Men—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 961–64).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

2. *2008 Referral: Item 09-13. Report, Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies, Recommendation 2. Request the Moderator, Stated Clerk and Executive Director of the General Assembly Council to Communicate with Congregations, Presbyteries, and Synods, Seminaries, Campus Ministries, and Conference Centers Asking Them to Recognize the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God and Incorporate It in Worship, Conferences, Training Events, and Other Activities—From Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 964–77).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

3. *2008 Referral: Item 08-03. Special Offerings Task Force Report, Recommendation 3. That the General Assembly Council Commission an Advisory Task Force for Special Offerings to Review the Possible Role and Functions of Special Offerings and That the Advisory Task Force Make an Annual Report to the General Assembly Mission Council, an Interim Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010), and Final Recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012)—From the Special Offerings Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 23, 586–615).*

Interim Report: An Advisory Task Force for Special Offerings has been commissioned by the General Assembly Mission Council. Members of the Advisory Task Force for Special Offerings include: The Reverend Karl Travis (chair), the Reverend Sarah Butter, the Reverend Sidney Davis, Jorge Gonzales, Taylor Lewis Guthrie, Helen Morrison, and Cathryn Piekarski.

The interim report of the Advisory Task Force for Special Offerings includes a report of activity during 2009. There is also a recommendation to revise the Criteria and Guidelines for Special Offerings as found in the *Organization for Mission*, Appendix A (Item 09-12).

The task force met for their first meeting in Fort Worth in May 2009. The group reviewed twenty-year giving trends of the offerings in the context of church membership and giving to denominational mission through other funding streams. (See General Assembly Mission Council Charts for Special Offerings, pp. 182–83.) Members conducted an initial analysis of print and web resources related to the four special offerings noting at least three major elements to all of the offerings: a theological/liturgical moment, an educational/inspirational moment, and an asking/giving moment. These three aspects combine to give the offerings their individual and collective identity and help serve as the “connective tissue” of congregations across the denominations as they participate in the offerings.

It was discovered that two separate actions of the 218th General Assembly (2008) resulted in minor inconsistencies in regard to the guidelines for the church-wide special offerings (from “Funding Christ’s Mission” and from the previous Special Offerings Review Task Force). A document that reconciles these differences has been reviewed, affirmed by the task force, and submitted as a separate action item through the GAMC entitled, “Revised Criteria and Guidelines for Special Offerings.”

The chair and vice chair were appointed to work on behalf of the entire task force to explore parallel evaluation projects that relate to the offerings—one being a ministry effectiveness (effectiveness usually means costs/spending so might you want to say ministry impact) study of the program recipients of two of the offerings, the other being a materials cost-effectiveness study. Both of these projects are being managed by GAMC staff with close cooperation and communication with the task force.

An annual report of revenue and expenditures was generated and reviewed by the task force, including information regarding use of the offering receipts by congregations and middle governing bodies. It has been noted as an item of concern that some congregations use the offering materials and collect the offerings, but retain the receipts for local use. Likewise, there are some inconsistencies between what congregations submit to presbyteries and the disbursement of those funds in a timely and accurate manner to the intended programs. These concerns are lifted up as concerns that the task force will continue to explore as they seek recommendations to address these issues. It is also noted that in some instances the portion of the Peacemaking Offering designed to be used by presbyteries and synods are on occasion not being put to use, but placed in savings or in rare circumstances used to cover administrative and staff expenses of the middle governing bodies. These are items of concern that warrant further study or evaluation.

The task force met again in February 2011 with the chief item of business to be that of developing a methodology and process for evaluating the marketing effectiveness of the offering resources and tactics used to interpret and promote the participation and fund-raising capacity of the offerings. The task force will work with a consultant to conduct a thorough review of the marketing effectiveness of special offerings (marketing or promotion or materials or potential). It is believed that there exists great untapped promise and potential for the offerings to cultivate wider participation and increased financial support of Presbyterians for the funding of the church’s mission. This project will include numerous interviews, focus groups, and online surveys over the course of the next eighteen months, resulting in information that will shape recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

4. *2003 Referral: Item 10-06. Recommendation 4. That the General Assembly Urge the General Assembly Council, Congregational Ministries Division, to Develop and Produce Processes and Materials for the Incorporation and Reception of New Adult Members Based on The Study Catechism (Full Version)—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2003, Part I, pp. 22, 565).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

5. *Alternate Resolution to 2004 Referral: Item 04-12. Recommendation 2. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council Office of Theology and Worship Undertake an Analysis of the Directory of Worship with the Goal of Evaluating Its Influence and Effectiveness in Guiding Sessions, Pastors, and Higher Governing Bodies in Planning*

and Conducting Worship That Is Authentically Reformed and Culturally Appropriate—From the 216th General Assembly (2004) (Minutes, 2004, Part I, p. 86).

This project has been deferred until final action on the proposed Form of Government has been taken.

6. *2004 Referral: Item 06-06. Report, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Understanding of the 16th and 17th Century Condemnation of Other Churches in The Book of Confessions, Recommendation 4. That the Office of the General Assembly and the Office of Theology and Worship Be Requested to Initiate Conversations with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Seeking a WARC Statement on the Issue and Report Results of These Conversations to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2004, Part I, pp. 21, 424).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

7. *2006 Referral: Item 07-06, Recommendation 1.d., That the General Assembly Council's Office of Theology and Worship Consider Drafting a Report on Reformed Theology and Economic Justice, Especially Dealing with the Theological Language Appropriate to Address Social and Economic Justice—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Delegation to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches General Council (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 16, 575–79).*

Final Response will be presented to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

8. *2006 Referral: Item 10-05. On Teen Suicide and Self-Injury—From the Presbytery of St. Augustine (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 49, 50, 916–19).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

9. *2006 Referral: Item 13-03. That the 217th General Assembly (2006) Authorize the Office of Theology and Worship to Undertake a Study of "Salvation and Sin," and Report the Results of Its Study to the 218th General Assembly (2008)—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 11–12, 1101).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

10. *2006 Referral: Item 13-05. Report, The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing. Recommendation 5. Encourage the Office of Theology and Worship to Work with Congregational Ministries Publishing and/or Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to Make Available Liturgical Resources Based on "The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing"—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 11–12, 1108).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

11. *2006 Referral: Item 13-05. Report, The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing. Recommendation 6. Encourage the Office of Theology and Worship to Work with Congregational Ministries Publishing and/or Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to Make Available the Historical Resources on Prayer and Worship That Underlie "The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing"—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 11–12, 1108).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

12. *2008 Referral: Item 07-05. Ecumenical Policy Statement, Recommendation 3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly to Develop Materials Based on the Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for Use with Local Congregations—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 516–26).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

13. *2008 Referral: Item 07-08. Mutual Recognition of Baptism with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Recommendation 3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, Through the Theology, Worship, and Education Ministries Area, to Develop Congregational Study Guides for the Pastoral Recommendations: Tangible Expression of Mutual Recognition of Baptism and Make Readily Available to Congregations, Pastors, and Seminaries—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 527–31).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

14. *2008 Referral: Item 07-10. Covenant Agreement with the Moravian Church, Recommendation 3.a. Direct Staff in the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council to Work with Moravian Colleagues to Devel-*

op Process and Procedures for the Orderly Exchange of Ministers—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 531–38).

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

15. *2008 Referral: Item 07-10. Covenant Agreement with the Moravian Church, Recommendation 3.b. Direct Staff in the General Assembly Mission Council to Explore with Moravian Colleagues Opportunities for Strengthening Mission Partnerships, Joint Evangelism Efforts and Development of Shared Resources, and to Encourage Presbyterian Conferences and Gatherings to Extend Invitations to Moravians for Participation as Appropriate—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 531–38).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

16. *2008 Referral: Item 07-11. Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement, Recommendation 3.b. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council to Work with Presbyteries in Understanding This Agreement and Facilitation Their Partnership with Episcopal Dioceses—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 538–41).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

17. *2008 Referral: Item 07-12. Report, The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) Gender, Leadership, and Power Consultation, Recommendation 2. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to Provide Leadership and Participation in the North American Region with Our Partner WARC Communion and Include a Strategy for a Study Process for Gender, Leadership, and Power in the PC(USA)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 541–44).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

18. *2008 Referral: Item 08-17. On Responsible Purchasing, Recommendation 4. That the General Assembly Mission Council Encourage Congregations and Presbyteries to Actively Lobby Their Respective State and Local Governments to Join the Sweatfree Consortium—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 24, 712–14).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

19. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.m. That the Theology, Worship, and Education Ministry Area, in Consultation with Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women, Prepare and Distribute a User-Friendly Instrument Based on the Reformed Tenets of Our Faith for Helping Congregations Achieve Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Justice in Compensation and Other Employment Issues—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

20. *2008 Referral: Item 09-10. Report, The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming, Recommendation 3.b. Urge the “Restoring Creation” Program to Establish a Presbyterian Green Energy Fund, Which Would Help Congregations and Other Organizations in Our Church Reduce Their Carbon Footprint Through Investments in Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy Production, and Green-e Certified Carbon Offsets—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 934–58).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

21. *2008 Referral: Item 09-13. Report, “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies.” Recommendation 4. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, in Consultation with Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, to Plan a Women of Color Consultation That Focuses on the Full Participation and Leadership/Decision-Making Roles of Women of Color of All Ages in Synods and Presbyteries. Plans for Next Consultation Reported to the 219th General Assembly (2010), Report of the Consultation and Recommendations to Be Submitted to the 220th General Assembly (2012)—From the Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 964–77).*

Progress Report: A Women of Color Consultation Committee has been formed. Planning meetings were held in Spring 2010 and Winter 2010. The consultation will be held in 2011. Report of the consultation and recommendations will be submitted to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

22. *2008 Referral: Item 09-13. Report, “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies.” Recommendation 9. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to Develop a Resource for Use By Con-*

gregations, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assembly That Will Provide Tools to Conduct a Gender Equity Audit That Includes Age, Race, and Ethnicity, that Enables Entities Within the Church to Gather Quantifiable Data on Women and Persons of Color's Presence, Participation, and Influence in Decision-Making Processes—From the Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 965–77).

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

23. *2008 Referral: Item 09-13. Report, "Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies". Recommendation 10. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, in Consultation with Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, to Expand on the Basic Antiracism Training to Include Modules on the Intersectionality of Race, Gender, and Class, and Provide Focused Training on Internalized Oppression and Privilege with a Timeline as Follows: (a) the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Class by 2010; (b) Internalized Oppression (Race & Gender) by 2012; and (c) White Privilege and Male Privilege by 2014—From the Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 964–77).*

Final Response will be presented to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

24. *2008 Referral: Item 09-15. Report, Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future, Recommendation 6. Urge the Presbyterian Foundation, in Collaboration with the General Assembly Mission Council to Loan \$4 million to Local Initiatives Support Corporation to Create a Low-Interest Revolving Loan Fund Available to Presbyterian Congregations, Presbyteries, and Coalitions in Which Church Entities Are Involved, in the Affected Gulf Region for Development Loans to Support Construction and Rehabilitation of Affordable, Permanent Rental Housing and Mixed Housing Attached to Congregational Redevelopment, or to Fund Neighborhood Initiatives Organized by Community Development Corporations in Which a Presbyterian Congregation or Presbytery Is Involved—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 994–1009).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

25. *2008 Referral: Item 10-06. On Supporting Single Payer Universal Healthcare Reform, Recommendation 4. Direct That \$25,000 from the Mission Budget of the PC(USA) Be Sent to the Presbyterian Association for Community Transformation (PACT) Network for the Purpose of Holding Ten Regional, One-Day Seminars Supporting Single Payer Universal Healthcare Reform, Moneys to Be Allocated on a First-Come, First-Served Basis—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1133–36).*

Progress Report: Single Payer Seminars

Seven very successful regional, one-day seminars supporting Single Payer Universal Healthcare Reform have been provided with funding, toward implementation of this action of the 218th General Assembly (2008). The funding remaining for three seminars is projected to be completed in 2010 with a final report to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

a. Basic Information

Of the ten seminars that were mandated by General Assembly action, seven have been held:

- In Pasadena, California, at the First Presbyterian Church on May 9, 2009; 375 persons in attendance.
- In Albany, New York, at the Westminster Presbyterian Church on March 31, 2009; 325 persons attended.
- In Princeton, New Jersey, at the Mackay Center of Princeton Theological Seminary on May 31, 2009; 175 persons attended.
- In metro Louisville, Kentucky, in New Albany, Indiana, at Indiana University Southeast on May 4, 2009; 160 persons attended.
- In Towson, Maryland, at the Towson Presbyterian Church on May 30, 2009; 100 persons attended.
- In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary on June 14, 2009; 200 persons attended.
- In Houston, Texas, at St. Paul's United Methodist Church on September 13, 2009; 100 persons attended.

b. Programs and Budgets

The local expense budgets for these seminars ranged from \$1,900 to almost \$6,000, not including in-kind assistance such as the use of hosts' facilities. Our grants ranged from \$1,900 to \$2,500. In two instances the latter amount included sending a member of a committee to participate in the program (Houston and Pasadena). For the most part, programs featured well-known single payer advocates as speakers, plus panel presentations or discussion periods either with the attendees as a whole or splitting up into small groups. Some took up the better part of the day and included a meal (breakfast or lunch) while one

was a three-hour program. Representative John Conyers (Michigan-14), the author of the main single payer bill in Congress spoke at three of the seminars, expressing gratitude for this prophetic action by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Federal, state, and local elected officials were invited to each seminar, with gratifying results. Seminar presentations were made by several, including Representative Eric Massa (New York-29), Representative Paul Tonko (New York-21), Representative John Yarmuth (Kentucky-3), two Pennsylvania state representatives at the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, seminar, a city councilman at one seminar, and more. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese was among presenters for the Houston, Texas, seminar. In every seminar, representatives of Physicians for a National Health Plan were involved in speaking, planning, or both. In several, persons connected to Healthcare-Now were involved. After the endorsement of the PC(USA) General Assembly, these two latter groups officially offered their support as well as the California Nurses Association—all prominent single payer advocacy groups.

c. Impact

We are still collecting information about the impact of these seminars and so this part of the report is incomplete. The endorsement of a single payer Medicare-for-all plan by the General Assembly did, itself, have considerable impact as the Episcopal and United Church of Christ denominations followed with their own endorsements, specifically citing the Presbyterian action as exemplary. Most of the seminars ended with an opportunity for participants to send cards or letters to state and national legislators on behalf of single payer national health insurance. Surveys of participants indicated that the seminars attracted large numbers of people who had never attended a single payer event before. Media presence was actively solicited and obtained by all, some receiving extensive print, internet, and local television coverage. Preliminary indications are that at least some of the seminars generated considerable impact, but we will have specifics at a later date. One site (Princeton, New Jersey) has already sent in an impact statement that we attach herewith.

d. Coming Events and Challenges

We anticipate arranging for three more seminars as per the General Assembly mandate. We are in slow-moving conversations with Presbyterians in Minneapolis, Colorado, and Montana. We are finding that many locations are just not aware of the availability of these grants. Presbyterian organs of communications have not been cooperative in this respect. Published summaries of General Assembly actions have omitted any mention of this action. Even after expressing our frustration over this, General Assembly agencies and staff have not really paid any attention to (or attended) seminars. The national staff at the PHEWA Office is the exception, both having attended the local seminar and provided exemplary staff assistance and support in implementation of this General Assembly action. The Stated Clerk, however, did send a forceful letter on behalf of single payer to national legislators and offices. There has been no coverage of these seminars by the denomination. I think this lack is at least partly why we have not had more applications. Just recently we had a group in Dayton inquire about the grants; they only lately discovered the program through indirect contacts. Considering that this proposal passed the health committee of the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority and the General Assembly itself by a 60-40 split (which is only slightly lower, in terms of support, than national polls), it is a bit disconcerting to have so little support from General Assembly communications and staff. We think some explanation is in order and ought to be forthcoming.

Other challenges include the attempt of groups that are not interested in advocating for the single payer solution to obtain these grants where we have had to reiterate our purpose and the General Assembly mandate. Also we have had to negotiate with groups that wanted to advocate for a state-based single payer plan and were not as interested in educating about and advocating for a national single payer health insurance plan.

David Bos for Presbyterian Association for Community Transformation (PACT), a network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA) and on behalf of the Special Single Payer Committee. December 13, 2009.

Attachment #1

Impact Statement from Planning Committee, Princeton, New Jersey, Seminar
Educating About and Advocating for Single Payer Universal Healthcare Reform

Good News: About the consequences of the “Single Payer” G.A. Overture from Pittsburgh Presbytery, adopted by the 218th General Assembly (2008), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

1. This Overture, and the resulting G.A. action, have been used as curriculum at Cornell Medical School.
2. Our mission monies, through these seminars, multiplied energy, intelligence, imagination and love.
3. Our PC(USA) mission presence is encouraging statewide organizing in New Jersey.

Note related to Point # 1 above: At a reception for Physicians for a National Health Plan in Manhattan in the spring of 2009, Dr. Oliver Fein, of the Cornell Medical School, was introduced to a guest, the Rev. Bebb Stone. When he learned that she was a Presbyterian, Dr. Fein thanked the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for their 2008 General Assembly Overture on “single payer” healthcare reform. He said that he was using it on Grand Rounds with medical students. Evangelism!

Note related to Point #2 above: The mission monies that backed up that 2008 Overture, which named single payer as the best method for achieving healthcare reform which is a ‘moral imperative,’ were shared regionally. In New Jersey, that \$2500 leveraged the members of a nascent organization (New Jersey One Plan, One Nation) into action and additional donations were forthcoming. The Coalition included churches, Healthcare-Now, Physicians for a National Health Plan, labor, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the National Organization for Women (NOW), Peoples Organization for Progress, and other activists. This coalition organized a May 31, 2009 conference at Princeton Theological Seminary, which was attended by 175 people. Rep. John Conyers, author of House Resolution 676, supporting universal healthcare reform, came and spoke. Moderated by Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Kate Killebrew, there was a panel of individuals who told why, from their perspective, single payer was a necessity. Those individuals included a small business owner (who had been identified by his Letter to the Editor in the New York Times); an uninsured, working single mom, a young urban community organizer from Newark, and a new U.S. citizen with no health insurance, who had to return to India for treatment of his life threatening condition. At the “Presbyterian table” 120 postcards reading, “As a person of faith, I support single payer healthcare reform” were signed and addressed for mailing to their legislators. Another donation covered postage.

Note related to Point #3 above: The New Jersey One Plan, One Nation has continued its efforts. There was a lobbying day in Washington D.C. in the summer with two busloads of folks going to visit Senators and Representatives in support of single payer universal healthcare reform.

We, here in New Jersey, thank the Commissioners of the 218th General Assembly (2008) for their faithfulness.

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

26. *2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 11-01. On Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel, Recommendation 6. Instruct the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to Report Regularly to the General Assembly Mission Council on Its Communication and the Compliance, or Lack Thereof, by Caterpillar, Motorola, and Other Corporations Involved with Regard to General Assembly Guidelines and Concerns for Justice and Human Rights—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1137–39).*

2008 Referral: Item 11-27. Report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment of Its Engagement with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank. Recommendation 4. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, Through Its Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, to Continue the Corporate Engagement Process, and Report on Its Status with Any Recommendations to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 46, 47, 1223–25).

Progress Report: These referrals are partially answered by the “Report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment of Its Engagement with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank,” refer to Item 14-03.

Final Response will be presented to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

27. *2008 Referral: Item 11-12. On Preventing the Trafficking of Women, Internationally and Nationally, Recommendation 4. Instruct the General Assembly Mission Council to Direct the Appropriate Offices of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAC) to Work to Strengthen Laws That Prohibit Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children—From the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1164–67).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

28. *2008 Referral: Item 11-15. On Support for the Presbyterian Church in Zimbabwe, Recommendation 3. Support the Work of Individual Congregations, Church Governing Bodies, and Ecumenical Groups Within Zimbabwe as Well as the Presbytery of Zimbabwe and the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa—From the Presbytery of Denver (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1174–76).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

29. *2008 Referral: Item 11-18. Report on Human Rights in Colombia, Recommendation 2. Direct the World Mission’s Ministry Area, in Consultation with the Appropriate Entities of the General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly, to Continue to Monitor the Situation in Colombia, and to Keep the Whole Church Abreast of These Findings; and to Offer Advice and Counsel, as Needed, About How This Denomination Can Continue to Support the Peacekeeping Efforts of Our Partners in Colombia—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1180–85).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

30. *2008 Referral: Item 11-30. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Mobilizing Presbyterians for a Significant Response to the Global Food Crisis, Recommendation 2. To Step Up and Speed Up Mission Personnel Deployment, in Response to Overseas Partners Who so Request, to Advise and Accompany Them as to the Kinds of Actions That Could Be Undertaken to Alleviate Hunger in the Short Term Without Creating New Dependencies and/or Compromising Their Countries’ Sovereignty and Economy—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1226–29).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

31. *2008 Referral: Item 12-01. Report, “Strategy for Church Growth for African American Congregations.” Recommendation 2. Encourage the General Assembly Mission Council, Specifically the Racial Ethnic and the Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women Ministry Areas, to Appoint a Task Force to Monitor the Progress of African American Church Growth and Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 12, 1235–37).*

Progress Report: A task force was appointed by the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/PW ministry area to monitor the progress of African American church growth as directed by the 218th General Assembly (2008). The National Black Presbyterian Caucus held its biennial meeting in July 2009, and a major focus of the meeting was to consider implementation of the African American Church Growth Strategy. An Implementation Team was appointed by the board of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus in consultation with the African American Congregational Support Office. The task force appointed by the Racial Ethnic and the Women’s Ministries/PW ministry area will present a final response to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

32. *2008 Referral: Item 12-08. On Directing the General Assembly Council to Produce Adolescent Human Development Resources—From the Presbytery of Grace (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 12, 13, 1245–47).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

33. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.j. That the Human Resources Department and the Offices of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women, in Consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, and Other Appropriate Entities, Participate in the PC(USA)’s Goal of Assuring Gender Pay Equity by Conducting a Pay Equity Study Covering the Employees of the General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly and Report Results to the 220th General Assembly (2012)—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

34. *2008 Referral: Item 09-16. Report, Creating a Climate for Change Within the PC(USA), Recommendation 3.a.–d. Direct the Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008), in Consultation with ACREC, ACWC, Associate for Cultural Proficiency, and GANC, to Appoint a Climate for Change Task Force, Which Will Provide an Interim Report to 219th General Assembly (2010) and a Final Report to 220th General Assembly (2012)—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 1009–54).*

Interim Report: This interim report is submitted by the Creating a Climate for Change Task Force.

The church has long established its mission to speak prophetically for justice, equity, and full inclusion in the human community, and its responsibility in its own life to practice policies of non-discrimination, affirmative action, and cultural proficiency, both as a witness to the abundant diversity of God’s creation and as a means of equipping the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to minister and do mission effectively in the world today.

The church’s policies and practices relating to its own employment and purchasing practices have evolved with societal practices and changes in the church’s own institutions and structures. However, the development of this policy has not been a smooth progression and there are places where there are overlapping responsibilities and/or policy guidance that is no longer with existing practices.

The Climate for Change Task Force was created by the 218th General Assembly to: “review the current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity (AA/EEO), contracting and purchasing policies; and recommend revisions” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1010, Recommendation 3.a.).

The task force is charged with responsibility to consider and recommend changes to the following:

- (1) Update churchwide AA/EEO policies to reflect the church’s commitment to using the tools of cultural proficiency for organizational change;
- (2) Provide guidance and standards for consistent application of the Minority Vendor Policy in the six corporate entities related to the General Assembly;
- (3) In consultation with staff, develop new guidelines and procedures to be used in lieu of services formerly provided by Project Equality; and
- (4) Revise and update AA/EEO and Minority Vendor policies to reflect changes in the agencies related to the General Assembly and the changing business environment created by emerging technology. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1010, Recommendation 3.b.)

The General Assembly directed the task force to submit “an interim report to the 219th General Assembly (2010), and a final report to the 220th General Assembly (2012)” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1010, Recommendation 3.d.).

The task force was appointed in 2009. The members include: Diane Givens Moffet (chair), Yvonne Armstrong, Colby Anderson, Catherine Chang, Hardy Kim, Albert Masters, Sarah Moore-Nokes, and José Olagues. They have had two meetings, both in Louisville, Kentucky: October 8–10, 2009, and May 12–14, 2010; and are scheduled to meet September 9–12, 2010, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

At its first meeting, the task force consulted with agency executives of the five agencies located in the Louisville area, along with other appropriate staff, including the associate for Cultural Proficiency and the manager for Purchasing. At its May meeting, the task force consulted with representatives of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and the Advisory Committee on Cultural Proficiency. The task force will consult with the Board of Pensions at its September 2010 meeting. The task force will meet twice in 2011 to draft its report and hold a final meeting in January of 2012 for final consultation and preparation for General Assembly.

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

D. Office of the General Assembly

1. *2008 Referral: Item 07-04. Covenant Relationship with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America, Recommendation 2.b. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council to Convene Tables to Develop Processes and Procedures for the Orderly Exchange of Ministers and Orderly Transfer of Churches—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 513–16).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

2. *2008 Referral: Item 07-04. Covenant Relationship with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America, Recommendation 2.c. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council to Report These Processes and Procedures to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 513–16).*

Final Response will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

II. FINAL RESPONSES TO REFERRALS

A. Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

1. *2006 Referral: Item 09-10. Report: Resolution on Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership, and Accountability. Recommendation A.4., Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Prepare an Accompanying Study Guide, Which Would Include Diverse Responses on the Issues Presented in the Paper—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 50, 51, 826).*

Response: This study guide will be available at the General Assembly. Its preparation has involved three elements: (a) two consultations with presentations by economists, development specialists, and justice advocates of a wide range of opinions, looking at economic, cultural, and spiritual aspects of globalization; (b) ecumenical coordination, particularly within the Reformed family; (c) the preparation of a version of the study guide for young people going on mission trips.

2. *2006 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 09-14. The 217th General Assembly (2006) Directs the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in Consultation with the Presbyterian Washington Office, and Appropriate Entities to Assess the Effects on Christian Witness to Society of Government Faith-Based Initiatives and Other Vehicles by Which Presbyterian Churches and Groups Closely Affiliated with Congregations Accepts Moneys from Government Bodies with Particular Attention to Contracts Affecting Public Education; Consider Means to Gather Information by Congregations on the Proportion of Government Contracts and Moneys to Individual Church Budgets; Examine the Effectiveness of Publicly Supported Programs in Presbyterian Churches, in Consultation with Presbyteries and Synods; and Recommend to the 218th General Assembly (2008) Guidelines on the Acceptance of Such Moneys, Especially with Regard to Public Schools, Charter Schools, After-School Programs, Tutoring Programs, and Other Such Services for Public School Children—From the 217th General Assembly (2006) (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 50, 51, 878).*

Response: This referral is answered by Item 10-11, “Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K-12),” being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

3. *2008 Referral: Item 07-01. On Calling for Tolerance and Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, Recommendation 6. Identify Violations of the Civil Rights of Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the United States and Other Areas of the World, Along with Other Incidents of Violation of Religious Freedoms, as Part of the Regular Human Rights Report to the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Newton (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 507–10).*

Response: This referral is answered in the Human Rights Update, Item 11-04, prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. This report focuses on significant trends in each two-year period. More extensive treatment of the sit-

uation in the Middle East is contained in the report of the Study Committee on the Middle East, “Breaking Down the Walls,” Item 14-08, also being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

4. *2008 Referral: Item 09-05. On Addressing the Tragedy of America’s Gun Violence, Recommendation 2.a. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in Consultation with the Office of Theology and Worship, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, and the Presbyterian Washington Office to Prepare for the Larger Church a Comprehensive Study on the Concerns Raised in This Overture. Study Should Articulate a Reformed Theology of Proactive, Constructive Nonviolence Way of Life and Tactical Method of Bringing God’s Justice and Peace to Our Communities and Around the World; Assess the Social and Economic Costs of Gun Violence; Explore How Gun Violence Fits into a Larger National Culture of Violence, and Identify Ways That the Church Can Effectively Address Gun Violence Issues Domestically and Internationally, and to Report These Findings Along with Proposed Action Items to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the Presbytery of National Capital (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54,55, 859–65).*

Response: This referral is answered by Item 11-06, “Gun Violence and Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call,” being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

5. *2008 Referral: Item 09-06. That the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in Partnership with the Office of Child Advocacy and in Consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, Create a Resolution Team to Study the Church’s Policies on Public Education in Relationship to the Issues of Desegregation, Affirmative Action, Faith-Based Initiatives, Home Schooling, Charter Schools, and the No Child Left Behind Law, with Attention to Class as Well as Race; Making Appropriate Recommendations to the 219th General Assembly (2010) and, if Appropriate, Subsequently Preparing a Study Guide for Individual and Congregation Use—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 53, 55, 865–66).*

Response: This referral is answered by Item 10-11, “Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K–12),” being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

6. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.i. That the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in Consultation with Theology Worship, and Education Ministry Area and the Office of Vocation, Update the PC(USA)’s 1983 “Theology of Compensation” Report to Provide Theological Guidance to Church and Society with Regard Particularly to the Impact of Secular Market Assumptions on the Compensation Practices of the PC(USA)—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Response: This referral is answered by Item 10-10, “Neither Poverty Nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church,” being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

7. *2008 Referral: Item 09-11. A Resolution to Study Immigration Detention in the United States, Recommendation 1. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in Consultation with the Appropriate General Assembly Council and Office of the General Assembly Ministries Areas to Analyze the Social Witness Policy of the PC(USA) Regarding Detention in Relation to Immigration in the United States, Giving Attention to the Experiences of Women and Children Detained and Affected and Report Its Findings and Recommendation to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 958–61).*

Response: This referral is answered in the Human Rights Update, Item 11-04, prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

8. *2008 Referral: Item 09-19. Recommendation 1. Direct an Appropriate Program Body of the General Assembly Mission Council to Continue to Monitor the Situation at the Smithfield Packaging, Inc. Packing Plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, Consulting with a Joint Committee of Persons from the Presbyteries of New Hope and Coastal Carolina, Possibly Including Persons of Management and Labor Background, and Reporting to the GAC in 2009—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 53, 55, 1056–62).*

Response: With the help of justice-oriented Presbyterians in both New Hope and Coastal Carolina presbyteries, this monitoring has continued. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly wrote both company and union upon the certification of election victory by workers choosing to form a union in late 2008, affirming the result and encouraging both management and labor to negotiate constructively toward an equitable contract. Concern was also expressed that difficulties with the employment of immigrant workers could be resolved without government intervention.

9. *2008 Referral: Item 09-19. Recommendation 2. That the General Assembly Mission Council Make a Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Drawing from the Consulting Group, a Staff Liaison, and Other Research, and Making Recommendations, if Warranted, Concerning Actions Presbyterians May Take—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 53, 55, 1056–62).*

See Referral 8 above (this also has to do with the Smithfield labor situation).

10. *2008 Referral: Item 10-02. On Directing the General Assembly Council to Develop and Fund a Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Policy for the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of the Pacific (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1078–82).*

Response: This referral is answered by Item 19-05, “Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action,” being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

11. *2008 Referral: Item 11-13. Resolution to Expand the Church’s Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking, Recommendation 2. Urge the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Regularly Include Trafficking of Persons in Its Human Rights Updates—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1167–70).*

Response: This referral is answered by a section in the Human Rights Update, Item 11-04, prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

12. *2008 Referral: Item 11-18. Report, Human Rights in Colombia, Recommendation 6. Direct the Appropriate Entities of the General Assembly Mission Council, in Consultation with the Office of the General Assembly, to Continue to Monitor and Address Human Rights Violations in the United States, and in Other Nations Brought to Their Attention by the Members of This Denomination and/or the Partner Churches—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1180–85).*

Response: Monitoring has continued, noting continued U.S. investment in seven military bases, continued funding for anti-narcotics operations, and the transfer of some alleged drug traffickers and human rights violators for prosecution in the United States. The Peacemaking Program and the Peace Fellowship continue a very important accompaniment program that pairs U.S. Presbyterian volunteers with Colombian church leaders, especially in the areas and camps where approximately 3 million displaced Colombians live. Note is made of this in the Human Rights Update, Item 11-04.

B. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns

2008 Referral: Item 09-16. Report, Creating a Climate of Change within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Report to the 218th General Assembly (2008): Recommendation 2. Direct ACREC to Develop a Report Format and Timeline for the Consultation Process. The Cultural Proficiency Plan and Report of Accomplishments for Each Entity Shall Be Reviewed as Part of the Regular, Recurring Consultations Between ACREC and Agency Executives—From the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 95, 1010).

Response: In preparation for interviews the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) held with the chief executive officers for the six General Assembly agencies in 2009, a report format was developed and distributed for use. The form inquired about the agencies’ plans, strategies, and execution with regard to cultural proficiency goals set forth in report *Creating a Climate for Change within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, which was approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004). For information on the results of the form and the findings from the interviews, see the committee’s report, “A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” Item # 11-09.

C. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly/General Assembly Mission Council

1. *2008 Referral: Item 03-16. Report, Joint COGA/[GAMC] Budget Proposals, Recommendation 2. COGA and [GAMC] Review Allocation of Expenses and Programs to Per Capita and Mission Funds and Report to 219th General Assembly (2010); Recommendation 3. Stated Clerk and [GAMC] to Share, in Partnership with Middle Governing Bodies, Educational Materials with the Whole Church to Promote a Better Understanding of History, Values, and Uses of Per Capita Budget—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly [Mission] Council (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 62, and 167).*

Response: The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) respond to these referrals as follows:

Recommendation 2 reads as follows:

2. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly [Mission] Council recommend that the 218th General Assembly (2008) instruct the General Assembly [Mission] Council and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly Joint Per Capita Table to review the allocation of expenses and programs to per capita and mission funds, and present a report to the 219th General Assembly (2010). (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 167)

The COGA/GAMC Joint Per Capita Table met on January 28, 2010, in Louisville, Kentucky, to carry out the General Assembly’s self-referral review in regards to the per capita offering and how its expenses and programs are allocated.

The COGA/GAMC Joint Per Capita Table is composed of three elected members from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and three elected members from the General Assembly Mission Council.

The group reviewed the statistical history of per capita and the uncollected per capita statements from 1988 through 2008. The group also reviewed the itemized Statement of Activities, beginning with the year 2008, as well as the proposed 2011–2012 Per Capita Budget. Further, the COGA/GAMC Joint Per Capita Table reviewed the report submitted by the Office of the General Assembly to the 218th General Assembly (2008). This report (Item 03-16) was overwhelmingly approved by the General Assembly by a voice vote. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 164–75).

The results of the review of allocations of expenses and programs to per capita funds are listed below.

The group unanimously affirmed the following:

- The COGA/GAMC Joint Per Capita Table acknowledged the value of “the interdependent nature of Presbyterian polity” (*Book of Order*, G-9.0404) as the responsible way of sharing the costs that equitably belong to the whole Presbyterian church community expressing the essential unity of the church, giving tangible witness to the unity and wholeness promised to us in Jesus Christ: “all believers are, therefore, under obligation to sustain the ordinances of the Christian religion where they are already established, and to contribute by their prayers, gifts, and personal efforts to the extension of the Kingdom of Christ throughout the whole earth” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.058).

- That Presbyterians have a deep concern for good stewardship, the decent and orderly administration of funds, and the most responsible and economic uses for financial resources. The COGA/GAMC Joint Per Capita Table reaffirmed the significance of the per capita offering to the welfare of the ministries properly funded by it.

- The table affirmed that while every funding system in the church is under stress, the per capita system is working! Hard work has been done at the General Assembly level to keep the increase in the per capita rate below the rate of inflation. At the same time, in spite of the fact that many congregations and governing bodies are facing financial stress, the level of per capita payments received has remained remarkably high (more than 95 percent). Both COGA and GAMC are grateful for the faithful support of Presbyterians for these core ecclesiastical responsibilities.

- The table reaffirmed the basic functions outlined by the 207th General Assembly (1995) and the 218th General Assembly (2008) that are critical for holding us together as a Presbyterian Covenant community and are funded appropriately from per capita at the General Assembly level. Therefore, the COGA/GAMC Joint Per Capita Table reaffirmed the following as core ecclesiastical expenses to which per capita funds shall be allocated:

—The General Assembly session, including commissioners’ expenses, where elders and ministers come together to seek to discern the mind of Christ.

—The Office of the General Assembly, which is responsible for the planning and the execution of the General Assembly; upholding our Constitution; communicating the actions of the assembly to the church and the world; supporting our governing body system and providing training for elders and church officers; training our committees on preparation of ministers (CPMs) and committees on ministry (COMs); maintaining our minutes, records, and statistics; publishing essential resources to uphold our faith and polity such as the *Book of Order* and *The Book of Confessions*; giving staff support to our military chaplains; promoting Christian vocation, the ordering of ministry, and the certification of Christian educators.

—The General Assembly permanent and special committees and commissions (such as the General Assembly Nominating Committee, Advisory Committee on the Constitution, Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, the Form of Government Task Force, and so forth) that carry out the work of the assembly between meetings.

—The Presbyterian Historical Society, which collects, preserves, and shares the historic record of American Presbyterianism.

—Our membership and core support in the ecumenical bodies in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a member (their “per capita” costs), and our participation in interdenominational conversations, which give expression to our basic ecclesiological conviction that we alone are not the church but only one part of the body of Christ, so we “might be a more effective instrument of mission in the world” (*Book of Order*, G-3.0401d), thus expressing our Presbyterian identity through our ecumenical participation and connections.

—The meetings of the General Assembly Mission Council, and the expenses for legal services and for the planning and evaluation of mission (but not the mission programs), which makes it possible to coordinate our mission as Presbyterians, and connect it with fidelity to the governing bodies and the whole church.

Therefore, the Per Capita Table agrees that the proposed Per Capita Budget for 2011–2012 is responsibly allocated and administered. It is a fundamental way in which all of the nearly 11,000 congregations and governing bodies of the PC(USA) are connected, and the way it allows its members and leaders the support and the training needed to participate in the work of General Assembly committees, commissions, and the General Assembly itself. It is how Presbyterians discern God’s call to service and it is how Presbyterians preserve our heritage. It is how Presbyterians participate in the life of the wider church, as

we commit ourselves to share the Gospel, and work and live in fellowship with “all persons in every nation” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0101).

Recommendation 3. reads as follows:

3. . . . the Stated Clerk and the General Assembly [Mission] Council to share, in partnership with the middle governing bodies, educational materials with the whole church, so that all will have a better understanding of the history, values, and uses of the per capita budget. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 167)

In preparation for producing and sharing educational materials on per capita with the whole church, the Department of Communication, Technology, and Development of the Office of the General Assembly took steps to plan and implement a per capita summit in October 2009. Immediately following the Fall Polity Conference, the summit gathered approximately twenty people to look at the history of per capita, at current trends across the church, and to share thoughts and ideas for the future of per capita. The group included leadership from middle governing bodies and national staff. The ideas generated from the two-day summit were extremely helpful as plans for educational materials became more focused. The multilayered dimensions of per capita, as well as the changing nature of the church in the twenty-first century, are being taken into consideration in this process.

As this project progresses, it is apparent that “one size fits all” is not the case when it comes to interpreting per capita across the church. Therefore, multiple approaches will be necessary. The per capita Web site is a source of interpretive materials. The new Web design for OGA, which will come in the latter half of 2010, will be an effective way for congregations and middle governing bodies to share their “best practices” in interpreting per capita in their contexts. An easy link to MGB Connect is included in the plans.

In addition, a new per capita brochure will be available by the 219th General Assembly (2010). General in nature, the brochure will provide biblical and historical foundations for this funding stream, all in a language and approach that resonates with the church of today. A church-wide distribution of the brochure is planned, beginning with the assembly and extending to every session and middle governing body in the denomination.

2. *2008 Referral. Alternate Resolution to Item 03-20. Joint Resolution Between the Office of the General Assembly; the General Assembly [Mission Council]; the Overture Advocates of the Presbyteries of San Francisco, Geneva, and San Jose; and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns—From the 218th General Assembly (2008)* (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 177–81).

Response: While the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) provide a combination of staff and resources to assist in prevention of sexual misconduct and to support middle governing bodies and local churches when a minister of the Word and Sacrament controlled or employed by them is accused of sexual misconduct, this approach may have been perceived to be reactive rather than responsive, and could be more proactive. The approach should be expanded and strengthened to ensure appropriate resources are easily accessible to middle governing bodies and local particular churches. At the same time, survivors must receive information to enable them to access pastoral care and access advocacy assistance regardless of whether the perpetrator is a minister of the Word and Sacrament, member, elder, deacon, commissioned lay pastor, volunteer, or non-ordained staff doing ministry, including Christian educators and youth leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

To strengthen and improve resourcing for middle governing bodies and local particular churches, the OGA/GAC will:

a. Better coordinate and develop resources by forming a joint OGA/GAMC staff advisory team that will meet regularly to review existing resources and recommend development of additional resources; review the hotline response to ensure it includes appropriate pastoral and advocacy elements; review and recommend Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) “best practices” to be included in a revised Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Sexual Misconduct Policy and Guidelines to be recommended as guidelines to middle governing bodies and local churches, which is being sent as a report to the 219th General Assembly (2010) (Item 03-26); and to review the training resources for needed updates and enhancements.

STATUS: An Office of the General Assembly/General Assembly Mission Council (OGA/GAMC) staff advisory team met regularly in 2008–2010 to address the ongoing work associated with 2008 General Assembly referrals, to collectively complete a draft of the revised Sexual Misconduct Policy, and to review and evaluate ongoing prevention and response needs related to sexual misconduct policies and procedures. The OGA and the GAMC jointly recommend to the 219th General Assembly (2010) a revised General Assembly Sexual Misconduct Policy for its approval as a model with guidelines to be urged for use by all governing bodies and related entities. (See Item 03-26.)

b. Train three to four people to answer the hotline in the absence of the Sexual Misconduct Ombudsperson.

STATUS: The Sexual Misconduct Ombudsperson, Pat Hendrix, has trained two staff persons to answer the hotline. This brings the total staff available and trained to support the hotline to four people.

c. Survey, through the Office of Middle Governing Body Relations, to determine what resources presbyteries need for the prevention of and response to incidents of sexual misconduct and, if needed, to develop and distribute at reasonable cost to middle governing bodies and local particular churches, a training on the topic of preventing and responding to sexual misconduct by ministers of the Word and Sacrament, member, elder, deacon, commissioned lay pastor, volunteer, or non-ordained staff doing ministry, including Christian educators and youth leaders. This training could be available on DVD and available for order on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Website at reasonable cost. The advisory staff team could investigate online training and train-the-trainer educational programs to be provided through third party vendors at a reasonable fee per participant.

STATUS: A survey regarding prevention and response resources for sexual misconduct was prepared and sent to the middle governing bodies. Unfortunately the responses to the survey were not enough to prepare a statistical analysis of the overall need. The OGA and GAMC will continue to gather information as possible regarding the ongoing needs for prevention and response resources.

d. Place resources currently available on the PC(USA) website in one easily accessible area of the website, and develop and distribute a brochure to promote the available resources on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) website to middle governing bodies and local churches and available opportunities for training.

STATUS: There is a website at <http://www.pcusa.org/sexualmisconduct> where people can go to learn about keeping their congregation safe. The website also contains a wealth of information for victims seeking to know the position of the PC(USA) regarding sexual misconduct and how to make a report of sexual misconduct. There are resources for prevention and for responding to incidences of sexual abuse and misconduct available on the website as well as links to resources created by other denominations and entities that also have as their goal creating and keeping safe and healthy congregations. This website is linked from the front page of the PC(USA) website and will be featured on the front page of the PC(USA) website one week per year.

e. Increase middle governing body and local particular church awareness of the availability of these resources through MGB Connect, OGA website, and GAC website by sending online communications.

STATUS: Communications regarding the resources on www.pcusa.org/sexualmisconduct are sent periodically to middle governing bodies and are available through other PC(USA) websites and networks such as Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, Fall Polity Conference, etc.

D. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

1999 Referral: 30.035-.048. Approve and Authorize the Creation of New Covenant Annuity Insurance Company (Minutes, 1999, Part I, pp. 37,500).

Response: The Foundation has elected not to charter an insurance company.

E. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations

2006 Referral: Item 07-05. On Becoming a "Provisional" Participant in Christian Churches Together—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) (Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 574ff).

Response: This referral is answered by Item 08-10, GACER recommendations regarding Christian Churches Together.

F. General Assembly Mission Council

1. *2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 03-20, Recommendation 1. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council Form a Joint Advisory Team to Review Existing Resources and Recommend Development of Additional Resources, Review Hotline Response, and Recommend PC(USA) Best Practices to Be Included in a Revised PC(USA) Sexual Misconduct Policy and Guidelines to Be Presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 177–81).*

2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 03-20, Recommendation 2. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council Train Three to Four People to Answer the Hotline in the Absence of the Sexual Misconduct Ombudsperson—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 177–81).

2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 03-20, Recommendation 3. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council Survey, Through the Office of Middle Governing Body Relations, Resources Needed by Presbyteries for the Prevention of and Response to Incidents of Sexual Misconduct, and if Needed, Develop a Training for Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct by Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Member, Elder, Deacon, Commissioned Lay Pastor, Volunteer, or Non-Ordained Staff Doing Ministry—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 177–81).

2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 03-20, Recommendation 4. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council Place Currently Available Resources on the PC(USA) Website and Develop and Distribute a Brochure Promoting the Resources Available on the Website and Available Opportunities for Training to Middle Governing Bodies and Local Churches—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 177–81).

2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 03-20, Recommendation 5. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council Increase Middle Governing Body and Local Particular Church Awareness of the Availability of Resources Through MGB Connect, OGA, and GAC Websites, by Sending Online Communications—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 177–81).

Response: The above five referrals are answered by the Joint Report of the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council, “Joint COGA/GAMC Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures Recommendation.” Refer to Item 03-26.

2. *2008 Referral: Item 08-10. On Reinstating the Office of Environmental Justice as an Integral Part of the Mission of the Church—From the Presbytery of the Heartland (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 23, 655–60).*

Response: The Office of Environmental Ministries opened in April 2009. A mission study was completed in the summer of 2009 to guide the work of the office. The office inspires and equips congregations and presbyteries to work for eco-justice for all of God’s earth; implements the Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice policy and other environmental policies; and works with and connects other General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) offices and networks including the Stewardship for Creation Enablers, Presbyterians for Earth Care, and the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program to educate the wider church on environmental issues including climate change, water issues, and sustainable agriculture.

3. *2008 Referral: Item 08-16. That the General Assembly Council Create a Review Committee, with Each Agency Reviewed Having a Voice on the Review Committee, to Review the Service of the Whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Permanent and Advisory Committees as Related to the General Assembly Council by Doing Items 1.–3.—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 23, 24, 709–11).*

Response: The chair of the General Assembly Mission Council appointed the Advisory and Advocacy Committees Review Committee, which is reporting to this General Assembly. Refer to Item 09-19.

4. *2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 08-21. Recommendation D. That the General Assembly Council and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, with the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee, Jointly Report Their Progress in the Resolution of Restricted Funds Issues to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 24–25, 720–21).*

Response: This referral is answered by the Report of the Six Agency Review Committee, Item 18-B. A communication sent by Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council, and Richard Clay, then interim president of the PC(USA) Foundation, to the committee is Appendix III of the Six Agency Review Committee Report.

5. *2008 Referral: Item 09-16. Report, Creating a Climate of Change Within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Recommendation 1. That All Agencies Prepare a Written Plan for the Continuing Implementation of Cultural Proficiency—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 1009–055).*

Response: The Office of Cultural Proficiency serves as a resource to the PC(USA) and provides primary support for the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) in developing and implementing a strategic plan for cultural proficiency, including a long-term communication plan. The associate for Cultural Proficiency is available to consult and coordinate with the management teams of the GAMC as requested, to interface and integrate cultural proficiency goals with the implementation of the GAMC Mission Work Plan, and other diversity and inclusion efforts, as appropriate.

In an effort to promote continual organizational education and subsequent implementation of cultural proficiency, the Office of Cultural Proficiency will continue to provide and/or offer the following:

- Consultation to General Assembly committees (Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns [ACREC] and General Assembly Committee on Representation [COR]) in assessing “Creating a Climate for Change” implementation, and to others across the PC(USA) working with issues of diversity and inclusion including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, and geography.

- Identify environmental barriers and threats, particularly within the GAMC, that inhibit the development of an authentic sense of community, that supports mutual respect, workplace and personal integrity, and a willingness to be culturally proficient.

- Provide managers and supervisors with educational sessions to support the development of a culturally proficient lens in the employee evaluation process, particularly as it relates to the item addressing cultural proficiency in the workplace and/or job performance.

- Periodic engagement of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Ministries Leadership Team (MLT) and the Office of Cultural Proficiency in the continued development and assessment of the communication strategy for the implementation of cultural proficiency within the GAMC. The associate for Cultural Proficiency has identified the Cultural Proficiency Continuum as an assessment tool to measure the implementation of cultural proficiency and to establish accountability for cultural proficiency across the GAMC.

- Consultation and review of all agencies' written plans to assist in establishing support of and developing congruence with aspects of the implementation of cultural proficiency within and across agencies and with the cultural proficiency communication strategic plan.

- Utilization of Cultural Proficiency Advisory Committee members as a resource to the GAMC and others, providing opportunities for collaboration in implementation of cultural proficiency.

6. *2008 Referral: Item 09-13. Report, Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies, Recommendation 7. That Communications and Funds Development, in Partnership with the Cultural Proficiency Office, Equip OGA and GAC Staff with Culturally Proficient Communication Tools—From Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 964–77).*

Response: Communications and Funds Development has worked in partnership with the Cultural Proficiency office to increase the cultural competence of stories and images used in communicating the work of General Assembly mission. In addition, the Cultural Proficiency office has equipped members of the Executive Leadership Team with tools such as the Cultural Proficiency Continuum chart and *Culturally Proficient Leadership: The Personal Journey* by Raymond D. Terrell and Randall B. Lindsey.

7. *2002 Referral: Item 08-11. That the General Assembly Council Implement the Mission Initiative, Report on Its Progress Annually with a Final Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010), and Report on the Web Quarterly the Cash Receipts and Disbursements of All Mission Initiative Funds—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2002, Part I, pp. 77, 461).*

Response: The General Assembly Mission Council approved a final narrative report for “Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts and Hands,” in September 2008 (submitted by Communications and Funds Development). This report is presented for information. Current quarterly reports of receipts and disbursements are posted online at <http://www.pcusa.org/financials/missioninitiative.htm>. Future reports will also be posted to this web address.

Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts and Hands, Final Narrative Report

Executive Summary

The Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts and Hands campaign began as a five-year campaign to raise \$40 million for church growth and international mission personnel. The campaign faced a variety of challenges from its very beginning in 2002, which limited its ability to raise pledges to meet the campaign goals.

Despite the challenges, the campaign had a number of successes, including the focused effort of its final year, which brought in \$10 million in pledges, raising the total amount pledged through the campaign to more than \$30 million.

The journey of the past six years, with its challenges and successes, has provided the church with the valuable opportunity to learn lessons from the campaign.

This report seeks to document the challenges, successes, and lessons, so that future efforts might be strengthened.

I. Background

A. *Purpose*

The strategic vision of the Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts and Hands (MIJHH) was to raise \$40 million in pledges during a five-year campaign for the funding of church growth and international mission support.

B. *Origins*

The Mission Initiative originated with actions taken by General Assemblies between 1996 and 1999 to call attention to the need for additional strength in two key areas—new-church development/redevelopment in the United States and mission support overseas. The 1998 General Assembly approved an overture calling for the investment of \$80 million.

In August 2001, GAC staff, after consulting throughout the church, and with area experts, identified a need for about \$200 million, between 2003 and 2010, to impact the pressing needs of the church and to offset the loss of revenue from spendable endowments, but felt that this level of giving was not feasible in the next few years. A first phase targeting

nearly \$40 million was proposed for the years 2003–2006. Based on the results of Phase I, it was hoped that additional phases would follow, eventually realizing the total challenge of the growth needed in this mission work.

In the original report, several campaign parameters were proposed, based on the collection of General Assembly comments that gave rise to the campaign, including:

1. The funding plan would include, but not be limited to, endowments.
2. Costs related to implementing the funding plan should be paid from the proceeds of the campaign.
3. “Up-front” money would be needed to cover initial planning and start-up costs. (The GAC set aside \$1 million for this purpose.)
4. A national campaign, similar to previous efforts, was not anticipated. Instead, this creative funding plan would include a number of targeted components that would be tested during the feasibility study.
5. In order to facilitate responses from donors, six Extra Commitment Opportunity accounts were created to cover three specific areas of mission in each of the two causes.
6. A decade-long period for interpretation, cultivation, and solicitation would be developed as part of a creative new mission funding effort.
7. Intentional efforts would be made to encourage presbyteries that would be conducting campaigns for their own needs to include these causes and to assist those presbyteries with funds development counsel, inasmuch as such shared efforts may provide resources for these causes in their own regions.

C. *Feasibility Study*

A feasibility study was commissioned from the consulting firm of Marts & Lundy, in order to determine if the proposed campaign was realistic for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at this time in the life of the church.

Ninety individuals were identified as potential and desirable participants in the feasibility study and seventy-four individuals were subsequently interviewed. Based on the research, it was determined that the campaign should be styled as a capital campaign and focus on major prospective donors, individual and corporate (with pledges of \$25,000 or more, per gift), rather than be directed to the church at large. Marts & Lundy found that “a campaign might be feasible for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the near future, but only if some significant moves are made to articulate the value of the denomination and to work in concert with local churches involving the members in those pews.”

Other criteria included:

1. “The key leadership of the GAC, Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD), and National Ministries Division (NMD) must commit a significant amount of their time to this funding effort over the five-year period.” (“a significant amount of time” was defined by “as much as 30 percent”)
2. “New and creative partnerships with governing bodies and congregations must be developed.”
3. “Adequate staffing and a budget approaching \$5 million for this five-year effort must be identified. Expert funds development counsel must be retained.”
4. “List of 1,000 major gift prospects for research and cultivation must be identified, and a campaign committee comprised of key denominational leaders and major gift prospects must be established” (“major gift prospects” were defined as those who might contribute \$25,000 or more).

The majority of respondents said, “2003 could be the right time for a campaign, as long as the next 12 months was spent in preparation for the effort.” Marts & Lundy drew the conclusion that “taking that position and attending to a longer view and to the fundamental mission of your organization, it may happen that in the next 12–18 months the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) could move into a capital campaign. In fact, such a campaign might be used as a tool to leverage a reorientation to [a renewal of] the true mission of the church. This is certainly the direction in which the interviewees seemed to be leading.”

Marts & Lundy proposed a five year total time horizon for the Phase I of the campaign. Their report, presented in December 2001, proposed twelve or more months to prepare for the campaign, a public kick-off in spring 2003, followed by four years focused on raising the dollars needed for the goal.

The feasibility study concluded with the voice of prospective donors: “Give us something that’s worth working for and we can make it happen with God’s help.”

D. *Initial GAMC Approval*

The General Assembly Council (GAC) gave initial provisional support for the campaign in February 2002, describing the effort as:

... a funds development campaign to support international mission personnel and church growth, particularly racial-ethnic church growth. The campaign will target major donors (individuals and congregations) that have an interest in mission personnel and church growth. Phase 1 of the Mission Initiative Campaign will raise \$40 million over the next five years.

Final approval by the GAC was made contingent upon the following:

1. Completion of the case statement including specific examples of the mission.
2. Recruitment of the campaign committee including a campaign committee chairperson.
3. The GAC participation in the identification of potential donors.
4. Pledges to the campaign by at least 90 percent of members of GAC.
5. Presentation of a staffing plan for the administration of the campaign.

E. *Case Statement*

In June 2002, the five contingencies for the approval of MIJHH were addressed by the GAC.

The completed case statement addressed the two goals of the campaign:

1. *Church Growth*—According to the case statement, “Without new funds, we will not be able to reverse the trend of annual net losses in our denomination’s membership, nor will we be in a position to meet the opportunities to grow churches in areas of increased racial-ethnic and immigrant populations. In the last 40 years, no new endowments for new church development and redevelopment have been established. While primary responsibility for church development resides with the presbyteries, the national church has the responsibility to ensure that vital church-wide resources are developed and shared throughout the whole nation.” Therefore the campaign proposed:

a. *Grants to Presbyteries*

- (1) New church development grants for new opportunities, especially in racial ethnic, immigrant, and Gen-X new church developments—\$8.1 million.
- (2) Church redevelopment grants for existing congregations—\$2.5 million.
- (3) Racial ethnic and immigrant fellowships—\$359,000.
- (4) Grants for specialized ministries such as day-care centers, youth outreach programs, and parish nurses—\$800,000.

b. *Loans to Congregations*

Loans to new and existing churches to support property acquisition and building construction and expansion for racial ethnic, new immigrant, and Anglo congregations. The loans would also help congregations upgrade their technological capabilities to assist in worship—\$6.5 million.

2. *International Mission Personnel*

a. *Support for Current Mission Personnel.* At the time, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supported more than 600 mission workers in the field. A significant portion of the campaign was designed to sustain this level and replace lost funding from the Bicentennial Fund campaign—“Without new funds, we will no longer be able to support our current level of international mission personnel”—\$9.4 million.

b. *New Mission Personnel.* The GAC, in consultation with partner churches, mission personnel, and staff, also identified needs for new mission personnel, in categories such as: regional experts, replacement personnel, international volunteers, frontier workers, health consultants, and many others—\$11.5 million.

F. *General Assembly Approval*

The GAC adopted the recommendation and sent it to the General Assembly for approval. The 214th General Assembly (2002) reviewed the GAC recommendation and approved it, launching MIJHH as a five year, \$40 million funds development effort for international mission personnel and church growth, with an additional provision: “that the

proceeds from this campaign be considered over and above the budget and not be used to weaken the church's commitment to missions from its unrestricted budget."

The General Assembly directed the GAC to "implement the Mission Initiative and report on its progress" to future General Assembly meetings.

II. Campaign Challenges

A. *Mission Personnel as a Focus of Campaign*

The change added by the 214th General Assembly (2002) was very significant. As interpreted by the General Assembly Council, the provision specified that no Mission Initiative gifts could be allocated in support of existing mission personnel, since existing personnel were already within the budget. The General Assembly Council had been clear that it could not sustain the current number of mission personnel without additional funds, and had designated 25 percent of the total campaign for support of current mission personnel, but the revisions to the case statement on the floor of the assembly made this impossible.

To meet the requirement that the Mission Initiative not diminish the level of undesignated mission budget support for mission personnel, the GAC determined a percentage of the budget, based on the previous year, that would be representative of the church's commitment to mission from the unrestricted budget, and made that percentage constant over the life of the campaign. But as each year passed, the level of restricted funds available for mission personnel support decreased, and they could not be replaced by new gifts to the Mission Initiative.

The General Assembly was aware of the funding needs for current mission personnel, and had approved an additional funds development effort to meet those needs: The General Assembly Council was directed to "communicate to the particular churches of the denomination an extra commitment opportunity (ECO) to support a 'faith factor' increase in the 2003 budget of sufficient size to permit continuity in the recruiting, placement, and support of worldwide missionaries."

With this effort, two simultaneous funds development campaigns were launched:

1. The Mission Initiative, in part, for new mission personnel, in addition to the mission budget, and
2. The "Faith Factor" extra commitment opportunity to increase the 2003 budget to permit continuity of existing number of mission personnel.

With two funds development efforts underway, at times competition between a priority for existing personnel and a priority for new personnel developed and prevented the degree of collaboration that was necessary to make either effort successful. Therefore, ironically, during the course of the campaign designed to increase the number of mission personnel, the number actually decreased.

The campaign would face this issue again when new mission personnel, appointed through gifts to the Mission Initiative, reached the end of their first three-year term of service. At this point, they were no longer considered new mission personnel, and therefore could not remain in the field funded by the Mission Initiative, and funds were also not available within the mission budget to keep them in place.

B. *Nature of the Campaign*

The campaign also faltered initially due to confusion over the nature of the campaign. It was originally designed as a major gifts campaign, similar to a capital campaign, with specifically targeted appeals to individual donors who could make significant pledges.

Campaigns of this nature generally begin with a quiet phase, with advance gifts from several substantial donors. Then, once the campaign has passed a tipping point, a public phase finishes off the pledges, using the advance gifts as leverage. According to a story in the *Presbyterian Outlook*, at the first meeting of the Steering Committee, the campaign director said that the first step should be a strong effort to attract major gifts. The first gift, he said, must be at least \$5 million, the next two in the range of \$2.5 million, the next five at least \$1 million each. The textbook says you stop there, "you stay in this room until you've found those eight gifts," to give the big-hitters a chance up front to start off the campaign with real momentum.

But, this first meeting of the Steering Committee was in November of 2002, several months after the campaign had been approved by the General Assembly. The approval process for the Mission Initiative had required pledges from at least 90 percent of General Assembly Council members. This round of GAC pledges became the "quiet phase" of the campaign.

Upon approval by the General Assembly, two additional motions were approved from the floor of the assembly, launching the campaign with two supplemental funding efforts:

1. A motion to take up an offering for missions at close of the assembly. Baskets were placed at the back of the assembly hall at the close of the assembly to receive cash donations and pledge cards. (This offering, from a General Assembly audience of about 2,500 participants, totaled just over \$17,000.)
2. A motion, in the wake of approving a move to biennial assemblies, encouraging “presbyteries, synods, exhibitors, and affiliated groups to apply the savings realized from biennial assemblies to the Mission Initiative,” and pledging as individual commissioners to “to celebrate the hope in our Lord Jesus Christ by interpreting and advocating for the Mission Initiative” in their presbyteries.

From the start, therefore, the campaign, originally designed as a “major gifts” effort, was evolving into a mass appeal for contributions. The mass audience approach differed sharply from a targeted campaign for special gifts, but the assembly approval process, and the genuine excitement of commissioners toward addressing these heartfelt needs for the church, created confusion around the proper way to carry out the campaign. After the assembly, presbyteries and congregations also followed suit and took up collections for the Mission Initiative, but without the campaign discipline that would be required to cultivate special gifts from major donors.

Members of the Steering Committee wanted to tap into the passion for mission that they saw at the General Assembly and in members of congregations. In the article from the first Steering Committee meeting, published by the *Presbyterian Outlook*, one of the steering committee members is paraphrased as saying, “The denomination needs to find a way to capture that populist energy, to make sure it’s not seen as a campaign for ‘just a bunch of fat cats.’”

This tension between the original direction of the campaign, in line with the feasibility study, and a broader appeal that tapped existing passions within congregations and middle governing bodies, continued throughout the campaign—in part driven by the lack of a major gift donor database, and in part by the developing sense of energy within governing bodies. At times significant effort was focused on individuals, and at other times the best prospects were governing bodies who had demonstrated a strong vision for mission that would qualify as a Mission Initiative cause, and a desire to raise funds to implement that vision.

The campaign was also challenged by its implementation as a one-time funding effort. Efforts such as capital campaigns are generally conducted for one-time expenses that will advance the organization’s capacity to serve. In the case of the Mission Initiative, the campaign’s causes were ongoing ministries, not one-time expenses. The case statement had clearly stated that the effort was necessary in order to offset the final disbursements from several spendable endowments. One-time funding would not be sufficient to continue these ministries into the future, instead they would need replacement funding every year into the future that the ministry continued. A donor might make a five-year pledge, which would enable mission personnel to go into the field for a three-year term, but at the end of the term, there was no mechanism for funding that would continue the ministry beyond its initial term. A capital campaign model may not have been the best way to create renewable resources for funding these causes.

C. *Dearth of Major Gift Prospects*

In 2002, the General Assembly Council was not equipped as a funds development organization. The denomination’s mission agency typically spent most of its efforts properly managing funds, and allocating those funds in the pursuit of mission, but was not equipped to launch a donor-specific funds development appeal.

One of the original criteria for successfully launching the campaign was GAC identification of potential donors. The feasibility study indicated that the campaign would require the identification of 1,000 “major gift prospects” (capable of making gifts of \$100,000 or more). At this level, the campaign would need fewer than 400 gifts to meet the goal.

While the GAC had a record of considerable success in the promotion of special offerings, directed mission giving, and extra commitment opportunities, most of these efforts had focused on promoting through, and providing resources for, congregations and presbyteries. The GAC had not cultivated individual donors, and in 2002 did not have the names of 1,000 “major gift prospects” as required by the feasibility study.

In its statement to the General Assembly, the GAC had committed to “participate in the identification of potential donors,” and the GAC fulfilled this commitment, but the numbers were very small. The first campaign director was quoted in a November 2002 article saying, “To raise \$40 million will take 10,000 qualified prospects, and the Mission Initiative team so far has identified only 100 to 200” adding that there is no “master list” of the denomination’s 2.5 million Presbyterians.

Fortuitously, the campaign director reported growing interest on the part of the presbyteries in the campaign in the weeks leading up to the May 2003 meeting of the Steering Committee. He reported that one executive presbyter had even chased him down in an airport to request a meeting to discuss a potential future partnership in the campaign.

The interest of presbyteries and congregations had not been anticipated in the planning to this point, but the opportunities were welcomed. At a later meeting of the Steering Committee, the director would report that there were relatively few individuals, known to campaign staff—twenty or fewer, rather than the anticipated 200—who had the capacity to make major gifts.

But during the first year of the effort, the campaign was not yet ready to abandon the original design. In May of 2003, the Steering Committee heard a presentation from outside funds development counsel regarding the principles of fundraising as it applied to the campaign:

- In successful fundraising efforts, 10 percent of donors provide 90 percent of the funds.
- Lead gifts provide 25 percent or more of the total campaign goal.
- Lead gifts are important because your chances of taking less time with the overall campaign increases with lead major gifts in the beginning.
- If you “stretch the timetable,” negative aspects can occur within the campaign—people get tired, people wander away, costs skyrocket.
- It takes less money to raise major gifts than it does to raise gifts broadly. For that reason, we need to look at individuals within presbyteries who can give up to the \$10 million mark.
- All campaigns are volunteer driven—people give to people.
- People are needed from around the Steering Committee table, both to give major gifts and to provide names of others that are able.
- It is important to keep the campaign in a very tight timeframe—approximately forty-eight months.
- “Lead donors” will give in the \$5 to \$10 million range.

Questions regarding the dual nature of the campaign were openly discussed by the Steering Committee at this meeting. The meeting notes contain the direct question, “Are we pushing over to the presbyteries and away from individuals?” along with two responses:

- We currently have very limited major donor prospects and time is critical.
- Work with presbyteries must never be a way of getting around the major donor but a way to find major donors. We can assume at this time that pastors are not going to rush to bring their major donors to the table and that the timeline with presbyteries is very different from that of individuals.

The notes conclude with an observation about presbytery campaigns: “Fundraising is a volunteer driven process. The staff in Louisville should be positioned to support and assist volunteers. As we move toward the presbytery model, in some cases, we need to ensure that there is a campaign manager positioned in each presbytery who will ‘take home the project every night.’”

By the next month, June of 2003, the Steering Committee realized that to be successful in reaching the goal, it would have to develop funds through presbytery efforts. The Steering Committee made two decisions:

- “The campaign will continue to focus on major donors and will include a limited number of presbyteries who will be major donors.”
- “...money that is kept in presbyteries for the same purposes as the Mission Initiative will be counted as part of the total.”

The evolution continued, and by 2004, the campaign director was quoted as saying, “I don’t want anyone to think this is just a ‘major gifts campaign.’ We’re doing a campaign, and right now we’re in a deliberate phase of nurturing larger gifts to propel us forward, but by 2007 we’ll certainly want every Presbyterian involved.” One of the campaign chairs said, “We’re still focused on major donors, but frankly, the response from presbyteries has been overwhelming.” Two presbyteries had launched multimillion dollar campaigns. Two others who had approved MIJHH-related campaigns were conducting feasibility studies to determine the amounts they intended to raise.

The campaign was therefore challenged by multiple forces driving the implementation:

- the strength of the feasibility study and the campaign’s weakness with respect to a list of prospective donors, and
- the latent energy within presbyteries and congregations for the purposes of the campaign matched against the limited ability of staff to support a large number of campaigns.

D. Campaign Leadership

The campaign began in June 2002, and was designed to run for five years. Early reports suggested that it might not need the entire five-year period to raise the number of pledges needed, but the switch to biennial General Assemblies disrupted the flow of the campaign, and therefore it was extended through the close of the 218th General Assembly (2008). In total the campaign comprised six years, rather than five.

Through the six years of the campaign, the campaign experienced the leadership of four different directors, in addition to being without a director for eight months.

- June 2002—January 2003—no director
- January 2003—July 2003—director #1
- July 2003—September 2003—no director
- September 2003—February 2004—interim director
- February 2004—October 2006—director #2 (after serving as interim director)
- October 2006—July 2007—acting director
- July 2007—June 2008—interim director #2

During this same period, there were two GAC executive directors, and the two other senior positions that were to spend 30 percent of their time on the campaign were eliminated in a GAC restructure four years into the campaign. The evangelism office, central to the denomination’s leadership efforts for new church development and transformation, was also in the midst of transition throughout the campaign period.

Changes in GAC staff leadership contributed to the development of weak case statements describing the specific ministries that could be launched through the major gifts.

Leadership transitions within the national campaign staff also affected the presbytery-level campaigns. One presbytery reported that over the course of their unsuccessful campaign, five different campaign consultants from the national staff worked with the presbytery—each with a different funds development philosophy or focus, and none had previous experience with a presbytery-level campaign.

Relationship-building is central to a funds development campaign, particularly one focused on major gifts. The lack of long-term continuity in leadership, therefore, presented challenges for donor development.

The strong final months of the campaign can be significantly attributed to competent and effective leadership by the campaign director who was experienced, good on process and follow-through, and relational. He was able to enlist a number of fund-raisers, from within staff and part-time contractors, which leveraged and expanded the capacity of the campaign effort and the campaign leadership.

III. Successes of the Campaign

A. Mobilization Around a Theme

When the Mission Initiative began it was a concept to raise funds for mission by cultivating major gifts from donors toward two primary causes: church growth and international mission personnel. Even with such attractive causes, the Steering Committee and staff felt that to be successful, the campaign would need to have a more identifiable “brand” in order to capture the imagination of Presbyterians.

Taglines for the campaign were discussed at the first Steering Committee meeting, and at the next meeting in early 2003, the promotional identity for the campaign was approved. “The Mission Initiative” became “The Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts and Hands” with a tagline of “A Campaign to Renew the Church for Mission.”

In the years since early 2003, no effort in national church life could have been more successful than a “campaign to renew the church for mission.” While not all of the transformation can be directly linked to the Mission Initiative, the church has been renewed for mission in many ways during this period:

- Dallas consultation—Presbyterians gathered in Dallas, Texas, January 16–18, 2008, in response to an invitation from the Moderator of the General Assembly and the vote of commissioners to the 217th General Assembly (2006), to discuss the current state of international mission in the evolving context of denominational mission outreaches and the future of the worldwide mission work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for the twenty-first century.

Participants in the consultation came together to outline a covenant of agreement to live and serve together and a commitment to work cooperatively. The participants also pledged to celebrate diverse Presbyterian approaches to mission, to share responsibility for education and preparation of all Presbyterians for mission, and to seek and support more mission personnel. Each of the sixty-four consultation participants signed the document titled, “An Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God’s Mission” and agreed to take the document back to other mission-related organizations and seek their approval.

Since the consultation, earlier this year, the “Invitation” has been endorsed by more than 100 other Presbyterians and the:

218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
 Association of Presbyterians for Cross-Cultural Mission
 Association of Presbyterian Mission Pastors (APMP)
 Bel Air Presbyterian Church
 Council on Witness to Society and World of New York Presbytery
 First Presbyterian Church, Audubon, Iowa
 General Assembly Council
 Ghana Mission Network
 Giddings-Lovejoy Joining Hands Coordinating Team
 Grace Presbytery
 Israel/Palestine Mission Network
 Living Waters for the World
 Medical Benevolence Foundation
 New Wilmington Mission Conference
 Outreach Foundation of the Presbyterian Church
 Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship
 Presbyterian Global Fellowship
 Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
 Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Team
 Presbyterian Women of the Synod of Alaska/Northwest Coordinating Team
 Presbyterian Women Synod of the Sun Coordinating Team
 Presbyterians for Renewal
 Presbytery of Central Washington
 Tres Rios Presbytery
 Tres Rios Presbytery Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team
 Witherspoon Society
 World Mission Initiative

The Dallas consultation caps a renewal of interest in mission in recent years, and a remarkable display of unity around one of the central callings of the Christian life.

- World Mission '07: A Celebration of Grace—About 700 Presbyterians attended this world mission conference in Louisville in October 2007. They heard insights about the future of world mission, gained new resources for mission participation, shared their thoughts on mission engagement, and listened to inspirational speakers. The event was described in the church press as one aspect of “twin events that mark the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s most concerted effort to enlist support for the denomination’s global mission in decades.”

- Mission Challenge '07—Following the World Mission '07 event, forty-eight PC(USA) mission workers began a month-long period of intensive itineration, visiting 144 of the PC(USA)’s 173 presbyteries. The itinerating mission personnel told their story of international mission, and asked congregations in these presbyteries to select at least one mission worker and build a relationship with him or her through prayer, correspondence, and financial support. They also challenged presbyteries to seek 100 percent participation by all of their congregations in support of at least one PC(USA) mission worker.

As a result of the itineration visits and a direct mail campaign to persons who had previously expressed an interest in PC(USA) mission, more than \$1.5 million has been raised in support of international mission personnel.

- Missional identity increasingly a focus of church life—Over the last decade, the phrase “missional church” has taken on a life of its own within North American contexts. While there is not a universal agreement on what it means, Alan J. Roxburgh, in his article “The Missional Church” written in 2004, finds these traits, which have had a part in renewing the church:

—“Western society as a mission field.”

—“Mission as *missio dei*.”

—“Missional church is about the nature and purpose of the church.”

—The church as a “contrast society.”

The Mission Initiative is not directly responsible for any of these efforts, but within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) we give thanks to God for the campaign’s part in renewing the church for mission, and pray that this renewal continues.

B. *Funds Development Capacity at the General Assembly Level*

When the campaign started, most GA level activities were focused as funds management, or funds distribution; but few areas had an expertise in funds development. An increasing number of Presbyterians had moved toward donating directly to mission causes through the denomination, (based largely on the success of disaster relief efforts and extra commitment opportunities), but the General Assembly itself had not developed a competency at nurturing those donors.

This structural weakness for funds development significantly impacted the early success of the Mission Initiative. There was no capacity for coordinated donor relations or cultivation, and therefore the GAC did not have information on donor prospects.

One of the first efforts of the campaign, within staff in Louisville, was to increase usage of donor management software. On a small-scale basis, software had been in use since the late 1990s, but it was not widely used. Over the course of the campaign, the difficult challenge of bringing together the various databases of contacts who were interested in the ministries of the General Assembly was addressed.

Today, that donor management software is at the core of the General Assembly Council’s accounting and contact management infrastructure. The software creates a capacity for improved communication with donors and interested others, and allows GAC staff to customize appeals based on the constituent’s demonstrated interests. Unlike the situation in 2002, an infrastructure for funds development, as well as staffing to resource that information, is now in place.

The infrastructure was tested most extensively with the overwhelming response of Presbyterians and others to the needs created by 2005 Hurricanes Katrina, Wilma, and Rita, and the Indonesian tsunami of 2004, as more than \$38 million in donations from almost 30,000 donors was received. Of these 30,000 donors, 18,000 had not previously made a gift to General Assembly mission.

The benefits of this infrastructure may also be seen in the increased success as the campaign continued. Once the infrastructure was built, donors received better information, solicitation, and acknowledgement.

As the campaign started, the GAC Executive Director repeatedly referred to the campaign as “phase one” of a fundamental shift in the way PC(USA) mission is funded. “We’ve been passive, waiting for folks to give,” he said. “We

need to learn to be more interactive and proactive. This campaign will help us learn, while we raise money for two specific parts of our work.” Part of the success of the Mission Initiative has been the learning of these lessons.

C. Thirty-four Mission Personnel Fully Funded and Deployed

The campaign has generated pledges and gifts that have enabled thirty-four individuals to be appointed into new international mission service positions, including several that were deployed in January 2009:

- Stacy and Bob Bronkema (Russia)—to serve with the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy, an international faith community composed primarily of students and refugees from the developing world.
- David Dierksen (Mexico)—to serve as Puentes de Cristo U.S. coordinator for Presbyterian Border Ministries in Mexico.
- Carol Dolezal-Ng (Lebanon)—to serve as development associate for interpretation and support with the Near East School of Theology (NEST).
- Brett and Shelly Faucett (India, Thailand, and China)—to serve as regional consultants for HIV/AIDS in Asia.
- Gwenda and John Fletcher (Democratic Republic of Congo)—to serve in education with the Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa and as a physician with the Presbyterian Community of the Congo.
- Jacob Goad (Peru)—to serve as coordinator for receiving PC(USA) mission teams and delegations in Peru.
- Shirley Hill (Cameroon)—to serve as registered nurse, pastor, and chaplain, providing training and support to the public health (HIV/AIDS) program of the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon.
- Jane Holslag (Lithuania)—to serve as a professor of theology and English at the LCC International University (formerly Lithuania Christian College).
- Tracey King (Nicaragua)—to serve as regional liaison for Central America, creating better communication between the Worldwide Ministries Division, mission personnel, partner churches, and PC(USA) congregations interested in ministry in Central America.
- Matt Middleton (Palestine/Israel)—to serve as a music teacher in Bethlehem, Palestinian territory currently occupied by the state of Israel. He was chair of music at Dar Al-Kalima College and music coordinator for Lutheran ministries in Bethlehem. Matt also directed Bethlehem Star Music, a joint program of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church and International Center of Bethlehem, which has five ensembles: band, chamber ensemble, choristers, chorus, and handbells.
- Shannon O’Donnell (Palestine/Israel)—to serve as assistant to the director for the Sabeel Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem.
- Ingrid Reneau (Sudan)—to serve as an educator in Sudan, and to help the Sudanese, who have lived through such unimaginable horrors, know the peace and love of Christ.
- Bill Richter (Mexico and Texas)—to serve as U.S. coordinator of the bi-national ministry, Puentes de Cristo, helping PC(USA) delegations and mission teams be engaged in meaningful ministry along the U.S./Mexico border.
- Doug and Liz Searles (Poland)—to serve as consultants and evangelists working with church leaders in church growth, small group development, music ministry, and teacher training in English as a second language, all in order to assist church renewal and growth in the Evangelical-Reformed Church in Poland in the post-communist environment.
- Vicki Smith (Jamaica)—to serve as educator in music and art with children ages three to twelve at Iona Preparatory School in Tower Isle, Jamaica.
- Scott and Melanie Smith (India)—to serve with the Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA). Scott is helping the EHA take a community-organizing approach to community health work, and Melanie is office manager for a “struggling but growing” fair trade company.
- Stacey Steck (Costa Rica)—to serve as associate for development and congregational growth with the Costa Rican Presbyterian Church
- Marcia Towers (Guatemala)—to serve as site coordinator for the Young Adult Volunteer Program, placing young adult volunteers in Guatemalan church communities. She also works with the Central American Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies.

- Bruce and Lora Whearty (Ethiopia)—to serve in an outreach program of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus teaching English as well as mentoring and training teachers.

An additional nine mission workers were deployed in the fields of education, evangelism, and health in four countries that are not listed here due to security concerns.

D. *Presbyteries and Congregations Have Connected with General Assembly Mission*

As campaign staff visited with prospects (presbyteries, congregations, and members), it often formed a first encounter for those prospects with representatives of General Assembly mission. Time after time, visit reports revealed that the prospective donors had no awareness of the range of mission being engaged by the General Assembly.

In addition, the visits opened lines of communication between General Assembly offices and many congregations actively engaged in other mission, where previously there had been a disconnect. Campaign staff had no awareness of the range of mission being engaged by presbyteries and congregations as well.

The fruit of these visits will be borne out over the years to come. In some cases, the prospect was already committed to causes for the near term, but indicated a willingness to consider General Assembly mission options in the future. The value of the campaign cannot be stated solely in the number of pledges that came in during the six-year life of the campaign. Future gifts will not be counted in the Mission Initiative totals, but the inspiration for the gift will have come from the initial cultivation of the donor that occurred during the campaign.

E. *More Than \$30 Million in Pledges Despite the Challenges*

Despite the campaign's uneven start, and the lack of a database of prospective donors, the Mission Initiative raised more than \$30 million in pledges, including:

Mission Personnel

GAC Administered	\$4.7 million
Presbytery Administered	\$0.02 million
Congregation Administered	\$1.0 million

Church Growth

GAC Administered	\$0.1 million
Presbytery Administered	\$16.2 million
Congregation Administered	4.0 million

Unrestricted/Undesignated

GAC Administered	\$3.2 million
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A complete report was made available at the September 2008 General Assembly Council meeting.

More than \$10 million in pledges and gifts were produced in the campaign's final quarter (April–June 2008), following a refocusing of campaign energy in the campaign's final year, which included:

- Adopting campaign parameters—providing reasonable definition for acceptable Mission Initiative contributions.
- Creating a written plan for contacting the “top 200” congregations and the top presbyteries—defining a critical path for a comprehensive fund-raising strategy.
- Implementing “user-friendly” commitment forms (pledge and gift instruments) for churches, presbyteries, and individuals—eliminating much of the complication involved in record-keeping and determining donor intent.
- New leadership and the recruitment of a staff team of six, part-time, experienced, relational, and process-oriented Presbyterian fundraising professionals who were assigned specific church and presbytery prospects—bringing the basic principles of effective fund-raising into play.
- Enlisting, and getting the commitment of, an ad hoc Leadership Task Force of Steering Committee members to assume the responsibility for contacting selected “Top 200” churches where they had a personal relationship with the pastor to set the stage for staff team members to schedule visits and discuss participation in mission initiative. Without this effort, the campaign would not have made the forward progress that it did over the final year. The Leadership Task

Force was comprised of Joanna Adams, Tim Hart-Andersen, John Huffman, Dave Peterson, and Linda Valentine under the leadership of Tom Gillespie. Adams and Peterson also served as campaign co-chairs over the campaign's final two years.

Additional gifts and pledges were signed by donors before the end of the campaign on June 30, 2008, but were not received in the campaign office until July or August. These gifts/pledges will be noted on future campaign reports.

The energy of the campaign's final year provides a platform for continued successful funds development efforts. In many of these "top 200" congregations, once the renewed set of contacts were explored there wasn't enough time left in the campaign to cultivate the relationship and find the best way to link mission opportunities with mission interest, but the relationships will continue to develop within the Funds Development office.

F. *Leadership within the Steering Committee*

1. *Early Successes*

When the campaign was launched in June of 2002, a Steering Committee had not yet been formed, but the two campaign co-chairs were in place, Bill Saul, of Long Beach, California, and Lucimarian Roberts, of Biloxi, Mississippi. The leadership provided by Roberts and Saul in the initial phases were central to the recruitment of the Steering Committee, the selection of campaign staffing, and the initial pledges that were secured. It was also under the leadership of Saul and Roberts that the campaign responded to the interest expressed in presbyteries and created the category of "presbytery administered" funds. Saul's presbytery, Los Ranchos, was one of the campaign's first large donors, pledging \$4.5 million.

2. *Thomas Gillespie*

Thomas Gillespie, a member of the General Assembly Council Executive Committee, became an outspoken advocate for the successful completion of the Mission Initiative late in 2006. The campaign had raised about \$26 million in pledges, but lacked the momentum to raise the final \$14 million that would be necessary to complete the effort. In addition, several of the pledges included in the \$26 million were overly optimistic estimates of what might be possible within several governing bodies.

Gillespie gave energy to the campaign, both through verbal support, and a willingness to assist the effort through all means possible. As a result, he was named honorary campaign chair, and rallied the Steering Committee through its final eighteen months of work with an extraordinary vigor.

3. *The Steering Committee*

Members of the Steering Committee agreed to serve a five-year term on a committee that would seek to do a new thing: effectively raise a significant amount of funds for critical mission needs within a denomination that was finding its unity challenged at each step of the way. Through it all, they sought "to renew the church for mission."

At the end of six years, the Steering Committee was thanked for its efforts and dismissed, with most of the church knowing little about the extent of the commitment that the members had given. Members of the Steering Committee led the way in early pledges, as 85 percent of its members made financial commitments to the campaign. Steering Committee members have described their work as one of the most difficult challenges in their careers of church service.

Through these challenges they were led by the unity of Christ's mission. In February 2003, the committee released a statement regarding their common convictions for the unity of mission that would guide their efforts throughout the rest of the campaign:

We, the members of the Steering Committee of the Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts and Hands, reaffirm our unequivocal and unanimous support of the goals for the PC(USA) \$40 million campaign: expanding global mission and developing churches. We represent a range of theological positions and differing perspectives on some matters that are divisive in the life of the church, including ordination issues and questions of biblical authority and interpretation. Yet, we remain united behind the Mission Initiative. We trust that God will work through the church to resolve these matters in God's own time and way. In the meantime, we call all members of the PC(USA) to step forward and join us in fully supporting the Joining Hearts and Hands campaign. Together, by the grace of God, the church will be renewed for the mission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Those who have served as Steering Committee members: Joanna Adams, Atlanta, Ga.; Judy Angleberger, Beaver Pa.; Carol Adcock, Fort Worth, Tex.; Fran Calderwood, Sterling, Kans.; Don Campbell, San Antonio Tex.; Youngil Cho, Raleigh, N.C.; Melva Costen, Atlanta, Ga.; Erin Cox-Holmes, Yatesboro, Pa.; Fred Denson, Webster, N.Y.; John Detterick, Rociado N.M.; Jan DeVries, Tucson, Ariz.; Winnie Drape, Manitowoc, Wis.; Chuck Ford, Huntington Beach, Calif.; Thomas Gillespie, Princeton, N.J.; Tim Hart-Andersen, Minneapolis, Minn.; Thomas Hood, St. Louis Miss.; John Huffman, Newport Beach, Calif.; Curtis Kearns, Louisville Ky.; Charles Kim, Setauket N.Y.; Bob Langwig, Tucson Ariz.; Robert Leech, Jeffersonville, Ind.; Marian McClure, Louisville Ky.; Manley Olson, St. Paul, Minn.; Letty Owings, Edmonds Wash.; David Peterson, Houston, Tex.; Alvin Puryear, Williamsburg, Va.; Lucimarian Roberts, Biloxi, Miss.;

Allison Seed, Lee's Summit, Mo.; Linda Valentine, Louisville, Ky.; Edmundo Vasquez, Pasadena, Calif.; John Williams, Overland Park, Kans.

G. *Generosity of Individuals*

1. *Mary Lee Dayton of Minneapolis*

In January of 2006, Mary Lee Dayton created a permanent endowment for the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Cameroon, through a \$1 million gift. Dayton, and her congregation, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, had a special connection with Cameroon. Her father, the late Arnold Lowe, began his ministry there in 1912 as a Presbyterian missionary. At that time Cameroon was a German colony. When World War I broke out, Lowe was one of three missionaries who remained and courageously led an effort to protect thousands of Cameroonians from the warring Europeans. Later, he served as pastor of Westminster Church from 1941–1965. Dayton's gift created an endowment through the Presbyterian Foundation, and will provide support for the seminary in Cameroon for future generations.

2. *Chuck Ford, Huntington Beach, California*

Chuck Ford, a lifelong Presbyterian, and member of the Mission Initiative Steering Committee, has been instrumental in starting fifteen new and redeveloped congregations in southern California. His contributions to the campaign have been numerous and multifaceted. In addition to his own pledges of more than \$680,000, he has been active in the campaign of his congregation (St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach, California), his presbytery (Los Ranchos), and other presbyteries.

3. *Anonymous*

In June of 2008, an anonymous donor, citing deep concerns for the health, education, and well-being of the world's children, made a gift of \$510,456 to the Mission Initiative. The funds ensured that six new mission co-workers would be sent to serve in positions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Poland, Pakistan, and Costa Rica.

H. *Presbytery Campaigns*

Several presbyteries have been actively involved in campaigns to raise funds within the scope of the Mission Initiative, but none have been as active and energetic as the campaign of the Presbytery of Los Ranchos. In July of 2003, the presbytery announced that it had committed to raise \$4.5 million to extend its ministry at home and around the world. The presbytery worked with its congregations and sessions follow-through on its pledge and celebrated the accomplishment at its November 2008 meeting. Projects sponsored included: Chinese Presbyterian Church of Orange County, Village Presbyterian Church of Ladera Ranch, Mission workers in Thailand, and Mission workers in Pakistan.

I. *Congregational Campaigns Over \$1 Million*

In addition to presbytery campaigns, several congregations have responded to the twin challenges of raising support for church growth and international mission personnel by engaging campaigns that have pledged more than \$1 million each. The mission commitment of these congregations has been extraordinary: Memorial Drive, Houston, Tex.; Grace First, Long Beach, Calif.; Madison Avenue, New York City; Fourth Presbyterian, Chicago; and St. Andrews, Newport Beach, Calif.

J. *New Church Development Efforts*

Many new church developments have been nurtured through the support of the Mission Initiative campaign, including:

- Iglesia Fuente de Esperanza—a new church in Houston, which is attracting and serving primarily Mexican, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan immigrants who are new to the faith.
- Highlands—an exciting new church development in Paso Robles, California, which has moved in only a year and a half's time from one service of worship with an average attendance of 180 to three services with an average attendance of 550.
- Peace New Church Development—a missional church with an intentional, outward focus that is making a real difference in the community in Lakewood Ranch, Florida.
- Word of Life—a new church in Port Hueneme, California, an area characterized by extreme poverty and gang culture, which is comprised primarily of new Christians between the ages of twenty-three and forty-five, who had never been formally involved in a church before.

K. *Administrative Cost of Campaign*

Previous campaigns have often faced difficulty in covering the administrative cost of conducting the campaign. The Mission Initiative was set out in a different manner. The original staff-led study proposed that costs for the funding plan be paid from the proceeds of the campaign and estimated that an up-front investment would be required of the GAC.

The feasibility study was more specific about those estimates, calling for a budget of nearly \$5 million to implement the campaign over five years.

The General Assembly Council budgeted \$1 million for 2003 to cover the upfront costs of the campaign, ensuring that the campaign had the resources needed to launch the effort. In addition, the GAC covered campaign operating expenses for 2004 and half of 2005. At this point, the Mission Initiative campaign was charged with covering campaign expenses.

As of the end of June 2008, six years into the campaign, due to the careful stewardship of campaign resources, the total administrative cost has been \$4.3 million, easily under the initial estimate of nearly \$5 million for five years. At the same time, of the more than \$30 million in campaign pledges and gifts, only \$2 million has been allocated toward campaign expenses, since the GAC separately invested \$2.3 million into the campaign.

IV. Lessons Learned

A. *Donors Seek Involvement in the Mission They Fund*

The Mission Initiative campaign was designed to focus resources on two of the most commonly cited priorities for General Assembly mission: international mission personnel and church growth. A variety of giving opportunities were created so that donors could participate in the campaign through a number of options. Donor response to the variety of accounts taught the campaign a mixed set of lessons.

When Presbyterian churches are open to investing in PC(USA) mission projects, they are increasingly determined to know where the money is going, who the mission workers are, what the purpose of the mission is, and how they might have some interaction with the mission workers.

Donors are much less interested in giving undesignated funds to international mission, instead they want to share in the mission. Therefore they seek a direct connection and a meaningful relationship with a mission worker and with a part of the world that resonates with their congregation's own missional interests.

Each of the major pledges to the campaign were made in a region of the world where the donor, whether an individual, congregation, or presbytery, had previously existing relationships. It was that involvement in mission that inspired the donor to make an even greater gift.

The same lessons can be found in the church growth side of the campaign. A large majority of the funds committed to church growth as part of the campaign were committed to specific causes within the donor's congregation or presbytery.

Unrestricted pledges, for either primary cause of the campaign, were relatively rare, comprising less than only 10 percent of the total pledges committed.

The designation of a pledge, however, does not have to be tightly defined. As Mission Challenge '07 (a related effort that during 2007 and 2008 raised more than \$1 million for World Mission) demonstrated, when given an option, donors prefer some restriction on the gift in order to gain involvement in the mission, but they do not want to micro-manage the causes they pledge to support.

B. *Campaigns Must Hit the Ground Running*

The feasibility study for the Mission Initiative called for a twelve-to-eighteen month period of preparation prior to launching the campaign. However, once active consideration of a campaign began, the process gathered momentum and moved more quickly than the feasibility study had recommended, condensing the time allotted for preparation.

While the idea of a campaign, in response to *Overture 98-47*, had been circulating for several years, the sequence of events began to move quickly with the internal report (August 2001), the feasibility study (December 2001), GAC provisional approval (February 2002), and GAC final approval, along with General Assembly approval, in June 2002.

Despite this ten-month period, campaign preparations were not occurring, instead the focus was on demonstrating a commitment to meet the criteria that had been proposed for the campaign. When the campaign was launched in June

2002, a five-month period passed before a Steering Committee was selected, and six months passed before there a campaign director was in place.

During this period, the original strategy for the campaign lost momentum, and a grassroots approach to raising funds stepped into the vacuum, with a \$17,000 offering at General Assembly, several presbytery collections, and a general encouragement to apply savings from biennial assemblies toward the campaign. This made it impossible to fulfill the campaign strategy of having a “quiet phase” in which the bulk of the major pledges would be developed.

In addition, this timeline left little room for consultation with the GAC, middle governing bodies, or large congregations, apart from the feasibility study itself, prior to seeking approval for the campaign from the General Assembly.

Once campaign leadership was in place, several additional months of planning and preparation were needed to reorient the campaign toward its purposes, to interpret the campaign, and to build relationships with the necessary partners across the church.

Future campaigns would benefit from additional consultation and planning with GAC elected leaders, presbyteries, and congregations; and a longer quiet phase before launching the campaign into a public process. Careful planning is required to find a way to balance the General Assembly timelines for approval, while also allowing campaigns to hit the ground running—once launched, they don’t have time to go back and invent the rules, they need to be equipped to begin working as soon as they are approved.

In addition, the staff organization must be equipped with the ingredients for a successful campaign, before a campaign is launched:

- A donor base with meaningful relationships, based on prior giving history with some connection to GAC and GAC mission, must be developed.
- Qualified staff with time dedicated to fund-raising.
- Volunteers with relationships to donors.

C. *Applying Criteria from the Feasibility Study*

The feasibility study for any campaign is a very significant document, as it sets out under what conditions a proposed campaign might be successful. The Mission Initiative campaign was backed by two significant documents: the internal preliminary case study document, and the feasibility study. Each was carefully developed to elaborate on the style and substance of a campaign that could be successful within the mission life of the General Assembly from 2003 through 2007.

In many instances, the criteria are very clear about what should and should not be done within the campaign. In other areas, Steering Committee members report that they wished the document would also have discussed campaign strategies, necessary campaign leadership, and the campaign resources required to sustain such strategies.

D. *A Comprehensive Plan for Fund-Raising*

There was no comprehensive plan for fund-raising for the first five years of the campaign. This shortcoming resulted in most of what would be considered the “Top 200” churches and most of the higher budget presbyteries either not being contacted at all, or lacking any follow-up after a perfunctory initial contact. This scenario changed in September of 2007, the sixth year of the campaign, bringing energy and direction to the campaign, a surge of contacts within the last nine months, and more than \$10 million in pledges and gifts in the final quarter of the campaign. Unfortunately, the increased number of contacts came very late in the campaign, and found many prospects without sufficient reaction time to be able to make a commitment within the campaign period.

The success of future campaigns will be enhanced if a comprehensive plan is put into place at the beginning of the campaign, and then adjusted based on implementation results.

E. *Much of the Mission Work of Presbyterians Is “Off The Radar”*

In the campaign’s final one-year push, the strategy was revised to approach the largest congregations in the PC(USA). Presbyterians and Presbyterian churches are very “mission-minded.” In the contacts that were made by staff team members, time and again it was revealed that there were significant “mission projects” and significant dollars devoted to projects that had no connection to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a denomination. At first there was an attempt to document and record those initiatives, but this was not kept up because of the sheer volume. At least the very least, the \$30 million attributed to the Mission Initiative is matched by another \$30 million worth of church initiatives that are under the radar of the denomination. These funds sponsor and support mission workers overseas, support schools and hospitals, and collaborate with other organizations in a myriad of projects.

F. *Perception of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) “Brand” of Mission*

Research done in 2005 indicated that a large majority of Presbyterians were either little informed or not informed about the range and scope of PC(USA) mission beyond their congregation. The study showed that this was also true of Presbyterian elders.

When individual prospects with the possible potential for major gifts were contacted, for the most part, they evidenced very little interest in the Mission Initiative campaign. Lack of sufficient interpretation and cultivation may have been a determining factor in these cases, but it also raises the larger question of how “brand” awareness relates to mission funding.

For many donors, there is a lack of history for direct giving in support of the twin causes of the Mission Initiative: church growth and international mission personnel. Funding support for these causes has traditionally been provided within the context of support for the larger church (beyond the congregation), through gifts to the congregation. Therefore, the causes never had to provide specific promotional materials for funds development.

As patterns of mission, service, and funding have changed, the denomination has not kept pace. Organizations that can promote their “brand” attributes have generally shown an ability to raise the necessary funds to implement their mission.

Future campaigns will need to develop stronger presentations for the denomination’s approach to its mission, and the unique attributes that it brings, so that prospective donors can better understand the strategic importance of funding this kind of work. Relying upon the traditional legacy of Presbyterian mission effectiveness alone will not be sufficient.

G. *The Time Required to Cultivate a Gift*

Presbyteries, for the most part, are the bodies that initiate and follow through on new church development projects. It takes years to move from the decision to start a new church, through the planning phases, and then to conduct the campaign, if it is feasible, to begin the new congregation.

One common scenario that the staff team encountered was presbytery planning for new church developments that was not yet sufficiently developed enough to have dollars counted toward the campaign total, and not enough campaign time remaining to wait for specific definition.

A second common scenario was new church development projects that were well down the road to completion and that could not be counted because there was no prior Mission Initiative contact. Earlier contact, as opposed to final year contact, could have brought more presbyteries into the campaign.

While five or six years is a significant period for a campaign, the timelines for potential donors can be even longer, particularly when the effort begins without an active ongoing process of donor cultivation. Future campaigns will need to take those longer timelines into account, or be based on existing relationships with potential donors.

H. *Pastors and Congregations Are Central*

Pastors and congregations are central to Presbyterian funds development campaigns. While many Presbyterians are eager to participate in the mission and ministry of the denomination, they do so generally at the encouragement of those whom they most trust—their congregational colleagues and leaders. Each of the major gifts developed through this campaign occurred because of the encouragement of someone within their congregation or the encouragement of pastoral leadership. Future campaigns will need to draw upon the strength of the relationship between pastors, congregations, and the General Assembly.

I. *Accountability and Collaboration*

The Mission Initiative was a new approach to funds development for mission within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The campaign’s integration, with existing mission programs as well as presbytery and congregational campaigns, required tight collaboration. When this collaboration was lacking, the campaign’s progress suffered.

Similarly, in creating a new style of funds development, lines of accountability were not always clearly delineated. The campaign was initiated by the General Assembly Council, approved by the General Assembly, and overseen by the Steering Committee, with only brief clarifications as to ongoing roles:

- The General Assembly directed the GAC “to implement the Mission Initiative and report on its progress” to future General Assembly meetings.

- The campaign guidelines, proposed by the GAC and approved by the General Assembly, describe the role of the Steering Committee: “Under the direction of the General Assembly Council, the Mission Initiative Steering Committee will provide leadership for the Mission Initiative Funds Development effort.”
- A few months into the campaign, the GAC Executive Director sought to clarify the roles of the GAC and the Steering Committee by saying, “[The Steering Committee is] to lead the campaign and set the policies, and the Council will determine the utilization of the funds.”

There is a point at which too many changes in the game plan, and the rules, and the players, and the way of keeping score becomes highly detrimental to presenting a clear and understandable invitation to participation; not to mention the effect on the morale of those responsible for carrying out the mandate.

Future campaigns would be wise to build in clear principles of accountability and collaboration, so that there is no confusion, and so that communication between stakeholders can flow more freely.

V. Next Steps

The pledge reception phase of the Mission Initiative campaign came to a close on June 28, 2008, but payments on those pledges will continue to be received through December 31, 2012. A final financial report will be submitted to the 220th General Assembly (2014). Until that time, the following activities will be undertaken:

- The GAC director of funds development will create a collection system for outstanding pledges, and make quarterly reports via the website, regarding the fulfillment of pledges.
- World Mission will provide continuing feedback to donors regarding the projects for which pledges have been made.
- Presbyteries and congregations will be queried regarding the status of cash received toward pledges administered at the presbytery or congregation level.

8. *2002 Referral: Item 09-03. Recommendation to Delay Implementation of Overture 01-55. On Directing CMD to Develop Study Materials to Provide Guidance on the Relationship of the Finding of the Sciences to the Affirmation of God as Creator of the Universe—From the Presbytery of National Capital (Minutes, 2001, Part I, pp. 38, 467–86) Until Sufficient New Funding Is Provided—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2002, Part I, pp. 45, 493).*

Response: This project has been deferred due to lack of funds. A resource for teens, *Fossils and Faith Leader’s Guide: Finding Our Way Through the Creation Controversy*, by Thea Leunk is available. Theology Worship and Education ministries will continue to look for avenues to explore this important issue.

9. *2002 Referral: Item 11-02, Report: A Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans: 2002 Supplemental Recommendations of the General Assembly Special Task Force on Native American Ministries, Recommendation 4: Request That a Report on Implementation of the Recommended Strategies Be Presented to the 219th General Assembly (2007), in Coordination with the Native American Consulting Committee and Appropriate General Assembly Entities. The report should include consideration of the policies set out in the UPCUSA, Native American Ministry Churchwide Policy Statement, 191st General Assembly (1979) (Minutes, 1979, Part I, pp. 91, 401-4).*

Response: This referral is answered by the “Native American Ministry Supplemental Report,” found below. The Office of Native American Congregational Support, in consultation with the Native American Consulting Committee, has studied, reviewed, and submitted this report focusing on the implementation of strategies for Native American Ministry using the Native American Churchwide Policy Statement of 1979 as a standard of measurement.

Native American Ministry Supplemental Report

Background

Previous reports deriving from this referral include a report on the Native American Churchwide Consultation, held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 22–24, 2005, and a report from the Office of Native American Congregational Enhancement, which focused on pertinent statistics regarding Native Americans from both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the 2000 Census; both reports were presented to the 217th General Assembly (2006).

The *Churchwide Policy Statement for Native American Ministry*, adopted by the 191st General Assembly (1979) of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1979, Part 1, pp. 91, 401–4), is the current PC(USA) mandate for Native American Ministries. It continues to be an important guide for Native American ministries, for its policy directions are basic and achievable. Another critical document, “Comprehensive Strategy for Ministry with Native Americans,” approved by the 212th General Assembly (2000) (*Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 206ff), developed strategies to

support and supplement this policy. Under current PC(USA) policy, the Native American Consulting Committee (NACC) is the primary consultative body on Native American ministries in the PC(USA). The NACC periodically reviews the 1979 churchwide policy statement to identify progress being made in the areas identified in that report and those that provide continuing challenges. This report represents the NACC's continuing effort to assist the PC(USA) in implementing and supporting this policy.

The 1979 policy statement identified ten critical areas that needed to be addressed by the church as it went forward in ministry with Native Americans. They are:

- **Mutuality in Mission:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will seek to understand Native American culture and respect the philosophy, values, and heritage of Native Americans in order that Presbyterians may learn from Native American lifestyles and benefit from fellowship with them.
- **Preparation for Native American Ministry:** Native American ministerial candidates and non-Native American pastors engaged in ministries with Native Americans must be oriented to Native American culture, heritage, history, and religious thought.
- **Leadership:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to a ministry that is trained, ordained, and installed according to certain prescribed standards. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will work toward the provision of a competent ministry in every Native American congregation.
- **Continuing Education:** Continuing education opportunities are important to Native Americans in the professional ministry. Cooperative efforts by national agencies, governing bodies, and church education institutions should be undertaken to develop special programs designed to address specific and current concerns in Native American communities.
- **Pastoral Support:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) commits itself to the principle of adequate financial compensation and benefits for pastors and their families serving Native American congregations.
- **Lay Leadership:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through its presbyteries, will provide resources to train elders and other lay leader for witness and service in both church and community.
- **Facilities, Buildings, and Land:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will encourage the use of criteria set for constructing and maintaining church buildings, facilities, land, and equipment utilized in Native American ministries that conform to the highest possible standards for promotion of their ministries.
- **National Agency, Council, and Committee Relations:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will promote and effect through the General Assembly Committee on Nominations the membership of Native Americans on agencies, councils, and committees at the national level.
- **Ecumenical Relationships:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will support and promote ecumenical participation and development of endeavors among Native Americans, particularly on the reservation and in urban areas where denominational differences impede Christian witness.
- **Secular Relationships:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will affirm, assist, and be an advocate for the efforts of Native American people for the betterment of Native American life, both on and off the reservation.

Since then, the 212th General Assembly (2000) approved a comprehensive strategy developed by a Special Task Force on Native American Ministries, which recommended the addition of three more areas. They are:

- **Urban Ministries:** As more and more American Indian people move from reservations and many move to cities, urban ministry with American Indians become critically important to the church.
- **Youth Ministry:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will assist and support Native American Youth Ministries in developing programs that will encourage Native American youth to learn about, develop skills in, and deepen a commitment to Native American Indian ministry.
- **Economics:** The Native American Consulting Committee will advocate and promote Native American economic development on reservations and in urban areas through appropriate bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The basis for these areas of concern lies in the history of Native American ministries within various Presbyterian bodies now represented as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). For a more complete version of this history, see Appendix A at the end of this report or "Summary of the Historic Relationship Between the Presbyterian Church and Native American Peoples" at www.pcusa.org/nativeamerican (click on Reports and Policies).

Prior to the 1970s, Native American ministries in the Presbyterian church functioned through either a “Foreign Missions” approach (in which missionaries were sent to evangelize the non-Christian natives on the American frontier) or a “Home Missions” approach (in which ministries and their properties were coordinated and funded through a centralized national board). In the early 1970s, however, through a major restructuring of the denominational offices, Native churches were moved from the umbrella of the Board of National Missions to being part of the presbyteries and synods in which they were physically located. Thus, approximately 100 congregations, for many of whom “the Presbyterian church” was represented by a national missions field staff person, experienced an abrupt transition. To be Presbyterian suddenly meant being part of new, unfamiliar, and often uncertain, relationships with presbyteries with whom they had few, if any, prior dealings and vice-versa.

In 1969, as this reorganization was being anticipated, the General Assembly provided seed money to be used for projects on Native American Indian reservations. An ad hoc committee, the Indian Consulting Panel, was created to review proposals for the use of those funds. It soon became apparent, however, that a permanent consultative body was needed.

The Native American Consulting Committee was formally established in 1977, with authority to evaluate and recommend programs seeking national funding and to provide counsel to the General Assembly agencies and synods on matters affecting Native peoples. The 1983 reunion resulted in a total of 109 Native American congregations in the newly formed Presbyterian Church (USA).

a. *Office for Native American Congregational Support (NACS)*

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy and commitment supports the principle of self-determination for Native American congregations. However, as is often the case with small congregations throughout the denomination, Native American congregations are reliant upon partnerships within and beyond the denomination in order to function and survive. The office for Native American Congregational Support (NACS), as part of the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women ministry area within the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), is the “connection” between Native American ministries and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The purpose of the office for Native American Congregational Support is to enable the PC(USA) to respond to Native American congregational issues and to enable Native American Presbyterians to participate actively and effectively within the PC(USA) at all levels. The office serves as the voice of these congregations and provides a sounding board for their concerns. It is also the link to critical information such as leadership development opportunities. The office is a key partner as presbyteries and synods strive to support Native American ministries within their bounds. It also serves as an important source of information and orientation for national and middle governing body staff in the PC(USA) as well as other denominations, particularly as these bodies experience restructuring and staff transitions.

The reliance of Native American congregations and pastors on the national office and its associate staff person cannot be overstated.

b. *Native American Consulting Committee*

Working closely with the Native American Congregational Support (NACS) office, the Native American Consulting Committee (NACC) is the other critical link in sustaining Presbyterian commitment to Native American ministries and implementing churchwide policies and strategies in this area.

The NACC began as a consulting body during the 1960s–1970s transition from the top-down model, through which the Board of National Missions had jurisdiction over Native American congregations and ministries, to the current model in which Native American ministries are part of presbyteries and synods based on geography. (The Presbytery of Dakota, a non-geographical presbytery, which serves Native American congregations in Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Montana, is an exception.)

The concept was one of consultation; decisions would not be made *about* Native American people without their presence and their participation. Over time, NACC has become the voice of Native American people within the denomination, as well as the voice of the denomination with regard to matters of importance to Native American people, their congregations, and their communities. The concept of consultation is so important that when other racial ethnic advocacy groups took the name *caucus*, Native American representation within the PC(USA) chose to retain the “Consulting Committee” title.

Funding for many areas of church life has diminished in recent years. Support for the NACC is no exception. We now do most of our work by email and conference call, with one face-to-face meeting a year. As our members are from diverse parts of the country, we are able, however, to provide consultation to presbyteries and synods close to our own base. This ability to travel, to meet, and to dialogue with Native American congregations and their presbyteries, makes a critical difference in sustaining vital ministry and enhancing the congregational revitalization process.

c. *Areas Needing Particular Focus at This Time*

Several of the strategies highlighted in the comprehensive strategy paper (2000) are of particular importance at this time and require particular attention from the church, Native American and non-Native American alike. First and foremost is the need for a broad-based consultation on Native American ministry through which the many areas of concern can be addressed and discussed, and new vision for implementing the strategies can be developed and communicated. Plans for this consultation are underway.

d. *Plans for a Churchwide Consultation on Native American Ministry*

Native Americans work through relationship, and meeting together is critical to our being able to learn from the past in order to envision the future. One of the important ways this has happened in the past was through “Eight Synod” consultations, which brought together Native American clergy and leaders, as well as middle governing body staff and leadership, from throughout the synods where Native American congregations are located. Though initially held every three years, the last such consultation was held in 2005. A report on this consultation was prepared for the 217th General Assembly (2006) (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 108–113).

It is critical that another consultation be held soon, with an even broader complement of participation. Given the increasing numbers of non-reservation Native American Indians, the next consultation must include persons from presbyteries and urban areas with strong, non-reservation Native American populations. There are persons who have expressed interest and willingness to engage in Native American ministry even though they do not live in a presbytery that currently engages in Native American ministry. And there are institutions and agencies that have offered to help resource Native American congregations. Through such broad participation we can better generate continuing vision for Native American ministry through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The consultation will provide opportunity for conversation and dialogue in all the areas highlighted by the 2000 paper. It will also provide an opportunity to educate and strategize in the areas that are of special importance to us at this point, namely Urban and Off-Reservation Ministry, Youth Ministry and Leadership Development, Preparation for Ministry and Congregational Leadership Development, and Economic Development. A consultation is a critical tool by which implementation of the strategies for Native American ministry in the PC(USA) could be carried into the next decade.

We plan to hold a churchwide consultation no later than 2012.

e. *Urban and Off-Reservation Ministries*

Of the nearly 2.5 million Native American Indians (2000 census) in the United States, more than half (65 percent) live in metropolitan areas. Less than a third reside on reservations and trust lands. Since World War II, many Native American people have moved to large cities. This initially was in response to the federal government’s Indian Relocation Program. Now Native American people move to cities in search of education, economic opportunity, and social mobility, as do persons from other racial ethnic backgrounds. Some Native American people mingle and intermarry with other Native American people and non-Native Americans, making a good adjustment to city life. Despite the distance, many maintain strong ties with their families and their reservation communities and look to retirement as a time to return to the reservation and once again have closer relationship with family, tribal friends, and the reservation congregation that formed them in the faith. For a large number, however, the urban setting is a hostile environment marked by discrimination, employment problems, family difficulties, and health concerns. Most Native Americans do not affiliate with Euro-American churches because they do not feel comfortable in these churches or welcomed by them.

Native American ministries in urban areas provide the spiritual base necessary for people to deal with the issues of daily life. One off-reservation Native American church is Central Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, Arizona, which has historically served Native American people. In other cities, Native American ministries are nurtured within existing Presbyterian churches. This is the case in Albuquerque and the Los Angeles area. In Anchorage, the newly chartered Anchor Presbyterian Church serves Native American people in the surrounding area. In Spokane, a Native American ministry is working towards having its first ordained pastor. The NACC is involved in ongoing consultation with presbyteries who have generated and/or hope to generate off-reservation ministries.

We lift up for special commendation these urban Native American Indian congregations for their leadership in serving the social and spiritual needs of Native American people, often across tribal lines. As with other Native American ministry, they are built on relationship, and they invite partnerships with other congregations and individual friends. Visit, participate, and learn: urban Native American Indian congregations seek your partnership.

In areas where there currently is no off-reservation Native American ministry, NACC is available to assist presbyteries in exploring ways existing congregations might extend outreach and welcome to Native American people, either through the formation of a Native American fellowship or through the development of a multicultural congregation that would include Native American people.

f. *Youth Ministry and Leadership Development*

Fostering youth work is important to the life of the church regardless of the setting. In the context of Native American ministry, it is especially critical. Native American youth ministry has evolved over the years to the current model of the American Indian Youth Council (AIYC), which was formed in 1994. The council brings together a group of eight youth representing the eight synods with Native American ministries within their bounds. The AIYC is supported by two to four adults who serve as advisors as well as the staff of the Native American Congregational Support office. Every three years a new council is organized with new representatives from the eight synods. Each newly formed council participates in an organizational meeting with a focus on developing leadership skills; it also represents Native American youth at PC(USA) gatherings in order to increase their experience of organized conferences. In their third year, council members plan, organize, and implement a national conference directed toward youth from Native American churches. Through these events, Native American youth find connection with others like themselves, which strengthens and encourages them to continue their faith journey despite their physical isolation from one another.

The Racial Ethnic/Immigrant Evangelism and Church Growth Strategy Report, approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998), recognized the need to give emphasis to Native American youth work and included it in its recommendations. The NACC supports this strategy and is supported by it.

g. *Leadership Development and Preparation for Native American Ministry*

The number of Native American congregations, chapels, and ministries within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) fluctuates as churches are closed and new urban fellowships begin. The number, however, remains about 109, spread over twenty presbyteries and eight synods.

The 2004 Session Annual Statistical Report indicated a Native American membership of more than 10,000 within the denomination (1,133 congregations have one or more Native Americans, and 97 congregations have 50 percent or more Native American membership). The year of organization for these congregations ranged from 1640 to 2002.

A key concern, however, is that very few Native American ministries can sustain a full-time, installed pastor, and the membership in many of the congregations is less than fifty. On average, worship attendance is about 25 persons, and the average operating income is less than \$27,000.

Native American congregations are rarely led by ordained ministers. Congregations that are led by Native American ordained ministers are even rarer. Of the forty persons identified as Native American clergy within the denomination, one-third serves as pastor in a congregation, one-third serves in other capacities within the church, and one-third is retired from active service.

Part of the issue is that ordained clergy are reluctant to serve on isolated reservations or are unwilling or unable to accept the financial package available from these congregations. With assistance from presbytery, synod, or mission partnership grants, some Native American churches have been able to provide at least presbytery-minimum salaries, but these are the exception.

Ironically, as “missions” of the national church years ago, Native American churches more often had the benefit of full-time ordained leadership than is now the case. The transition of Native American ministries, from “missions” to self-determining congregations within presbyteries, put the onus on the congregations to provide salary support, despite the demographics that made this virtually impossible. Recruitment of more Native Americans for the ministry is certainly needed, but the larger problem is that of providing them with a livable wage upon ordination and call. For that, partnership through presbyteries and synods will continue to be essential.

In order to enhance the training, equipping, and development of leadership for Native American ministries, NACC works with presbyteries and synods to identify and nurture potential candidates for both ordained and lay leadership in the church.

The future of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) lies in its ability to develop and sustain racial ethnic and multicultural congregations. This is dependent on the identification of potential candidates, the availability of culturally sensitive curricula and learning environments, and the development of scholarship assistance. At the national level, the office for Preparation for Ministry and the office for Church Leadership Connection, particularly through its Racial Ethnic Referral Program, have been exceptionally helpful in providing information and making referrals as needed. We note the continued need for watchfulness in this key area when Native American candidates are engaged in seminary studies and preparation for ministry.

The NACC provides ongoing consultation with presbyteries and synods regarding their key role as a resource for continuing education for ordained clergy as well as leadership development for congregations in such areas as Christian education, stewardship, and clerk of session and treasurer training. While distance and cost are problems, assuring the

participation of Native Americans in such programs is essential in order to meet the leadership development needs of Native American congregations. Training programs that are either on-site or on-line are critical to meeting the needs of many Native American congregations that are far removed from other churches and have limited funds to address leadership development needs. The Joint Session of the six Nez Perce Presbyterian churches in Idaho has been able to secure funding that will bring Native American church leaders and presbytery staff to them to conduct elder training.

The Commissioned Lay Pastor program is an opportunity to meet both the needs of Native American congregations, which are often hard-pressed to support even a part-time pastor, and the hopes of people who feel called to ministry even as they retire from careers in other fields. Native Americans frequently dream of and plan on returning to their reservation homes upon retirement. They also see retirement as an opportunity to serve the church in new ways. Non-Native American church leaders also see retirement as an opportunity to serve the church in new ways, including time with Native American ministry.

A highly recommended new resource is available for both interested individuals and presbyteries that may be able to provide pastoral support to Native American congregations through the Commissioned Lay Pastor program. It is: *Commissioned Lay Pastors in the Presbyterian Church* (PDS 72-213-03-003) \$7.50. It contains a brief history of the development of the CLP program in the PC(USA) and provides sample curricula as well as information on mentoring, examination procedures, and issues facing racial ethnic congregations that often lead them to utilize a commissioned lay pastor.

Internet-based courses, such as those offered to prepare commissioned lay pastors through the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, allow students to remain in their communities and serve their churches while undertaking their training. In conjunction with the Presbytery of Grand Canyon, Cook Native American Ministries has developed a program for Native American CLP candidates. This program has also been utilized by non-Presbyterian candidates and non-Native Americans who need orientation to Native American culture, heritage, and religiosity before serving in a Native American ministry. The continuation of these programs is essential.

The NACC affirms the continuation of specialized curriculum for the training of commissioned lay pastors (Native American and non-Native American alike) to serve Native American congregations and the continued exploration of an agreed-upon source for all such training.

h. *Economic Development*

Native American people are the indigenous peoples of the land now known as the Americas. They are an ancient people who have lived and evolved in these lands over many centuries. The “discovery” of these lands by Europeans and the westward expansion of Euro-Americans into Native American Indian lands, however, forced Native American people onto smaller and smaller portions of their historic lands with little access to employment or other means of economic development.

The primary economic development strategy of tribal organizations in recent years has been centered on the development of casino-centered resorts, which cater to the entertainment and recreation interests and demands of nearby populations. Some of these enterprises do well and provide significant income to tribal organizations for needed infrastructure and direct payment to members of the tribe. Others do not. Despite the large roles that casinos play in the life of many tribes, some tribal organizations have taken steps to explore other economic development options, such as expanded agriculture, clean energy development, and selling reservation water rights to nearby water-starved urban areas. Presbyterian General Assemblies have recognized that gaming is a tribal sovereignty issue, and Native American congregations represent a variety of opinions and responses to casinos as a means to economic development in their communities. For the long-term welfare of Native American communities and Presbyterian congregations located on tribal land, NACC supports and encourages the church’s involvement in the exploration and support of alternative strategies for economic development.

The Self-Development of People Fund (SDOP) is a means through which Native American people and other groups can organize a project and seek support through existing Presbyterian resources at the presbytery, synod, or national level. Funds become available annually through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. While SDOP is ideally suited to serve small-scale projects that might well emerge on reservations or among non-reservation Native American people in urban areas, it is not well known among Native American congregations. Native American people are underrepresented among SDOP decision makers at all levels of the church as well as among the applicants for and recipients of funds from Self-Development of People.

The NACC will continue to consult with the office for SDOP, to develop strategies to increase awareness of and access to SDOP resources by Native American communities and organizations, and with presbyteries and synods with Native American populations about the need to undertake vigorous education and outreach to congregations and other organizations for whom SDOP may be of assistance.

A critical resource to help the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bring its mission priorities and its financial strategies together is the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee. As the church recommits to Native American ministry, we are called to explore ways that the economic resources of the denomination may be utilized to enhance the economic development of reservation communities through clean energy and the development of sustainable resources that are consistent with Native American people's connection with and commitment to the land.

The NACC will continue to pursue this question, in consultation with the Office for Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), with the goal of creating a conversation that would enhance clean energy development and other appropriate industries for Native American lands and lay the groundwork for church partnership in such endeavors.

i. *Property Concerns*

Many of the reservation churches were built during the time of Euro-American westward expansion, well over 100 years ago, and in many cases the last major maintenance on the buildings was done under the Board of National Missions (pre-1973). Reservation churches have few financial resources, and the cost of repairs can be prohibitive. While not the case in all situations, most Native American churches are built on tribal land, and if the congregation ceases to exist, the building, by law, reverts to the tribe. Some tribes have been responsive to the needs of reservation congregations, and some congregations have been able to do fundraising, both locally and through "children" of the congregation now living in urban areas.

Presbyteries too have a significant role regarding the properties of Native American churches. They are often the source of mission connections that can help provide assistance and/or direct contributions of labor and materials, whether to help with ongoing maintenance or to respond to a crisis situation when a building becomes unusable as a result of age or natural disaster such as wind, flooding, or fire. The NACC celebrates as well the significant trend toward broad partnership in response to these situations, with non-Presbyterian church groups as well as tribal and other secular organizations. The NACC has been engaged with Dakota Presbytery, among others, in the ongoing inventory of Native American church properties and the issues they present.

j. *Recent Developments in Native American Ministry*

While there are many challenges in Native American ministry, NACC is pleased to report that there are also many positive signs that Native American ministry is being revitalized, through consultation and collaboration between appropriate governing body staff and members of the Native American constituency, in keeping with the comprehensive strategy paper (2000). Here are some examples:

(1) The Laguna congregation in the Presbytery of Santa Fe began a program of teaching children how to do traditional pottery painting; the program enrolled as many adults as children! This is a small step in overcoming the past in which the church was negative about preserving and maintaining the culture and traditions of the people. While the congregation remains very small, the average age has dropped dramatically from over age sixty to more than half now being under age 40. The congregation is seeing new life with young adults coming into membership and several who attend but have not yet become members.

(2) The Ute Mountain Ute congregation in Colorado is a joint ministry of the Presbytery of Western Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church. Two years ago, vandals broke into the church and started a fire that caused major damage to the sanctuary. Fortunately, the damage was covered by insurance, held by the presbytery, and the payout was sufficient to allow them to do a major rehabilitation of the interior space. As a result, they now have a new sanctuary, kitchen, and restrooms—improvements to the building that were needed prior to the fire but would not have been possible, given financial constraints. The church also did local fundraising, and the Tribal Council provided assistance as well. "The church has always been here; it is the church for the community," said the council. "It needs to continue." Increasingly, partnership is able to go beyond the connections within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to include community members and tribal organizations.

(3) The North Fork Presbyterian Church on the Nez Perce reservation in Idaho experienced a fire on Christmas Eve in 2008. This too brought people from throughout the area, both churches and civic organizations, together. The new building was dedicated in September 2009, a testament to the spirit of rebirth that can come alive in the face of disaster, even in a community where there has been a long history of discrimination and racism against Native American people.

(4) On the Navajo reservation in Arizona, the Leupp Presbyterian church was located on a flood plain and faced serious damage from seasonal rains. Deciding that their future depended on moving to higher ground, the church raised the necessary funds and then proceeded to construct a new sanctuary and fellowship hall with their own skills and labor.

(5) In Sells, Arizona, vandals destroyed the pulpit of the Papago Presbyterian Church when it was being used as the outdoor chapel during the annual camp meeting in September 2008. An appeal to the Presbytery of de Cristo resulted in a carpenter in one of the congregations donating the materials and his skilled labor to construct a beautiful new pulpit that is now in place in the church.

(6) La Mesa Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque called a Native American pastor to focus her ministry on developing both a Native American fellowship to meet the spiritual needs of off-reservation Native American people in Albuquerque and an outreach and organizing project to address their critical social needs. Through community-oriented potlucks, a focus on the behavioral health needs of Native American families has emerged. A formal group has been organized to represent off-reservation Native Americans in the state Local Collaboratives system that addresses health issues and wellness. A member of the fellowship has stepped forward to address the needs of Native American women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence. Many urban Native Americans' experience of church is one of judgment; this ministry is centered on letting people know that "somebody cares."

(7) Church of the Indian Fellowship (Presbytery of Olympia), which continues ministry begun by missionaries in 1876, is now in its eighth year with a called Native American pastor. They are in their third year of having a ministry to children, and a Vacation Bible School attracted more than thirty-five children. In their final year of support through PC(USA) Mission Partnership Funds, they have negotiated partial funding for the church's programs through the Puyallup Tribe. All this is in part due to the extension of the redevelopment period beyond the traditional five-year period.

(8) In response to the call for new patterns of connection, the Presbytery of Western New York has formed a Strategy Team for Native American Ministry to assist the three Native American congregations in that presbytery. Worship leadership is currently shared by a Native American who is training to be a commissioned lay pastor (CLP), other CLPs in the presbytery, and elders of the Native American congregations. Indian Nations Presbytery in Oklahoma has formed a committee on Native American ministry. Presbytery de Cristo created a mentoring team to support a new pastor and assist in leadership development for session members and others in the congregation. It continues to be available to assist as the congregation goes through an upcoming leadership transition in 2010.

(9) A variety of new partnerships have emerged between Native American congregations and their presbyteries, neighboring congregations of non-Presbyterian denominations, and congregations and presbyteries in other parts of the country. Many of these are centered on one-time mission trips, but some are ongoing, with significant degrees of mutuality and two-way exchanges. Increasingly, mission work groups are undergoing orientation to the culture of Native American communities before undertaking the trip. University of Dubuque Theological Seminary faculty have provided immersion experiences for some groups planning mission trips to Native American communities.

(10) Trinity Church in Chinle, Arizona, installed a new pastor in November 2008, soon after an arson fire destroyed the communion table, baptismal font, and part of the sanctuary. With the insurance money and the assistance of mission volunteers, they were able to remodel the sanctuary and other rooms. In the process they also were able to deal with other property issues such as demolishing an old manse. The process of rebuilding the sanctuary provided an opportunity to think about God's call to them as a Navajo congregation, and they decided to use symbols that have significance in both Christian and Navajo culture, such as mountains and eagles. There is also discussion about developing a community garden on the church grounds.

(11) There have been several instances where presbyteries have created commissions to consider the future of Native American congregations. In more than one case, a NACC representative raised the question of how many members of a decision-making committee had been to the reservation and had met the people they were making decisions about. In those cases, the decision making was put on hold until the committee could go to the churches and meet the people. In most cases, the results of these conversations have been very positive, leading to the issues being resolved and funding being continued. They have also led to the Native American congregations becoming more involved in the life of the presbytery.

(12) In the Synod of Alaska/Northwest, two important developments have been made possible through the synod's Self-Development of People fund. The Makah Tribe was seeking ways to restore their lost skills and renew the connection with their traditional crafts. To do so, however, they needed to know if the necessary natural materials were still available. A grant from the synod's SDOP fund made an inventory of these materials possible. The Haida Heritage Group wished to make their own ceremonial regalia, but the cost of even the basic materials was prohibitive for this island-based congregational group. They applied to the SDOP committee and were given a grant that permitted members of the group to make two sets each, one for themselves and one to sell. These stories demonstrate how new patterns of connection within the church have opened pathways for Native American ministries through access to existing funds.

k. *Conclusion*

Since the last meeting of the General Assembly, the United States has gone through a cataclysmic economic crisis. The church, as a part of this country and its economy, has been deeply affected. Congregations are struggling; presbyte-

ries are struggling; the national structures are struggling. For many in the church, this is a new experience, but Native American ministries have functioned on limited funds for decades. We have learned to be faithful in ways that do not depend on large budgets. We have learned to be flexible and creative. We honor relationship and value community life, however small the community may become. Perhaps Native American ministries have wisdom that can be shared with the wider church in these hard times.

However, as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels learns to live with fewer financial resources, it must remember and retain its commitments, including the commitment to Native American ministry. Native American Presbyterians must retain our place at the table. While our numbers may be small, our voice is necessary, and it must continue to be present. Together we are the body of Christ, and working in partnership, we are members one of another.

Appendix A

Brief Historical Summary

There has been a Presbyterian presence in Native American communities and reservations in the United States since the late 1600s. When the first presbytery in this country was formed in 1706, it is believed that there were thirty-seven Native American Indian Protestant ministers in Eastern America. A major portion of the comprehensive strategy paper approved by the 212th General Assembly (2000) was devoted to a “Summary of the Historic Relationship Between the Presbyterian Church and Native American Peoples” (pcusa.org/nativeamerican, click on “Reports and Policies”). While the history is complex as well as long, one thing is clear: Presbyterians have had a long connection to Native American ministry, and Native Americans have long identified as Presbyterians.

Evangelization of Indians was initially treated in the Presbyterian church, and other early American denominations, as a matter of “foreign missions.” An American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (“the American Board”) was established in 1810, and the United Foreign Missionary Society (Presbyterian, Reformed, and Associate Reformed) was organized in 1816. The two merged in 1826. The Presbyterian church transferred “Indian missions” to its Home Mission Board in 1883. Throughout the nineteenth century, the geographic expansion of Presbyterian mission work often coincided with the movement of Euro-Americans to Native American lands. Missionaries frequently served dual roles, as agents of the gospel and as agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, with responsibilities to supervise reservation communities. Church and government cooperated as well in the management of “Indian schools,” which were designed to “Christianize and civilize the Indians” through a curriculum aimed at breaking the connection between Indian children and their tribal roots, including their language.

A distinguishing mark of American evangelism was its insistence on individual salvation. The conversion and reformation of individuals, it was felt, would correct the evils of society. This emphasis on individualism was in direct conflict with the principles of communal life and the strong emphasis on relationship within Native American communities. The church’s approach was to work for the individuation of the Indians and to break the cultural bonds to tribal life. Many Native American congregations still reflect both their roots in the evangelical period and the church’s negation of tribal culture and traditions.

In the early twentieth century, sweeping change in federal Indian policy came about. The Indian Reorganization Act, passed in 1934, offered protection for the land base of tribes and permitted tribes to set up legal structures designed to aid in self-government. Many tribes adopted a constitutional form of government. A new approach, based in the social sciences, encouraged the recognition and affirmation of Indian culture, language, and heritage.

In the period following World War II, Presbyterian General Assemblies consistently took positions supportive of Native American land rights and other issues affecting Native American peoples. By 1983, both Presbyterian bodies that came together to form the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supported the concepts of tribal sovereignty and self-determination, as well as the freedom for Native Americans to practice their traditional religion.

Structurally, however, Native American ministries in the Presbyterian church functioned through a “Home Missions” approach well into the twentieth century. Through a major restructuring of the denominational offices, which was fully realized in the early 1970s, Native American churches were moved from the umbrella of the Board of National Missions to being part of the presbyteries and synods in which they were physically located. Thus, approximately 100 congregations, for many of whom “the Presbyterian church” was represented by a national missions field staff person, experienced an abrupt transition. To be Presbyterian suddenly meant being part of new, unfamiliar, and often uncertain, relationships with presbyteries with whom they had few, if any, prior dealings, and vice versa.

In 1969, as this reorganization was being anticipated, the General Assembly provided seed money to be used for projects on Indian reservations. An ad hoc committee, the Indian Consulting Panel, was created to review proposals for the use of those funds. It soon became apparent, however, that a permanent consultative body was needed.

The Native American Consulting Committee was formally established in 1977, with authority to evaluate and recommend programs seeking national funding and to provide counsel to the General Assembly agencies and synods on matters affecting Native American peoples. The 1983 Reunion resulted in a total of 109 Native American congregations in the newly formed Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

10. *2003 Referral: Item 09-01. Reclaiming the Vision: A Mission Strategy to Strengthen the Partnership Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities, Recommendation 9. That the General Assembly Require the National Ministries Division, Higher Education Program Area, to Return to the General Assembly with a*

Progress Report in Three Years, and a Full Assessment of the Response to the Recommendations in the Report in Five Years—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2003, Part I, pp. 24, 523).

Response: Due to the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) restructure, the dissolution of the National Ministries Division in the fall of 2006, and the closure of the Higher Education program area in 2002, the final report was delayed. Progress has been made by the GAMC in renewal of the covenant with the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities (APCU) and by reasserting an emphasis by GAMC leadership to visit the Presbyterian-related colleges and universities in 2009. The Executive Director of GAMC, Linda Valentine, has made numerous visits to related colleges and universities in the last two years and was in attendance at the APCU annual meetings in 2007 and 2008.

From the *2003 Referral: Item 09-01*, Recommendations 1, 4, 5, and 6 were referred to the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and will not be addressed in this response. Recommendations 2, 3, 7, and 8 were fully answered for the 218th General Assembly (2008) and will not be addressed in this response. Part of Recommendation 9 was to return to the assembly with a full assessment, which will be addressed in this response.

Responsible entities in this referral were the National Ministries Division and the Office of Higher Education. As stated earlier, the National Ministries Division was dissolved three years after this referral (2006) and the Office of Higher Education was closed a year prior to the referral (2002). From the outset this created the challenge of where the work would be lodged and what staff was available to complete the work.

There were more specific sub-points to the recommendations, but they were mostly aimed at having the institutions themselves make changes to the way they educated students, related to the church, hired their staff, and funded their schools. The assembly intended that the GAMC offices would assist with all these initiatives, but the ultimate responsibility, and subsequent implications, rested on the institutions. At this point in history it is difficult for the denomination to dictate such programs for two reasons:

- The institutions operate quite independently of the denomination.
- At the General Assembly level there are not enough staff or resources to carry out this work.

However, there are offices and associations that continue to do work with and for our related institutions. Namely, the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities, which has a covenant with the General Assembly Mission Council; the Presbyterian College Chaplain's Association, and the Office of Youth and Collegiate Ministries. The schools, colleges, and universities that are affiliated with the PC(USA) continue to excel in academics as well as in the area of student life. The national office, without the proper staffing structure and adequate resources, does its best to assist some of the more vulnerable schools with their financial and accreditation issues. Ministry and connection to our denomination's related institutions, college-age members, and other affiliated college and campus ministries is a huge challenge in the overall mission of the PC(USA).

11. *2003 Referral: Item 10-07. Recommendation 3. That the General Assembly Instruct the Congregational Ministries Division, Office of Theology and Worship, to Report Annually the Number of Presbyteries That Participate in "Celebrating the Lord's Supper Each Lord's Day"—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2003, Part I, pp. 22, 566).*

Response: In May 2008 the Office of Theology and Worship published *Common Ministry, Shared Celebration*, encouraging presbyteries to organize weekly celebrations of the Lord's Supper in congregations across the presbytery. Theology and Worship also created a website, www.pcusa.org/sharedcelebration/, to support congregations and presbyteries in this endeavor; the website includes a theological and historical rationale for the initiative, suggestions for establishing this practice at the presbytery and congregational level, liturgical resources for presbytery-wide celebrations of the Lord's Supper, historical background on Calvin's attempts to establish weekly Eucharist in Geneva, ideas for creating a presbytery chalice and paten, a place to share stories about presbytery-wide celebrations of the Lord's Supper, and the link to a Facebook group devoted to this effort.

No presbytery has communicated to the Office of Theology and Worship that they are committed to this practice. The organization of presbytery-wide celebrations of the Lord's Supper in local congregations is a worthy endeavor; however, it is clear that more time is needed for this groundbreaking initiative to take root and grow. Nevertheless, the office remains convinced that "these celebrations, in which we proclaim and enact the unity of the body of Christ, can serve to strengthen and sustain our common ministry and mission, drawing members, ministers and churches together in deeper relationship through our shared participation in the Sacrament."

At the next available opportunity, a question regarding presbytery-wide celebrations will be added to the Clerk's Annual Questionnaire Survey.

12. *2004 Referral: Item 06-09. On Re-Examining the Relationship Between Christians and Jews and the Implications for Our Evangelism and New Church Development—From the Presbytery of Hudson River (Minutes, 2004, Part I, pp. 20, 440).*

Response: This referral is answered by the report "Christians and Jews: People of God." Refer to Item 08-03.

13. *2006 Referral: Item 09-09. Report: Economic Security for Older Adults, Recommendation 14. That the 217th General Assembly (2006) Call Upon the Office of National Health Ministries to Provide Information Through Its Website, Publications, and Workshops, and Training on Congregational Care, Healthful Living, and Health Care Access for All People—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 50, 51, 815).*

Response: The Office of National Health Ministries was closed in 2009. The Website is no longer available and workshops and training on Congregational Care, Healthful Living, and Health Care Access for All People are no longer offered.

14. *2006 Referral: Item 09-10. Report: Resolution on Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership, and Accountability, Recommendation C. In Order to Manage Technology for the Common Good, Through the Office of the Stated Clerk, the Washington and United Nations Offices, and Other Appropriate Agencies to Carry Out Item 1. Concerning Public Domain Intellectual Property, Item 2. Concerning Agricultural Technology, and Item 3. Concerning the Internet—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 50, 51, 826–27).*

Response: Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has worked in cooperation with other religious shareholders to encourage the big pharmaceutical companies to make drugs available, and not oppose efforts by developing countries to produce drugs needed to address pandemic diseases. The MRTI has also encouraged high-tech companies to adopt “open-source” policies on their technologies such as Sun Microsystems has done.

The Presbyterian Washington Office has advocated for a provision in the climate bill that would include clean technology transfer to developing nations to help the most vulnerable communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. Such technology transfer is seen as a very important support necessary for global mitigation and adaptation.

The Stated Clerk has sent a letter to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) of the United States Department of Commerce.

15. *2006 Referral: Item 10-06. Report: Living into the Body of Christ: Towards Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities, Recommendation 2.c.(1), That the General Assembly Council Facilitate, with Middle Governing Bodies, a Strategy to Educate, Train, Research, and Provide Advocacy for Peoples Living with Disabilities and Their Families in Church and Society by Assisting Them in Developing Guidelines and Training Procedures for Use by Church Leaders in Local Congregations—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 49, 50, 921).*

Response: Education, training, research, and advocacy for people living with disabilities and their families in the church and in society are at the core of the ongoing work of the PC(USA) Disability Consultants and the volunteer network of PHEWA, Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC). Examples of resources developed by PDC and disseminated in print form and downloadable from their website, <http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/pdc>, are their “Congregational Audit of Disability Accessibility and Inclusion” and guidelines for “Establishing a Presbytery Committee on Disability Concerns.” Intentionally working with middle governing bodies in the development of guidelines and training procedures has been done effectively on a limited basis.

16. *2006 Referral: Item 11-28. On Supporting the Peace Process in Sudan—From the Presbyteries of Trinity and Sheango, Recommendation 3. Direct the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment to Explore the Appropriateness of Recommending to the General Assembly That It Add to Its Divestment List Those Companies Profiting from the Sale of Armaments, Helicopters, Tanks, and Other War Material to the Government of Sudan until These Companies Either Suspend Their Operations in Sudan or a Just and Lasting Peace Exists for All People of Sudan (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 43, 45, 1002–5).*

Response: The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment monitored corporate involvement in Sudan. All U.S. companies are forbidden to do business in the country unless exempted for providing medical supplies or food. International companies are researched by the Sudan Divestment Task Force, and divided into categories according to the strategic or sizeable nature of their involvement. Some companies that remain unresponsive are recommended for divestment. This is a process similar to the procedure of “phased, selective divestment” followed by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). None of the companies in this category are owned by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, New Covenant Trust Company, or the Board of Pensions. The MRTI will continue to monitor the situation as part of its ongoing work.

17. *2006. Referral: Item 11-36. On Recognizing the Value of Proactive, Constructive Nonviolence and Establishing Nonviolence Training—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 43, 46, 1018–19).*

Response: Recognizing that a number of nonviolence training programs already exist, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program has determined to identify and create resource materials grounded in the Reformed tradition. The use of nonviolence was addressed in workshops at the 2008 and 2009 Peacemaking Conferences. A Web page of resources related to nonviolence, including nonviolence training opportunities, has been created at <http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/nonviolence.htm>. Resources will be added to this page and publicized as they are created.

18. *2006 Referral: Item 11-37. On Advocating for Positive Change in Darfur and All of Sudan—From the Presbytery of the Palisades (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 43, 46, 1019–21).*

Response: The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment monitored corporate involvement in Sudan. All U.S. companies are forbidden to do business in the country unless exempted for providing medical supplies or food. International companies are researched by the Sudan Divestment Task Force, and divided into categories according to the strategic or sizeable nature of their involvement. Some companies that remain unresponsive are recommended for divestment. This is a process similar to the procedure of “phased, selective divestment” followed by the Presbyterian Church (USA). None of the companies in this category are owned by the Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation, New Covenant Trust Company or the Board of Pensions. MRTI will continue to monitor the situation as part of its ongoing work.

19. *2006 Referral: Item 13-04. Recommendation 4. That the 217th General Assembly (2006) authorize the Office of Theology and Worship to Gather Learning’s, Insights, and Experiences, from Churches That Engage in This Discipline (Practices That Deepen Baptismal Life and Discipleship), and to Submit a Final Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes 2006, Part I, pp. 11–12, 1102).*

Response: This referral is answered by the report “On Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.” Refer to Item 16-06.

20. *2006 Referral: Item 13-05. Report, The Trinity: God’s Love Overflowing. Recommendation 4. Instruct the Office of Theology and Worship to Make The Trinity: God’s Love Overflowing Available to the Church, with Study Guide, in Both Print and Electronic Forms—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 11–12, 1108).*

Response: The Office of Theology and Worship has made these available through the Presbyterian Distribution Service since July 2008. They can be ordered thru the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Marketplace website at <http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace/index.jsp>.

21. *2006 Referral: Item 13-10. On the Development of a Denominational E-Hymnal—From the Presbytery of Miami (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 11–12, 1141–42).*

Response: This is being included in the development of the new Presbyterian hymnal that is currently underway.

22. *2008 Referral: Item 04-13. On Equal Rights for Families of Same-Gender Partners, Recommendation 1.a.–c. Renew and Strengthen the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Long-Standing Commitment to Equal Protection Under the Law for Lesbian and Gay Persons and Direct the Stated Clerk, General Assembly Mission Council, and Other Representatives of the PC(USA) to Urge State Legislatures and the Federal Government to Apply the Principle of Equal Protection to Same-Gender Couples and Their Children—From the Presbytery of Denver (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 48, 49, 258–60).*

Response: In September 2009, the Presbyterian Washington Office sent letters containing this overture’s contents to all members of the United States Congress and to President Barack Obama.

23. *2008 Referral: Item 07-01. On Calling for Tolerance and Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, Recommendation 5. That the 218th General Assembly (2008) Commission a Study on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations That Would Have the Same Scope and Authority as the 1987 Study on Christian-Jewish Relations, to Be Carried Out by the Interfaith Relations and Theology and Worship Offices of the General Assembly Council—From the Presbytery of Newton (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 507–10).*

2008 Referral: Item 07-07. On Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, Recommendation 2. Instruct the Office of Theology and Worship and the Office of Interfaith Relationships to Undertake a Study of Current and Evolving Presbyterian Theological Understanding of Our Relationship with Our Muslim Sisters and Brothers—From the Presbytery of Chicago (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 526–27).

Response: These referrals are answered by the report, “Toward an Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations.” Refer to Item 08-04.

24. *2008 Referral: Item 07-04. Covenant Relationship with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America, Recommendation 2.b. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council to Convene Tables to Develop Processes and Procedures for the Orderly Exchange of Ministers and Orderly Transfer of Churches—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 513–16).*

Response: This referral will be answered by the response of the Office of General Assembly.

25. *2008 Referral: Item 07-04. Covenant Relationship with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America, Recommendation 2.c. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council to Report These Processes*

and Procedures to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 513–16).

Response: This referral will be answered by the response of the Office of General Assembly.

26. *2008 Referral: Item 07-07. On Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, Recommendation 3. Work to Improve Good Relations Between Presbyterians and Muslims at the Level of National and International Dialogue in Order to Promote Peace, Enhance Mutual Understanding, Counteract Bias and Discrimination, Recognize Commonality, and Celebrate Diversity—From the Presbytery of Chicago (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 526–27).*

2008 Referral: Item 07-07. On Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, Recommendation 4. Encourage and Provide Resources to Presbyteries and Local Congregations to Improve Good Relations and Mutual Understanding Between Presbyterians and Muslims at the Local Level—From the Presbytery of Chicago (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 526–27).

Response: The Interfaith Relations Office is working to improve national and international relations between Presbyterians and Muslims through:

- An ecumenical Christian-Muslim initiative that brings representatives of seven churches and seven Muslim organizations¹ together twice each year to build understanding and develop cooperative projects.
- A four-year conversation, meeting twice each year, between Presbyterians and African American Muslims following the late Imam W.D. Mohammed. Both of these gatherings regularly include a program bringing together Presbyterians and Muslims in the local areas where the meetings are held.

New resources for local congregations seeking understanding or engagement with their Muslim neighbors have been created and made available through the Interfaith Toolkit, a web-based collection of guidelines, studies, and other materials that may be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/interfaith/toolkit/>.

Endnote

1. The Muslim organizations are the Islamic Society of North America; the mosques associated with Imam Warith Deen Mohammed; the Islamic Circle of North America; the Muslim Public Affairs Council; the Universal Muslim Association of America; the Muslim American Society; the Muslim Alliance of North America. The Christian communions involved are the Alliance of Baptists; the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); the Episcopal Church; the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the U.S.A.; the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); the United Church of Christ; the United Methodist Church; with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

27. *2008 Referral: Item 08-17. On Responsible Purchasing, Recommendation 3. That the General Assembly Council Formally Endorse the Formation of the State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium Ending Taxpayer Support for Sweatshops—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 24, 712–14).*

Response: Presbyterian Hunger Program’s national associate, in his role as board member of SweatFree Communities, has helped in the formation and shaping of the Sweatfree Purchasing Consortium, whose purpose is to increase non-sweatshop products purchasing by government and nonprofit entities to improve the conditions, wages, and relative power of workers in the industry. Eight cities and states (including New York) have joined the consortium and the endorsement of the PC(USA) provides added legitimacy to the effort.

28. *2008 Referral: Item 08-20. That the 218th General Assembly (2008) Invite the Sessions, Middle Governing Bodies, Seminaries, General Assembly Mission Council Ministries Areas, and All PC(USA)-Related Mission Organizations to Affirm and Adopt An Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God’s Mission—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) Moderator, General Assembly Stated Clerk, and the General Assembly Mission Council—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 24, 715–19).*

Response: Since the “Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God’s Mission” was ratified by the participants in the January 2008 consultation and affirmed by the 218th General Assembly (2008), a Continuation Committee of representatives of the invitation signees has worked to communicate broadly to the church about the agreements reached at the consultation: letters have been sent to all middle governing bodies, seminaries, General Assembly Mission Council ministry areas, and all PC(USA)-related mission organizations, inviting them to affirm and adopt the invitation. In addition, the special web page designed by the GAMC (<http://www.pcusa.org/calltocommission/>) invites all sessions, middle governing bodies, seminaries, General Assembly Mission Council ministry areas, and all PC(USA)-related mission organizations to affirm and adopt the invitation.

29. *2008 Referral: Item 09-01. On the Church Addressing Intergenerational Injustice in America. Recommendation 2. Call Upon Public Leaders to Have the Courage to Address This Economic and Moral Crisis While There Is Still Time—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 53, 54, 851–52).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) has incorporated this concern of intergenerational injustice into many of its advocacy efforts. In particular, in drafting the interfaith community’s annual “Faith Reflection on the [Federal]

Budget,” the WO lifted up the concern of deficit spending in the following way: “Our mismanagement of our nation’s resources has brought us to the regrettable position where we must borrow from the future to meet current needs. As we increase near-term deficits through borrowing, we must use that money to address long-term human needs deficits to build a stronger, more just world for our children. Proper use of these borrowed resources can and should leave future generations not simply a legacy of debt, but rather a legacy of life and abundance.” The Washington Office has also been attentive to this overture in supporting that the new government funding be fully offset, or “paid for,” though it has stopped short of requiring offsets at the cost of poor communities in need of aid. Further, the WO has worked to lift up the moral dimensions of the economic crisis and recession by trying to ensure that stimulus funds support those who are most vulnerable in society, supporting financial services reform, and supporting remedies to the foreclosure crisis.

30. *2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 09-04. On Instructing PDA to Continue to Work on Nurturing Partnerships with Presbyteries Affected by the Storms of 2005—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 53, 54, 857–58).*

Response: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has worked intimately with the presbyteries affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. We continue to work with the Presbyteries of Mississippi, South Louisiana, and New Covenant in long-term recovery through conference calls, visits, and Gulf staff interaction. Examples of our close collaboration include: Project Homecoming in New Orleans, FLAPDAN (Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network), and our opening of two villages in the Presbytery of New Covenant in response to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike last year.

31. *2008 Referral: Item 09-05. On Addressing the Tragedy of America’s Gun Violence. Recommendation.2.b. Direct the National Offices to Provide Annually to Our Pastors, Educators, and Members Educational and Worship Resources to Encourage and Equip the Whole Church to Engage Fully in the Struggle to Reduce Gun Violence—From the Presbytery of National Capital (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 859–65).*

Response: In 2009, worship and educational resources were created on the theme of “a day of ceasefire in the United States” for the International Day of Peace. Educational resources from the Gun Violence and Gospel Values have been shared via the Web and in Presbyterian Peacemaking Program publications. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program will continue to create such resources.

32. *2008 Referral: Item 09-05. On Addressing the Tragedy of America’s Gun Violence. Recommendation.2.c. Direct the Washington Office and the Peacemaking Unit to Make Gun Violence One of Its Highest Priorities and Direct the Peacemaking Unit to Make an Annual Progress Report to Subsequent General Assemblies Until This Issue Is Resolved—From the Presbytery of National Capital (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 859–65).*

Response: In consultation with the Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) has engaged in numerous advocacy initiatives relating to the tragedy of gun violence. In particular, the WO joined with the interfaith and ecumenical community to oppose numerous attempts to weaken the District of Columbia’s gun laws. Weakening D.C. gun laws is a popular poison pill amendment offered to any number of federal bills. From September 2008 to August 2009, there have been three attempts to weaken D.C.’s gun laws and the WO has signed eight letters to protect them. The WO also signed a letter to Congress in support of closing the gun show loophole by requiring background checks at gun shows and similar events.

The Presbyterian Washington Office and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, working in some instances in partnership with other General Assembly Mission Council programs, arranged for Presbyterian speakers on gun violence at Ecumenical Advocacy Days, helped offer a colloquium on Gun Violence and Gospel Values, provided worship resources and identified educational resources, and offered opportunities for advocacy on issues related to addressing gun violence, particularly in relation to closing the gun show loophole.

33. *2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 09-07, Report, From Homelessness to Hope: Constructing Just, Sustainable Communities for All God’s People, Recommendation 5.b. That the General Assembly Council Facilitate the Development of a Portion of Its Website to Make Information, Resources, and Advocacy Suggestions Related to This Resolution Easily Accessible to the Church at All Levels—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 53–54, 55; 866–97).*

Response: The Small Church and Community Ministry Office, along with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), have posted the report, *From Homelessness to Hope: Constructing Just, Sustainable Communities for All God’s People*, on their respective WebPages at www.pcusa.org/smallchurch and http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/homelessness_report2008.pdf. This report provides information, resources, and advocacy suggestions related to this resolution.

34. *2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 09-07, Report, From Homelessness to Hope: Constructing Just, Sustainable Communities for All God’s People, Recommendation 5.c. That the Office of Small Church and Community Ministries, in Collaboration with the Presbyterian Washington Office and Other Church Entities, Develop and/or Make Resources Availa-*

ble to Educate Individual Presbyterians and Congregations on the Nature and Extent of the Crisis in Homelessness and Affordable Housing, Types of Housing That Can Address the Needs of Those Caught in the Cycle of Homelessness, and Ways to Respond to and Advocate for Public Policy Directives—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 53–54, 55; 866–97).

Response: The Small Church and Community Ministry Office, along with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), have posted the report, *From Homelessness to Hope: Constructing Just, Sustainable Communities for All God's People*, on their respective WebPages at www.pcusa.org/smallchurch and http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/homelessness_report2008.pdf. This report provides information, resources, and advocacy suggestions related to homelessness and affordable housing issues. The Small Church and Community Ministry Office also produced a worship and resource packet for Affordable Housing and Homelessness Sunday. This resource packet is posted on its webpage. The Small Church and Community Ministry Office also posted on its webpage stories of congregations engaged with affordable housing and/or homelessness ministries.

35. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God's Work in Women's Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.f. That the Office of Vocation, in Consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC), Presbyteries, and Congregations, Participate in the PC(USA)'s Goal of Assuring Gender Equity in Pay for Clergy by Developing by 2010 a Tool to Enable Presbyteries' Committees on Ministry to Analyze Clergy Terms of Call and Compensation Offers for Pay Equity Purposes; and That This Tool Be Placed on the PC(USA) Website That Would Include a Place for Presbyteries' Committees on Ministry Accessing the Tool to Register Their Interest; and That the Office of Vocation Report on the Use of This Tool to Each General Assembly Through 2020—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Response: Tool to enable presbyteries' committees on ministry to analyze clergy terms of call and compensation offers for pay equity purposes and supporting resources is posted at www.pcusa.org/ministers.

36. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God's Work in Women's Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.g. That the Office of Vocation, in Consultation with the Office for Cultural Proficiency, Participate in the PC(USA)'s Goal of Assuring Gender Equity in Pay for Clergy by Developing and Providing On-Going Training Modules for Committees on Ministry and the Councils of Presbyteries and Synods with Regard to Gender and Racial/Ethnic Sensitivity in Hiring and Employment Practices; Place Guidance on the PC(USA) Website; and That the Office of Vocation Report on Its Development to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Response: The first of these training modules for presbytery committees on ministry and councils of presbyteries and synods is posted at www.pcusa.org/clc.

37. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God's Work in Women's Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.h. That the Office of Vocation and Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women, in Consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC), and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), Participate in the PC(USA)'s Goal of Assuring Gender Pay Equity by Designing a Program for Women Clergy Interested in Preparing to Serve as Heads of Staff; and the Office of Vocation Report on This Process to the 219th General Assembly (2010))—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Response: Program cosponsored with Auburn Theological Seminary Center for Church Life, led by experts in organizational dynamics and vocational counseling, will be offered in late 2010.

38. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God's Work in Women's Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.i. That Mission Responsibility Through Investment Participate in the PC(USA)'s Goal of Assuring Gender Pay Equity by Including Pay Equity and Gender Representation as Criteria in Its Evaluation and Monitoring of the Businesses in Which the Church Invests—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Response: The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) regularly meets and communicates with companies in which stock is owned. These interactions frequently involve employment practices including pay equity and workplace diversity. Companies are encouraged to include basic equal employment opportunity data in public corporate social responsibility reports. In addition, MRTI has recommended proxy voting support for resolutions on these issues.

39. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God's Work in Women's Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 3.b. That the Presbyterian Washington Office (PWO) and the Presbyterian United Nations Office (PUNO) Advo-*

cate for Ratification of the Equal Remuneration Convention—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).

Response: In September 2009, the Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) sent a letter to all members of the U.S. Senate urging that they ratify the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951. The letter also commended the 111th Congress for enacting the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which is a step toward pay equity for women in the United States. The bill encodes “equal pay for equal work,” rather than the General Assembly’s call for “equal pay for comparable work,” but remains the most significant stride toward pay equity in the U.S. for some time.

40. *2008 Referral: Item 09-09. Report, A Social Creed for the Twenty-First Century and Recognition of the Centennial of the “Social Creed of the Churches” of 1908, Recommendation 3. That the General Assembly Council, Through the Presbyterian Washington Office, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and Other Appropriate Offices, Publicize and Interpret this “Social Creed” as a Synopsis of Existing Policy and to Affirm Its Holistic Vision of Necessary Changes for Our Society to Meet the Challenges of Sustainability and Globalization—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 924–33).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) has woven the themes of *A Social Creed for the 21st Century* into a number of its advocacy efforts, in particular those concerning justice for workers. The WO also highlighted the Social Creed by devoting the entire issue of the November-December 2009 *Washington Report to Presbyterians*, the bi-monthly print and e-mail newsletter, to the promotion and interpretation of the Social Creed.

41. *2008 Referral: Item 09-10. Report, The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming, Recommendation 3.e. Urge the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment to Expand Efforts to Engage Businesses on Energy Efficiency and Conservation in Manufacturing, Transport, and Product Design; to Work with Companies on Appropriate Technology Applications, Including Co-Generation, Wind, Solar, Biomass, Geothermal, and Low-Head Hydroelectric; to Support Solutions to the Problem of Nuclear Waste; and to Advocate That Utilities Establish Incentives to Reduce Electricity, Oil, and Gas Usage While Also Eliminating Barriers for Small Power Producers to Interconnect with the Power Grid—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 934–58).*

Response: The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), in collaboration with more than 200 partners, expanded its work to engage companies and industry groups around energy efficiency and conservation policies and practices. This included filing shareholder resolutions with ConocoPhillips, Norfolk Southern, and Time Warner Cable, and dialogues as part of stakeholder teams with American Electric Power, McDonalds, Sun Microsystems, and Timberland. In addition, working with Ceres, MRTI supported the development of a corporate group called BICEP (Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy) that advocated for U.S. climate and energy policy legislation, and an international agreement on climate change.

42. *2008 Referral: Item 09-10. Report, The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming, Recommendation 4.c. Direct the Stated Clerk, the Presbyterian Washington Office, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, the Environmental Justice Office, and Other General Assembly Representatives to Advocate for This Approach to National Energy Policy Before Congress, the Executive Branch, State Legislatures, and Regulatory Agencies, Including Those Specifically Involved in the Areas of Climate Change and International Cooperation, with the Goal of Restoring the United States of America to a Leadership Position in Taking Responsibility for Reducing the Scale and Speed of Global Climate Change—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 934–58).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) has been working very closely on this issue. In 2008, the WO worked to improve the Lieberman-Warner Senate climate change bill, the first comprehensive climate bill to reach the floor of the U.S. Senate. The WO has also been involved in what has become an annual process to pass new energy policy, giving the WO the chance to lift up the particular energy-production and usage-related concerns expressed in this referral. Furthermore, in 2009, the WO, together with ecumenical partners, was closely engaged in both House and Senate efforts to enact comprehensive climate change legislation. The bill that passed the House, though not as strong as the General Assembly policy demands, contains several good provisions, including a good program to help low-income energy consumers in the U.S. cope with increased costs related to global warming, and a robust International Adaptation program designed to provide much-needed assistance to the communities/countries around the world that are most vulnerable to climate change.

Working with the NCC and NCC-member communions, the WO helped to provide testimony to the House Energy & Commerce Committee on the faith perspective calling for climate change legislation, and in particular International Adaptation, four times in 2009. The WO also participated in numerous meetings with Congressional staff, both House and Senate, to emphasize the faith community’s priorities in a comprehensive climate bill.

The WO published eight articles in the *Witness in Washington Weekly* from June 2008–Aug. 2009 and one article in the May–April 2009 *Washington Report to Presbyterians*. The WO helped to draft the Stated Clerk’s letter to Congress in response to this referral. The WO also promoted climate change as a topic for worship on Earth Day Sunday and worked with interfaith partners to publish “Faith Principles on Global Warming.” The WO signed numerous letters to Congress and the

Administration on the subject of creation care, sustainable energy use, and a U.S. response to climate change. Finally, the WO has provided numerous resources to individuals and congregations, by responding to correspondence on the subject, both phone and email, and providing workshops and adult Sunday School class events in local churches.

43. *2008 Referral: Item 09-11. A Resolution to Study Immigration Detention in the United States, Recommendation 3. Direct the Washington Office and the Office of Immigration Issues to Partner with Ecumenical and Interfaith Entities to Build/Join in Coalitions Against Detention and to Advocate for Alternatives to Detention—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 958–61).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office brought in an intern who worked with the Interfaith Working Group on Immigration, a coalition working on fair immigration policies and alternatives to detention. The intern advocated through work with the coalition for alternatives to detention.

44. *2008 Referral: Item 09-12. Resolution to Explore the Study of the Status of Women at All Levels in the PC(USA), Recommendation 3. Equip All General Assembly Council Staff and Members to Be Responsive to the Needs of All Women as Part of Their Continuing Commitment to Valuing the Gifts That All Persons Bring to the PC(USA), to Continue to Encourage General Assembly Council Staff and Members to Reflect on and Incorporate the Values Articulated in the “Report on Creating a Climate for Change Within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” as Approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004) (Minutes, 2004, Part I, pp. 540ff) —From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 961–64).*

Response: The Racial Ethnic and the Women’s Ministries/PW ministry area has encouraged all GAMC staff and members to reflect on and incorporate the values articulated in the report on *Creating a Climate for Change* within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004). A Creating a Climate for Change Task Force has been formed, continuing this important work. The task force held its first meeting in October 2009, with staff support provided through Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries. The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) staff and elected members will continue to be informed about the task force’s progress and work.

45. *2008 Referral: Item 09-13. Report, “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies”. Recommendation 6. Request the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council, Working in Partnership to Resource and Equip Presbyteries and Synods, Utilizing the Tools of Cultural Proficiency, to Work for Equitable Participation of Women of Color in All Aspects of the Life and Ministry of Presbyteries and Synods—From the Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 965–77).*

Response: The General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly have provided support to equip presbyteries and synods, utilizing the tools of cultural proficiency, to work for equitable participation of women of color in all aspects of the life and ministry of presbyteries and synods. Workshops and training in antiracism and cultural proficiency were held at national conferences, including the National Multicultural Church Conference, the Big Tent, and the Peacemaking Conference. We have also provided workshops and training to particular presbyteries at their invitation. The GAMC is also developing the PC(USA) National Persons of Color Recruiting Network in the Office of Cultural Proficiency in collaboration with others working on issues of diversity and inclusion across the PC(USA).

46. *2008 Referral: Item 09-14. Report, Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform, Recommendation 1.a.(3). Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council, Through the Presbyterian Washington Office and Other Appropriate Ministries of Peace and Justice, to Advocate and Support the Positions Developed in This Resolution, and Urge Presbyteries, Synods, and Ecumenical Ministries to Advocate and Support These Positions as Well Within Their Witness for the Common Good in a Democratic Society—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 977–94).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) has promoted this new policy through publications and public outreach. The *Witness in Washington Weekly* published an action alert related to this item and the July–August 2009 *Washington Report to Presbyterians* contained an article on voting rights that lifted up this new policy statement. The WO helped the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to deliver this policy to all members of Congress before the November 2008 elections, which allowed the WO to promote the policy statement in its entirety. In addition, the WO has responded by phone and email to questions on the subject from Presbyterians.

47. *2008 Referral: Item 09-14. Report, Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform, Recommendation 1.b. To Increase Voter Participation by Doing Items 1 Through 8— From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 977–94).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) has promoted these policies where there has been legislative opportunity. The WO commended the Bush Administration and Congress for extending the Voting Rights Act, though, as described in the Winter 2008 Wrap-Up in the *Washington Report to Presbyterians*, Congress will be required to revisit the

VRA before its next expiration in 2031, due to a recent [at publication time, expected] decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. When Congress takes up the law again, it will provide another opportunity to speak from this policy statement.

48. *2008 Referral: Item 09-14. Report, Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform, Recommendation 1.c. To Ensure Equality and Fairness by Doing Items 1 Through 7— From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 977–94).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) has promoted these policies where there has been legislative opportunity. In particular, the WO joined with interfaith partners twice in 2009 to support the bill to enfranchise District of Columbia residents by giving them a voting member of the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, due to poison pill amendments, that bill has yet to pass Congress. The WO also joined with interfaith colleagues to support the Democracy Restoration Act, which seeks to restore federal voting rights to millions of Americans who have been disenfranchised because a criminal conviction in their past. The letter further expressed concern that state disenfranchisement laws continue to deprive citizens who have paid their debt to society their fundamental right to vote.

49. *2008 Referral: Item 09-14. Report, Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform, Recommendation 1.d. To Provide for Greater Accountability and Responsibility, Support Items 1 Through 6— From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 977–94).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) promoted these policy recommendations when it delivered the policy document in its entirety to members of Congress, but there has been no opportunity during the 111th Congress to advocate on particular bills that would accomplish these ends. The Administration of President Obama, however, has put in place rules based on former lobbying activities, governing who may work for the president. There has not been, however, a legislative opportunity to codify such policy for members of Congress and their staff.

50. *2008 Referral: Item 09-14. Report, Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform, Recommendation 1.e. To Renew and Broaden Democratic Practice, Support Items 1 Through 3—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 977–94).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) promoted these policy recommendations when it delivered the policy document in its entirety to members of Congress, but there has been no opportunity during the 111th Congress to advocate on particular bills that would accomplish these ends. During the 2008 election cycle, however, the WO provided resources to congregations pertaining to nonpartisan free speech by religious organizations, helping churches to understand what is and is not permissible for a 501(c)3 organization during an election cycle.

51. *2008 Referral: Item 09-15. Report, Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future, Recommendation 3. Call the Nation to Repentance Regarding Our Society's Continuing Failed Responses by Taking Concrete, Timely Steps, Through Policy Formation and the Appropriate Marshalling of Financial and Human Resources, to Transform New Orleans and the Gulf Coast Region into a Model of Redevelopment with Social and Environmental Justice— From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 994–1009).*

Response: Beginning with the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) Biennial in 2007, PHEWA, through its Presbyterian Association for Community Transformation (PACT) network, established and carried on an ongoing relationship with local ministry in New Orleans based in a commitment to “rebuilding with justice.” To that end, PHEWA developed a relationship the Covenant Presbyterian Urban Ministry Institute (CPUMI) in the Central City neighborhood. The CPUMI is connected with the Berean Presbyterian Church, the only traditionally African American Presbyterian church in the city. A grant was secured to provide funds for training board members in congregational based community organizing through the People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO) network. A primary goal was to help move the ministry from a needs model to a transformation model.

Throughout 2008 and 2009, PHEWA conducted consultations on an every six months basis, assisting in negotiations with presbytery and helping with the development of a new job description that combined the roles of CPUMI director and pastor of Berean Presbyterian. The PHEWA also conducted a consultation with the new pastor/director soon after his arrival.

In 2008–09, PHEWA also worked closely with the interim PICO director to secure a direct grant to PICO for \$10,000 to support organizing efforts in the Central City neighborhood. The PHEWA is planning another consultation in the first quarter of 2010 to assess where CPUMI is now and what aspect of their work will need continued support.

The PHEWA's Presbyterian Association of Specialized Pastoral Ministries (PASPM) network, in conjunction with the American Association of Pastoral Chaplains (AAPC), developed a music based project, “Winds of Hope, Winds of Healing,” created to raise awareness of the mental health issues following Katrina and to raise funds for a pastoral counseling/ mental health outreach project on the Gulf Coast, especially in Mississippi.

52. *2008 Referral: Item 09-15. Report, Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future, Recommendation 7. Encourage Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Those Agencies Involved in Disaster Recovery Research to Work in Collaboration with Long-Term Recovery Organizations in Finding Economically Viable “Green” Building Processes, Recommended Materials, and Models to Assist in Sustainable Rebuilding—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 994–1009).*

Response: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, along with partners and volunteer recovery workers, encourages the “Green” building process by providing recommended materials when available and encourages the use of items that do not require recycling.

53. *2008 Referral: Item 09-15. Report, Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future, Recommendation 8. Direct the Small Church and Community Ministry, Racial Ethnic Ministries, and Other Appropriate Ministries of the General Assembly Council, in Consultation with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, to Produce a Resource for Proactive Ministry and Preparation for Disaster in Urban and Rural Areas of Concentrated Poverty, and Provide These to Coastal and Other Vulnerable Presbyteries—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 994–1009).*

Response: The Small Church and Community Ministry Office served as a staff resource with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ASCWP) in the development of its report *Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future*. The Small Church and Community Ministry Office worked with the Presbytery of South Louisiana in the development of its housing development plan for the Gulf Coast region.

54. *2008 Referral: Item 09-15. Report, Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future, Recommendation 10. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Washington Office, and Other Ministries of the General Assembly Council to Support the Listed Public Policy Directions (a.–l.), at the Federal Level, and Urge Individual Presbyterians, Congregations, Presbyteries, and Synods to Support These and Other Equitable Reconstruction Policies on All Levels of Government—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 994–1009).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) has been engaged in the ongoing concerns of rebuilding the Gulf Coast. In particular, in consultation with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the WO has supported the Gulf Coast Civic Works Act, HR 2269 (in the 111th Congress) that deals with a number of the concerns addressed by this policy, including maintenance of prevailing wage levels, compliance with environmental laws, and developing local self-determination plans and re-developing the local work force. The WO has signed four letters in support of this bill. The WO has also been monitoring the situation of affordable housing in the Gulf Coast region, participating in a working group with other housing advocates whose concern is Gulf Coast housing.

In addition, the WO, together with interfaith colleagues, has met with the Department of Homeland Security federal coordinator of Gulf Coast Rebuilding and representatives of several other federal agencies, in order to express our particular concerns with the ongoing rebuilding process. Agencies involved in these meetings included the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Commerce, and the White House Domestic Policy Council.

55. *2008 Referral: Item 09-15. Report, Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future, Recommendation 11. Encourage and Equip Leaders in Local Congregations in the Gulf Coast Area to Help in Identifying Critical Needs That May Be Addressed Through Local Public Policy, Engage Proactively in the Development and Implementation of Such Public Policy and Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Washington Office, and Other Ministries of the General Assembly Council to Identify and Make Available Resources to Equip and Empower Local Leaders for This Task—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 994–1009).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) publishes a resource, “How to Be an Effective Advocate,” which is a good resource for doing advocacy at all levels of government. The WO also published an article in the September–October 2009 *Washington Report to Presbyterian* on the topic of Gulf Coast recovery.

56. *2008 Referral: Item 09-20. Commissioners’ Resolution. Affirming the Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on Prisoner Treatment, Torture, and Cruelty, Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to Identify or Create Devotional, Study, Worship, and Homiletic Resources, and Make Them Available on the Web so That Individuals, Congregations, and Middle Governing Bodies Can Lift Up Our Opposition to Torture and Our Commitment to Human Rights and Ethical Standards in Interrogation (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 1062–64).*

Response: The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program has created several worship resources related to the themes of opposition to torture, a commitment to ethical standards in interrogation, and a commitment to human rights. These resources are

available on the Web and have been publicized through the program's communication tools. Hard copies have been made available at peacemaking conferences and other events.

57. *2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 10-03. Direct the Appropriate PC(USA) Entities to Redevelop Congregational Resource Materials, on the Subject of Reproductive Options, to More Adequately Reflect the Full Spectrum of Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Council, While Remaining Consistent with the Policy of the 1992 Report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion and the 2006 Policy on Late-Term Pregnancies and Abortion and Report Back to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1082–87).*

[This item has been pulled from the Plenary Consent Agenda and has been assigned as Item 19-07.]

58. *2008 Referral: Item 10-05. Report, Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness, Recommendation 10. Encourage the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) to Establish a Churchwide Web-Based Network of Congregations Who Are Engaged in Ministries with Persons and Families Affected by Serious Mental Illness—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1088–133).*

Response: On October 22, 2009, the home page of the PC(USA) website featured the launch of the new web-based PC(USA) Congregational Health-Related Ministry Directory, developed by the Presbyterian Health Network (PHN), a volunteer network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association: <http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/networks/phn/directory.htm>.

In addition to providing the opportunity for congregations engaged in ministries with persons and families affected by serious mental illness to identify themselves here, this web-based directory allows congregations to register their ministries in area parish nursing and/or having a congregational health committee, substance abuse and addiction, domestic violence, twelve-step programs, HIV/AIDS, disability inclusion, older adult ministry, serving as a nutrition site and/or food pantry, free clinic, homelessness, with space to fill in “other ministry.”

Denomination-wide assistance will be appreciated in spreading the word about and promoting this new resource opportunity.

59. *2008 Referral: Item 10-05. Report, Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness, Recommendation 11. Direct the Presbyterian Washington Office to Advocate for Federal Legislation as Listed in Items a.–f.—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1088–133).*

Response: In October 2008, members of Congress attached the bill to require parity in the coverage of mental health and general health care to the Toxic Assets Relief Program (TARP) bill. While the Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) did not take a position on the overall TARP legislation, it did support the inclusion of mental health parity on a must-pass bill. Further, the WO included an action alert in favor of mental health parity in the *Witness in Washington Weekly* in September 2008 and invited Presbyterians to celebrate the passage of mental health parity in the 2008 Wrap-Up edition of the *Washington Report to Presbyterians*.

The WO has also included increased access to high-quality mental health care in its work on the comprehensive health system overall considered by Congress in 2009. Further, the WO has advocated for the reauthorization and expansion of Indian Health Care, the federal system that provides health services to native populations in the U.S. Expansion of these services would include increased access to mental health and substance abuse services, as Native Americans are a particularly high-risk population for these health issues.

60. *2008 Referral: Item 10-05. Report, Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness, Recommendation 12. Direct the Presbyterian United Nations Office to Advocate for International Human Rights Treaties That Would Protect the Rights of Persons with a Mental Illness and International Human Rights Treaties That Would Improve Mental Health Care Universally—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1088–133).*

Response: The Presbyterian United Nations Office, whenever appropriate, has diligently worked to advocate for improvement in mental health care as it lifts up and speaks out for comprehensive human rights for all people, especially the most vulnerable.

61. *2008 Referral: Item 10-05. Report, Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness, Recommendation 16. Direct the General Assembly Council to Provide Certified Chaplains and/or Pastoral Counselors in Collaboration with the Presbyterian Association of Specialized Pastoral Ministries (PASPM) at Large Presbyterian Gatherings Such as the Peacemaking Conference, the Youth Triennium, the Triennial Gathering of Presbyterian Women and the Biennial Meeting of the General Assembly—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1088–1133).*

Response: This action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) has been communicated to the appropriate entities and conferences, and conversations are in process.

62. *2008 Referral: Item 10-06. On Supporting Single Payer Universal Healthcare Reform, Recommendation 2. Direct the General Assembly Council, Through Appropriate Offices Including Health Ministries, the Washington Office, and the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA), to Advocate for, Educate About, and Otherwise Pursue the Goal of Obtaining Legislation That Enacts Single-Payer, Universal National Health Insurance as the Program That Best Responds to the Moral Imperative of the Gospel; Monitoring Progress Toward This Goal and Reporting Back to the Next Two General Assemblies (2010 and 2012)—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1133–36).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) has been very engaged in the national debate about health care reform. In particular, the WO has frequently iterated support for a single-payer system, and further expressed the General Assembly's historic commitment to health reform that will provide accessible, affordable, high-quality health care to all persons residing in this nation. This single-payer referral item has informed all of the Washington Office's health care reform advocacy in the 111th Congress.

In September 2009, the House of Representatives took a vote on an amendment to substitute the larger health reform package developed by the three committees of jurisdiction with a single-payer approach. The WO sent letters in support of the amendment to its cosponsors and also sent a letter to each member of the House of Representatives urging them to vote for the substitute amendment.

63. *2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 11-01. On Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel, Recommendation 3. Direct Appropriate Offices of the General Assembly Council to Provide Video, Cyber, and Print Resources on the Church's Historic Concern for Justice and Peace in Israel and Palestine—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1137–39).*

Response: Resources, and links to resources, are available on the Web pages of a number of programs including the Office on the Middle East, Presbyterian Washington Office, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Mission Responsibility Through Investment, Presbyterian Women, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

64. *2008 Referral: Item 11-06. On the 218th General Assembly (2008) Being a Voice for the Victims of Violence in Israel and Palestine, Recommendation 2. Focus Our Energy on the United States Government, Demanding That It Assume an Intensive and Unrelenting Role as Peacemaker, Bringing Together the Opposing Parties in Forums Where Reasonable People Can Reach Reasonable Compromises About Highly Complex Issues—From the Presbytery of National Capital (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1150–51).*

Response: The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, in partnership with the Washington Office and other programs, provides regular opportunities for Presbyterians to advocate with the United States government, calling the government to work for peace.

65. *2008 Referral: Item 11-09. Regarding Assistance for Iraqi Refugees—From the Presbytery of Lake Huron (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1156–59).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) published articles in both the *Washington Report to Presbyterians* and *Witness in Washington Weekly* on the plight of Iraqi refugees and called for Presbyterians to support legislation that would assist the refugees. The WO advocated forcefully with both congress and the administration for more assistance for Iraqi refugees. Through sign on letters and advocacy visits on the hill and with the administration, the WO conveyed the message that the U.S. ought to have a comprehensive, regional, multiyear plan for protecting and assisting Iraqi refugees, IDPs, and other vulnerable Iraqis: a plan with the full authorization and funding of congress.

66. *2008 Referral: Item 11-10. On Building Peace in Iraq, Recommendation 4. Call Upon the United States Government to Support Our Military Personnel by Granting Speedy Discharges to Conscientious Objectors; Fully Funding Veteran's Benefits; Ensuring That Injured Service Personnel and Veterans Have the Best Medical, Mental Health, and Rehabilitation Care Available; and Providing Generous Benefits to Surviving Family Members—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 46–46, 1159–61).*

Response: A letter was sent to both congress and the administration calling on our government to support our military personnel by granting speedy discharges to conscientious objectors; fully funding veteran's benefits; ensuring that injured service personnel and veterans have the best medical, mental health, and rehabilitation care available; and providing generous benefits to surviving family members.

67. *2008 Referral: Item 11-10. On Building Peace in Iraq, Recommendation 5. Call Upon the United States Government to Develop and Implement a Lasting Peaceful Solution, Responsibly Bring the Troops Home, and Reaffirm the Call of the 216th General Assembly (2004) for the United States Government to Engage with the International Community Through the United Nations and Other International Agencies to Cooperate with the Government of Iraq in Providing Security, Peace-keeping Forces, and Funding the Rebuilding of the Country—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 46–46, 1159–61).*

Response: Through articles published in the *Washington Report to Presbyterians* and *Witness in Washington Weekly* the Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) urged Presbyterians to advocate for a lasting peaceful solution for Iraq. A 2nd Tuesday briefing was held for Presbyterians on the situation in Iraq with a former Gulf War Veteran. The WO advocated, along with the Iraq Policy Development Working Group, for humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced people and for increased development assistance for the rebuilding of Iraq.

68. *2008 Referral: Item 11-10. On Building Peace in Iraq, Recommendation 6. Call Upon the United States and All Members of the United Nations to Establish and Fully Fund a United Nations Peacebuilding Mission for Iraq to Work in Partnership with Iraqi Leaders, Neighboring Nations, and Appropriate International Governmental and Nongovernmental Organizations to Establish Security in Iraq, Rebuild Institutions and Infrastructure, Resettle and Assist Refugees, and Initiate a Process of Truth and Reconciliation to Promote Healing and Forgiveness—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 46–46, 1159–61).*

Response: The Presbyterian United Nations Office has transmitted to the United Nations Security Council member states a letter to raise the visibility of continued violence in Iraq. The UN office also continues to work for the establishment of peace in Iraq, in partnership with the UN nongovernmental community and UN agencies.

69. *2008 Referral: Item 11-10. On Building Peace in Iraq, Recommendation 7. Call Upon the United States and Other Responsible Nations to Voluntarily Make Restitution in an Amount Adequate to Repair War Damage; to Fully Investigate, and Where Appropriate, in Accordance with the Principles of Due Process Recognized in U.S. and International Law, to Prosecute All Charges of War Crimes Including Torture and Mistreatment of Prisoners; and to Cooperate Completely with Any International Investigations of War Crimes Committed by any Party to the Conflict in Iraq—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 46–46, 1159–61).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO), on its own and in coalition with other denominations in the National Religious Coalition Against Torture, advocated for the full investigation of war crimes including torture and mistreatment of prisoners and to cooperate with any international investigations. This was done through sign-on letters, phone calls, direct visits with members of congress and the administration, as well as action alerts sent out to our Witness in Washington Weekly email list. Through the Iraq Policy Development Working Group, the WO on its own and in partnership with other organizations advocated for adequate development funds for the rebuilding of Iraq.

70. *2008 Referral: Item 11-10. On Building Peace in Iraq, Recommendation 8. Call Upon the United States to Remove All Weapons, Mines, Depleted Uranium, and Other Military Waste Products from Iraq; to Repair Other Damage to the Environment, Including Priceless Archaeological Sites—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 46–46, 1159–61).*

Response: A letter was sent to Congress and the administration calling on the United States to remove all weapons, mines, depleted uranium, and other military waste products from Iraq. The letter urged funding to repair the damage that had been caused.

71. *2008 Referral: Item 11-10. On Building Peace in Iraq, Recommendation 9. Call Upon the United States to Return Full Direct Control of Iraq's Oil Resources and Oil Revenues to Iraq—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 46–46, 1159–61).*

Response: A letter was sent to Congress and the administration calling on the United States to return full, direct control of Iraq's oil resources and oil revenues to Iraq.

72. *2008 Referral: Item 11-10. On Building Peace in Iraq, Recommendation 13. Direct the General Assembly Council to Continue to Expand the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Commitment to Relief Efforts in Iraq in Cooperation with Our Ecumenical Partners, to Ministries That Address Human Needs in Iraq Caused by the War, and to Long-Term Development Efforts to Assist in the Rebuilding of the Country—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 46–46, 1159–61).*

Response: The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program promotes the Peace Fund for Solidarity with the Churches of Iraq (E051722). This ECO (Extra Commitment Opportunity) supports assistance and training for doctors, nurses, community health workers, counselors, and therapists; development work among women and children, especially those widowed/orphaned by the wars; and more.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, working in collaboration with our ecumenical partners, has been providing assistance to about 5,000 of the most vulnerable people inside Iraq and to refugees in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.

In addition to basic humanitarian assistance of food, water, and sanitation, assistance has included a number of additional components, such as education, literacy programs, and vocational training. Activities aimed at mitigating the psychological effects of children between the ages of seven and fourteen includes recreational activities, art, and drama therapy.

A key component has also included providing training to Syrians—a way of showing solidarity with the “host community.”

Working with Church World Service, one of nine voluntary agencies that resettle refugees in the United States, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is assisting with the resettlement of Iraqi refugees that have been admitted to the United States and helping Iraqi refugees adjust to life in the United States. The Kreuz Creek Presbyterian Church in Hellam, Pennsylvania, hosted the first class to help Iraqi refugees introduce some of their traditional dishes to the U.S.

73. *2008 Referral: Item 11-11. On Addressing the Violence and Suffering Inflicted on Iraqi Women During the Current Prolonged War, Recommendation 1. Communicate to the Iraqi Government Our Concerns for Equal Rights and Justice for Women in Iraq; Deploring the Dramatic Increase in Abuses Since 2004; and Urging Steps Be Taken to Improve Women’s Status in All Areas of Iraqi Society—From the Presbytery of Providence (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1162–64).*

Response: Communication was sent to the Iraqi government expressing our concern for the status of women in the country. The communication cited the increase in abuses since 2004 and urged the government to take steps to improve the situation.

74. *2008 Referral: Item 11-11. On Addressing the Violence and Suffering Inflicted on Iraqi Women During the Current Prolonged War, Recommendation 2. Communicate to the United States Government, Through Letters to the President, the Members of Congress, and to the Secretary of State, Our Concern for Equal Rights and Justice for Women in Iraq and Urging That the U.S. Government Work with the Iraq Government Toward Correcting Inequities and Lost Civil Rights by Iraqi Women—From the Presbytery of Providence (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1162–63).*

Response: Communication was sent to the president of the United States, the Congress, and the secretary of state expressing our concern for equal rights and justice for the women of Iraq. The communication encouraged them to work with the Iraqi government to address this situation.

75. *2008 Referral: Item 11-11. On Addressing the Violence and Suffering Inflicted on Iraqi Women During the Current Prolonged War, Recommendation 4. Express Our Solidarity with Our Partner Churches in Iraq as Well as with the World Council of Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and Leaders of the Muslim World Assisting Them in Attempts to Address the Issue and the Difficult Conditions Under Which They Are Living—From the Presbytery of Providence (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1162–64).*

Response: The following letter was sent in response to the referral:

To:

The Leaders of the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches in Iraq
 President and General Secretary, World Alliance of Reformed Churches
 Programme Director, Middle East Office, World Council of Churches
 Programme Director Inter-religious Relations and Dialogue, World Council of Churches;
 General Secretariat, Middle East Council of Churches;
 General Secretariat, Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches
 President, Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue
 General Secretariat, Arab Group for Christian-Muslim Relations

Dear Friends:

Through an action of its 218th General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) addressed the issue of “Violence and Suffering Inflicted on Iraqi Women During the Current Prolonged War” (GA *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp.45, 46, 1162–64). The Assembly has directed that we express solidarity with our partner churches in Iraq, which the PC(USA) has continued to do since the U.S.-led international sanctions, then war, were launched against that country. Through a variety of programs, Presbyterians have accompanied the people of Iraq, particularly the churches, through prayers, encouragement, and support through opportunities for consultation, fellowship and training, as well as support for ministries with those who have been displaced or become refugees.

The assembly has also requested that we communicate with the WCC, WARC, MECC, FMEEC, partner organizations engaged in Christian-Muslim relations for the purpose of communicating with leaders of the Muslim World, to express our continuing solidarity, and to assist in any way possible in attempts to address particularly violence and suffering inflicted on Iraqi women.

We are aware, as you are, that women and children experience the greater share of suffering during times of hardship. We are also aware, and grateful, that your own organizations have stood in solidarity with those who suffer, and have been diligent in working for peace in that beleaguered situation.

Lest, because of a situation that has become all-too-common in the news reports, or because of other distractions, we forget the people of Iraq, we write to encourage you in your efforts, and to assure you of our prayers as together we seek to be instruments of God's peace to those who suffer.

Victor Makari, Coordinator for the Middle East & Asia Minor
(Signed)

76. *2008 Referral: Item 11-12. On Preventing the Trafficking of Women, Internationally and Nationally, Recommendation 5. Instruct the General Assembly Council to Direct and Promote the Appropriate Offices of the General Assembly Council (GAC) to Create Educational Materials on the Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children for use by Presbyteries and Congregations and to Promote the Use of the Adult Curriculum Entitled Sex Trafficking by Martha Bettis-Gee—From the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1164–67).*

2008 Referral: Item 11-13. Resolution to Expand the Church's Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking, Recommendation 1. Direct the General Assembly Council and the Office of General Assembly to Expand Their Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking to Include Adults, Especially Women, by Supporting the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women Ministry Area to Work with the Ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice in Providing Resources to the Wider Church for Education and Advocacy—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1167–70).

2008 Referral: Item 11-13. Resolution to Expand the Church's Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking, Recommendation 3. Encourage the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Self-Development of People, Presbyterian Women, and Other Grant Making Entities in the PC(USA) to Fund Partner Congregations, Presbyteries, and Synods, in Order to Provide Safe Housing, Medical and Psychological Help for Trafficked Persons; Support Efforts to Obtain Appropriate Documentation; and/or Assist Trafficked Persons, Especially Women, in Safely Returning to Their Country of Origin—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1167–70).

2008 Referral: Item 11-13. Resolution to Expand the Church's Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking, Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Washington Office and the United Nations Office to Express Concern for the Escalation of Trafficking Within the U.S. and Use the Public Witness Channels Available to Them to Raise Issues with Appropriate National and International Representatives; and Partner with Ecumenical and Interfaith Entities to Build Coalitions Against Trafficking and Participate in Activities Such as the National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness (January 11) and the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1167–70).

2008 Referral: Item 11-13. Resolution to Expand the Church's Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking, Recommendation 5. Direct the General Assembly Council Ministries of World Mission and Compassion, Peace, and Justice, in Consultation with Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries, to Work with Appropriate Offices and Partners to Gather Data on Initiatives That Respond to the Terror of Human Trafficking and Provide Materials on the Web or in Its Interpretation Resources, Which Lift Up the PC(USA) Efforts to Combat Trafficking Systemically, in the United States and Around the World; and Report Its Findings to the 219th General Assembly (2010) —From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1167–70).

Response: These referrals are answered by the report, "The Work of the Human Trafficking Roundtable," found below.

The Work of the Human Trafficking Roundtable

The trafficking of human beings, modern-day slavery, is a multidimensional threat that deprives men, women, and children both in the United States and around the world of their human rights. This global scourge increases health risks and fuels the growth of organized crime. Since the 217th General Assembly (2006) spoke out about child sex trafficking, General Assembly Mission Council staff have been working together to coordinate their work. With the 218th General Assembly (2008) action calling for an expanded focus on human trafficking, the Human Trafficking Roundtable was constituted. The roundtable is made up of staff persons from the ministries of Compassion, Peace and Justice; World Mission; Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries; Presbyterian Women; the manager of Immigration Services in the Office of the General Assembly; staff from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Concerns and from the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns; the Presbyterian Men volunteer; and a member of the leadership team of PADVN, the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network (a network of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association). The roundtable has been working collaboratively to expand the church's ministry with and advocacy against human trafficking, meeting regularly both to coordinate the efforts of individual offices and to plan joint efforts around trafficking, including launching a new webpage, www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking.

a. *Expanding Awareness and Advocacy*

While the Roundtable continues to lift up issues related to trafficking that particularly impact children through the Associate for Child Advocacy, the associate for Mission Responsibility Through Investment, and our partner ECPAT-

USA, the roundtable has been working to broaden the scope of awareness and advocacy about trafficking of adults by means of the following:

- Through the associate for Fair Food Concerns in the Presbyterian Hunger Program and the manager of Immigration Services in the Office of the General Assembly providing educational resources and advocacy tools on the web, through presentations and in articles about modern-day slavery in the fields and about immigration issues.
- Through the manager of Immigration Services in the Office of the General Assembly facilitating communications from the Stated Clerk to express the concerns of the PC(USA) to the United States Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security about the issue of human trafficking and to urge effective action.
- Through ministry area booths at the Presbyterian Women's Gathering and the annual Association of Presbyterian Church Educators' event and in a Human Trafficking Roundtable booth at the World Mission Celebration, providing resource materials.
- Through Presbyterian Women, in plenary presentations at the Presbyterian Women's Gathering, lifting up the issue of trafficking to raise awareness with members of Presbyterian Women across the country. Presbyterian Women has adopted human trafficking as an initiative and its Global Exchange for 2010 to India will offer opportunities for participants to see firsthand the effects of trafficking in that country.
- Through the work of the Presbyterian Men Volunteer, resourcing that organization in its emphasis on human trafficking.
- Through input from a member of the leadership team of PADVN (Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network), a network of PHEWA, exploring the connections between human trafficking and domestic violence in the United States as victims of trafficking come to domestic violence shelters.

b. *Funding for Work that Addresses Human Trafficking*

Although most funding entities of the PC(USA) are already aware of the intersection between human trafficking and such root causes as hunger, disempowerment, and disaster situations, the Human Trafficking Roundtable sent letters to the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Women, and Self-Development of People encouraging them to fund such programs through their grant-making mechanisms. Through the work of the associate for Fair Food Concerns, the roundtable is promoting partnerships with Freedom Network USA, an organization that provides trainings for people in churches as well as those working in law enforcement, social services, and businesses in order to build capacity for responding to human trafficking victims in their midst. One such training has already been held, co-sponsored by the Presbytery of Charlotte and Church World Service. The Self-Development of People program is open to receiving applications dealing with this very serious issue if they meet the criteria of being owned and controlled by the direct beneficiaries.

c. *Legislation to Combat Trafficking*

There is comprehensive federal legislation in place to address human trafficking, first enacted in 2000 as the Trafficking Victims Prevention Act (TVPA) and most recently reauthorized as the William Wilburforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008. As a provision of this act, the Department of Justice publishes an annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*, available as a link from the human trafficking website. This report details the monitoring of 170 countries in terms of their compliance with anti-trafficking efforts, highlights efforts of the international community to combat trafficking, and encourages governments to take effective action. Work is underway through web resources and by means of promoting more training events by Freedom Network USA to educate Presbyterians about the need for state legislation to address trafficking.

d. *Educational Resources*

The Human Trafficking website, www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking, is the primary source for educational resources on human trafficking and will be updated with links to new resources on an ongoing basis. The website promotes a four-session study, *Sex Trafficking*, available for purchase from *The Thoughtful Christian*, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation's web-based resource center, and provides a link to *The Thoughtful Christian* website where the resource can be purchased for download.

e. *Promoting Initiatives That Address Human Trafficking and Its Root Causes*

As a part of its ongoing work, the Human Trafficking Roundtable has collaborated with the World Missions Ministry and its area offices in exchanging information about and providing resources that address incidents of human trafficking, forced servitude, and sex trafficking in the six regions in which the PC(USA) has mission partnerships. Through the associate for Fair Food Concerns, the roundtable worked with Freedom Network USA, Presbytery of Charlotte, and

Church World Service (see www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking) to provide the event held in the Presbytery of Charlotte to train participants in identifying the victims of trafficking and addressing their needs in appropriate ways. The roundtable stands ready to facilitate other such trainings in other presbyteries or with other groups. The Human Trafficking website, www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking, will continue to be a source for information about initiatives that address trafficking and will be updated with new information on an ongoing basis.

77. *2008 Referral: Item 11-14. On Endorsing the “Publish What You Pay” Campaign, Recommendation 4. Join Worldwide Efforts to Curb the Current Threats Posed by the Destructive Practices of the Extractive Industries—From the Presbytery of Chicago (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1170–73).*

Response: The Stated Clerk encouraged President Barak Obama, by letter, to support *Publish What You Pay* legislation.

Thirty presbyteries—including the eleven Joining Hands presbyteries—are engaged at various levels to urge congressional representatives to cosponsor the Energy Security Through Transparency Act in the Senate and the Extractive Industries Transparency Act in the House.

The coordinator of the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) and director of Réseau de Lutte contre la Faim (RELUFA), PHP’s Cameroonian partner, met with Senator Richard Lugar to urge his support for addressing the petroleum/poverty paradox. Senator Lugar became one of the original cosponsors of the Senate bill.

Also, Presbyterian Hunger Program staff worked closely with the staff of Senator Mitch McConnell, requesting assistance to release transparency activists arrested in several African countries, bringing both the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and a local pastor into that conversation.

Presbyterian Hunger Program staff has provided advocacy opportunities since January 2009 for the release of seven transparency activists in African nations through letter-writing campaigns developed within the Joining Hands networks.

Staff of the Presbyterian Hunger Program coordinated several media campaigns on the petroleum/poverty paradox both in Chicago and in Louisville, involving local Presbyterians and Cameroonian partners, as well as the Publish What You Pay executive director, in largely broadcast media. Print media has engaged the issue in Chicago and in a blog in *Sojourners* magazine. More press is anticipated as the legislation comes closer to a vote.

Presbyterian Hunger Program staff provided a January 2009 seminar on Publish What Pay for Presbyterian seminarians and a smaller session for the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky pastors, as well as pastors and congregants in Monmouth and New Brunswick presbyteries.

The director of Publish What You Pay U.S. Coalition has taught in numerous Presbyterian gatherings in both presbyteries and congregations and has accompanied Presbyterians on visits to Capitol Hill.

78. *2008 Referral: Item 11-15. On Support for the Presbyterian Church in Zimbabwe, Recommendation 1. Call Upon the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union Heads of State and Government to Establish Concrete Measures for Addressing the Political, Economic, and Humanitarian Crises in Zimbabwe; Vigorously Advocate for Free and Fair Elections in Zimbabwe; Ensure That the Will of the Zimbabwean People Is Respected—From the Presbytery of Denver (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1174–76).*

Response: The Presbyterian UN Office has transmitted a letter to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to be transmitted to its member states and the SADC secretary general. The letter addresses election monitoring and the humanitarian impact of political and economic crises in Zimbabwe. The Presbyterian UN Office may also arrange meetings with the UN Missions of SADC member states in an effort to further raise visibility of the crises in Zimbabwe.

79. *2008 Referral: Item 11-15. On Support for the Presbyterian Church in Zimbabwe, Recommendation 2 Urge the President and Congress of the United States to Increase Humanitarian Aid to Zimbabwe and Continue Support for the Zimbabwean People Via Legislation, and to Condemn the Human Rights Abuses that Have Occurred in Zimbabwe—From the Presbytery of Denver (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1174–76).*

Response: A letter was sent to Congress and the administration urging the United States to increase humanitarian aid to Zimbabwe and continue support for the Zimbabwean people. The letter also condemned the human rights abuses currently taking place in the country.

The Presbyterian United Nations Office worked with the ecumenical community at the United Nations to host a briefing with a Zimbabwe representative of Maryknoll missionaries.

80. *2008 Referral: Item 11-15. On Support for the Presbyterian Church in Zimbabwe, Recommendation 5. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian United Nations Office to Communicate the Concerns, Prayers, and the*

Work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for Justice in Zimbabwe to the United Nations—From the Presbytery of Denver (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1174–76).

Response: The Presbyterian UN Office has transmitted a letter to the Office of the UN secretary general and other UN agencies and relevant member states that highlights PC(USA) concerns and engagements in relation to Zimbabwe.

81. *2008 Referral: Item 11-17. Overture on War, Mercenaries, and Profiteering, Recommendation 2. Direct the Stated Clerk, and Appropriate Offices of the General Assembly Council, to Support the Development and Enforcement of Laws to Prohibit the Use of Such Private Military/Security Forces, Whose Work Closely Resembles That of Mercenaries in Earlier Historical Periods—From the Presbytery of Scioto Valley (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1177–80).*

Response: The Stated Clerk has communicated with the president and Congress calling for the creation of such legislation. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and the Washington Office monitor proposed legislation for opportunities to engage in further advocacy on this issue.

82. *2008 Referral: Item 11-17. Overture on War, Mercenaries, and Profiteering, Recommendation 4. Direct the Stated Clerk, and Appropriate General Assembly Council Offices to Petition and Otherwise Advocate That the Congress and the Attorney General of the United States Investigate War Profiteering in the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Both by Private Military Contractors and Others, and That the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Further Requests That, as in the American Civil War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, an Excess Profits Tax Be Assessed Against Any Company Found to Be Engaged in War Profiteering, Recognizing That It Is Immoral to Use a Time of War or National Emergency to Expand Profits While Many Soldiers' Families Live in Poverty and All Official U.S. Personnel Bear the Primary Risks and Sacrifices of the War—From the Presbytery of Scioto Valley (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1177–80).*

Response: A letter was sent by the Washington Office to Congress and the attorney general calling for the investigation of war profiteering in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

83. *2008 Referral: Item 11-18. Report on Human Rights in Colombia. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Washington Office to Continue to Educate the Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Their Representatives in the Congress of the United States of America About the Effect of American Legislation on the Lives of Individual Colombian Citizens with Particular Emphasis on Plan Colombia and the Free Trade Agreement—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1180–85).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office (WO) published articles in *Washington Report to Presbyterians* and *Witness in Washington Weekly* about the situation in Colombia and the effects of current U.S. policy—particularly military assistance and the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. The WO signed on to a variety of letters to Congress and the administration expressing our concern about the Colombia Free Trade Agreement and Plan Colombia. We had face-to-face meetings with congressional offices as well as the Department of Treasury. The WO cosponsored a hill briefing on the effects of Plan Colombia and hosted a mission co-worker from Colombia who spoke in the 2nd Tuesday briefing to Presbyterians on the situation in Colombia.

84. *2008 Referral: Item 11-18. Report on Human Rights in Colombia. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian United Nations Office (PUNO) to Continue to Represent the Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the Committees and Delegates of the United Nations—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1180–85).*

Response: The Presbyterian United Nations Office hosted International Peacemaker Diego Higuera-Arango in the fall of 2008 for a briefing on the human rights situation in Colombia. The Presbyterian UN Office worked with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and other ecumenical colleagues to organize a day-long session on Colombia during the WCC United Nations Advocacy Week in November 2009. The presentations during the session included reflections from Colombian churches, the New York ecumenical community, and the United Nations.

85. *2008 Referral: Item 11-19. "Commitment to Peacemaking." Recommendation 9. That a Report Be Made to the 219th General Assembly (2010) on the Number of Sessions That Have Adopted the "Commitment to Peacemaking"—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1185–86).*

Response: The "Commitment to Peacemaking" equips Presbyterians as they seek to implement the Mission Work Plan justice and compassion goal, "Advocate for peace and nonviolence in accord with General Assembly policy and direction, and aid other governing bodies in peacemaking efforts."

As of January 5, 2010, the number of congregations affirming the "Commitment to Peacemaking" was 4,521. Additionally, three presbyteries have made the "Commitment to Peacemaking." This information will be updated and reported to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

86. *2008 Referral: Item 11-22. On Supporting Those Who Feel Called to Seek Status as Conscientious Objectors. Recommendation 2.a. Encourage the Peacemaking Program to Produce and Identify Study Guides and Discernment Materials for Individuals, Congregations, and Presbyteries to Help Church Members and Their Friends Be Able to Articulate God's Calling on Their Lives in Regard to Participating in the Armed Forces, and War. Such Materials Will Be Made Available on the Denomination's Website, with Notice of Its Accessibility Sent to Every Congregation and Presbytery in the Denomination—From the Presbytery of San Francisco (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1191–93).*

Response: A list of resources is posted on the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program's Web page at <http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/>. Resources will be added as they are identified or created. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program worked with the Office of the Stated Clerk to notify the congregations and middle governing bodies of the Web page.

87. *2008 Referral: Item 11-28. That a Nine-Member Committee Be Appointed to Prepare a Comprehensive Study, with Recommendations, That Is Focused on Israel/Palestine Within the Complex Context of the Middle East and Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the General Assembly Council—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1226.*

Response: As instructed by the General Assembly, the Moderator and his two predecessors appointed a Committee of Nine, representing diverse backgrounds and perspectives. The General Assembly Mission Council, through its Executive Director, named the following staff persons to serve as resources: the area coordinator for the Middle East, the Regional Liaison (mission co-worker) for Israel/Palestine and Jordan, and the coordinator of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. The Office of the General Assembly's (OGA's) director of Communication, Development, and Technology, and the regional liaison (mission co-worker) for Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and the Gulf facilitated committee meeting arrangements.

88. *2008 Referral: Item 11-30. Commissioners' Resolution. On Mobilizing Presbyterians for a Significant Response to the Global Food Crisis. Recommendation 1. Launch an Appeal to All Presbyterians to Donate to a Special Fund Set Up by the General Assembly Council to Enable the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Provide Better Support to and Accompaniment of Our Overseas Partners Trying to Step Up Their Response to the Global Food Crisis—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1226–29).*

Response: A Special Fund, H333333, was set up and promoted through Monthly Fast, Presbyterian Hunger Program website, and written pieces. Through November 30, 2009, \$10,999 had been received. This provided funds for two grants totaling \$10,706.40 for a grain mill in Haiti and support for more cereal banks in Senegal, two of the populations hardest hit by the Global Food Crisis. Special Fund H333333 will continue to be promoted and funds will be awarded based on donations.

89. *2008 Referral: Item 11-30. Commissioners' Resolution. On Mobilizing Presbyterians for a Significant Response to the Global Food Crisis. Recommendation 4. Produce Relevant Resources, Using All Available Communications Means, to Raise the Awareness of Presbyterians About the Current Food Crisis, Including the Dangers for the U.S. Government, the European Union, and Other International Entities Who Want to Use the Current Food Crisis as an Opportunity to Offer More Direct Food Aid Exports and Genetically Modified (GMO) Seeds to Affected Countries, Instead of Offering Economic and Financial Assistance to Enable Them to Increase the Production and Marketing of Their Own Traditional Food Commodities—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1226–29).*

Response: The Monthly Fast was launched as a way to focus Presbyterians on relevant resources (video and print) and raise their awareness of the global food crisis and its various causes. The integration of a Christian spiritual practice with education as well as personal and collective action was appreciated and positively received around the church. Twelve fasts are available at www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis and each highlights a different country in the world where PC(USA) has partners, who in most cases contributed to the materials.

Media: Articles have been published in a few major and many smaller newspapers; dozens of blogs; many PC(USA) congregational and presbytery websites. Radio interviews have been done with individual fasters.

Articles: *Dallas Morning News, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Des Moines Register, Tampa Tribune, San Diego Union Tribune, Huntsville Times, Christian Century, Washington Post, Washington Times, Presbyterian News Service, VOICE of Synod of Living Waters, Religion News Service (wire service picked up by many others), World Faith News, Pesticides Action Network e-newsletter (10,100 members), Salem Presbytery Hunger Blog, Bread and Butter Blog, Iowa.*

Radio: WFPL 89.3 with Rick Howlett, Louisville NPR; Dec. 7, 2008.

Legislation and Advocacy:

a. Fasters and other Presbyterians have been encouraged to contact their representatives on related legislation, e.g. the Trade Act, Jubilee Act and agricultural policy in support of sustainable approaches to agriculture and development.

b. The Stated Clerk has signed letters expressing these concerns to the presidents of Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. before the Summit of the Americas. He has signed a letter against the U.S.-Columbia Free Trade Agreement.

c. The PC(USA) has not endorsed the Global Food Security Act because of its orientation on biotechnology, with its mandated GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms) research, and is working with other organizations to get the wording changed.

90. *2008 Referral: Item 11-30. Commissioners' Resolution. On Mobilizing Presbyterians for a Significant Response to the Global Food Crisis. Recommendation 5. Call on the Stated Clerk and on Appropriate Entities of the General Assembly Council (GAC) to Contact the U.S. Government, the World Bank, and Other Relevant Institutions, to Call for the Continued Pursuit of Debt Relief as Well as an Immediate Increase in Their Financial Assistance for Food Aid and Agricultural Development in Developing Countries—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1226–29).*

Response: In 2008 we mobilized support for *Jubilee Act*, which passed committees but wasn't voted on the floors of the House and Senate. It was slated to be re-introduced late in 2009. Also:

- a. Jubilee USA launched a postcard campaign *Change, Not Chains*, which the PC(USA) helped promote.
- b. The November Global Food Crisis monthly fast focused on Haiti and encouraged congregations to become Jubilee Congregations.
- c. Sent out e-alerts urging support of Stop the Vulture Funds Act (House).
- d. Met with members of Congress and the administration in order to galvanize support for further debt relief for the most impoverished countries as well as to support the Stop the Vulture Funds Act.
- e. Sent letter and mobilized around Haiti's debt, which was cancelled (June 2009).
- f. Participated in calls and response to U.N. with other church entities on IMF (International Monetary Fund) reform.

91. *2008 Referral: Item 11-31. Commissioners' Resolution. Concerning Human Rights Violations in the Philippines, Recommendation 2. Call Upon the Appropriate Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Encourage Presbytery Partnerships, Joint Projects, and Immersion Experience in the Philippines, in Cooperation with the United Church of Christ of the Philippines, Providing Copies of This Resolution (Coordinated with the Resolution on Human Rights in Colombia and Others), and Requesting Participants to Provide Updates Upon Returning Regarding the Violence and Oppression Aimed at Church Leaders and Other Civil Society Groups—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1229–32).*

Response: In consideration of the above, the World Mission Office on Asia and the Pacific has worked with the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and other agencies to support existing partnerships between PC(USA) and United Church of Christ of the Philippines (UCCP) presbyteries, to itinerate a team of International Peacemakers from the UCCP and a PC(USA) mission co-worker from the Philippines during the World Mission Challenge 2009, and to explore the creation of a Philippines Mission Network. The Reverend Bruce Reyes-Chow, PC(USA) Moderator, visited the Philippines twice during 2009 to engage with and strengthen our partnership with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP). During one of his visits a UCCP pastor was abducted and Rev. Reyes-Chow participated in an ecumenical news conference to heighten awareness of these human rights violations. Conversations of possible travel/study opportunities to the Philippines are underway. The Asia Office is in the process of redefining the work of one of our mission co-workers towards advocacy/interpretation/education around human rights, peace, and justice issues.

92. *2008 Referral: Item 11-31. Commissioners' Resolution. Concerning Human Rights Violations in the Philippines. Recommendation 3. Directs the Appropriate Agencies Within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Advocate That the United States Congress and the Department of State Reduce U. S. Funding of the Philippine Military and to Condition All Future Aid on: (a) Concrete Signs That the Human Rights of Unarmed Citizens and Groups Within Civil Society Are Respected by All Levels of Government, Including the Philippine Military; and (b) Evidence That Those Elements of the Philippine Military That Are Implicated in Murder, Abduction, Torture, and Other Gross Human Rights Violations Are Held Accountable by the Government—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1229–32).*

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, the Office on Asia and the Pacific, and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program have arranged visits for PC(USA) leaders to elected officials, facilitated the signing of ecumenical advocacy letters by denominational leaders, helped provide written testimony to the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations of the House of Representatives' Committee on Appropriations by the director of the Compassion, Peace and Justice ministry, and made opportunities for Presbyterians to advocate with their elected officials.

93. *2008 Referral: Item 11-31. Commissioners' Resolution. Concerning Human Rights Violations in the Philippines. Recommendation 5. Directs the Appropriate Agencies Within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Advocate with Committees*

and Delegates of the United Nations to Review, Continually and Diligently, Through the Proper Agencies of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the Improvement or Decline of Respect for Human Rights by All Branches of the Philippine Government—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1229–32).

Response: The Presbyterian Washington Office, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, the Office on Asia and the Pacific, and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program have worked collaboratively and with other ecumenical partners at the United Nations to advocate for human rights in the Philippines.

94. *2008 Referral: Item 11-32. Commissioners' Resolution. On Emergency Food Aid to North Korea. That the General Assembly Council, Through Its Appropriate Offices, Be Instructed to Provide Immediate Food Assistance to Alleviate the Sufferings of the People in North Korea—(Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1232).*

Response: We have supported the Lighthouse Foundation and the Brethren in food aid projects in North Korea. One of Presbyterian Hunger Program's Monthly Fasts on the Global Food Crisis focused on Korea and one of the take actions was to give funds earmarked for Korea.

95. *2008 Referral: Item 16-02. A Call to Seek God for Spiritual Renewal of the Church—From the Presbytery of San Joaquin (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 33–34, 1401–02).*

Response: A wealth of resources has been produced and is still available to churches on seeking God through solemn assemblies. A website at <http://www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship/worship/assemblies.htm> includes a lengthy biblical and historical exploration of solemn assemblies, practical and prayer resources for preparation teams, theological and practical considerations, and liturgical resources for congregations. New resources continue to be added to this site. Those without web access have been sent these materials by mail. In addition, *HungryHearts* dedicated an issue to solemn assemblies, which can be accessed at <http://www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation/hungryhearts/archive/winter09/>.

96. *2008 Referral: Item 17-1NB. Direct the Office of Ministry with Youth to Provide the Resource Center or Resource Contact Person of Each Presbytery with a Copy of the DVD Soul Searching to Enhance Outreach to Teens and to Prepare a Study Guide to Accompany the DVD—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 16, 1404).*

Response: The DVD and study guide were sent to all PC(USA) presbytery offices, to the attention of the stated clerks, with an enclosed study guide and cover memo in Fall 2009.

97. *2008 Referral: Item 17-2NB. Recommendation 2. Direct the Office of Youth Ministries to (a) Affirm the Importance of the Use of Mentors in the Spiritual Formation of Youth, with Attention to "Tweens" (Ages 9–12), Teenagers (Ages 13–18), and Also to Young Adults (Ages 18+); (b) Create and/or Identify, and to Disseminate Tools and Appropriate Educational Materials for Training Mentors and Emphasizing Active Listening; (c) Develop Worship and Programmatic Resources to Celebrate the Rites of Passage for "Tweens," "Teens," and Young Adults, and to Commission Their Mentors; and (d) Include on the PC(USA) Website a Page to Report on the Experiences of Mentors—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 16, 1404–05).*

Response: The Office of Ministries with Youth published and continues to promote the resource *BeTween: Exploring Faith and Christian Life with Older Elementary Children and Youth*. *BeTween* includes two tracks—one for youth and one for parents/families. In particular, the parent/family track explores the role of adult mentors, parents as spiritual leaders, and intergenerational friendships. In addition, the Office of Ministries with Youth commissioned several "Quick Sheet" resources to be created and posted on the Ministries with Youth website at www.pcusa.org/youthministry/quicksheets that are focused on the topics of mentoring. The first of the mentor focused Quick Sheets were written, edited, and posted on the website in fall 2009. Quick Sheets focused on celebrating tween and teen rites of passage, mentor program development, and ways to "plug in" adults with youth in a congregation, will be written and posted on the website in 2010 as funding is available. It is important to mention that Quick Sheets are free resources. They are pdfs that can be downloaded and used by anyone who wishes to use them. The electronic vehicle enables the Office of Ministries with Youth to increase, update, and promote the collection of articles in an economical and expedient manner that a print resource does not often allow. In spring 2010, a section entitled "Youth Accompaniers" will launch. This link will be a lodging site for mentor stories, suggestions, and resources.

The Youth Task Force, in its reporting back to the 219th General Assembly (2010), has included several examples of programs that are centered around mentors and adult accompaniers of youth.

98. *2008 Referral: Item 03-16, Recommendation 2. That the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council Joint Per Capita Table Review the Allocation of Expenses and Programs to the Per Capita and Mission Funds, and Present a Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 62, 167).*

Response: Refer to the Joint OGA/GAMC report, found above in Section II. Final Responses to Referrals, C. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly/General Assembly Mission Council, Final Response 1.

99. *2008 Referral: Item 03-16, Recommendation 3. That the Stated Clerk and the General Assembly Council Share, in Partnership with the Middle Governing Bodies, Educational Materials with the Whole Church, so That All Will Have a Better Understanding of the History, Values, and Uses of the Per Capita Budget—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2008, Part I., pp. 34, 35, 62, 167).*

Response: Refer to the Joint OGA/GAMC report, found above in Section II. Final Responses to Referrals, C. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly/General Assembly Mission Council, Final Response 1.

100. *2008 Referral: Item 08-17. On Responsible Purchasing, Recommendation 7. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council Purchase from Factories and Vendors Whose Production Adheres to the U.S. or Country-of-Origin Environmental Standards—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 24, 712–14).*

Response: The General Assembly Mission Council, office of Purchasing Services, has worked with the Presbyterian Hunger Program in the past on sweatshop-free purchases from the Fair Trade Zone (a sweatshop-free women’s sewing cooperative) in Nicaragua that partners with Enough for Everyone, a ministry of the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

The GAMC Purchasing office continues to work with the Hunger Program in improving a responsible purchasing process that includes the purchasing of Sweatshop-free, ecologically-sound products that meets the minority vendor policy. This provides resources that assist in evaluating current suppliers to ensure they meet acceptable environmental standards and establish new sources of ecologically sound products.

101. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.e. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council Participate in the PC(USA)’s Goal of Assuring Gender Equity in Pay for Its Employees, Including Mission Personnel, by Providing the Following Data to Entities of the PC(USA) as Requested for Pay Equity Studies: Salary, Position Held, Part-Time or Full-Time, Gender and Race/Ethnicity, Date of Hire, and Highest Level of Educational Achievement—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Response: Information has been presented to the God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation Joint Working Group with the data requested, and available, for all PC(USA) entities. Initial analysis has been submitted, and additional analysis will be contributed as developed.

102. *2008 Referral: Item 09-10. Report, The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming, Recommendation 3.d., Urge the General Assembly Council, the Presbyterian Foundation, and the Board of Pensions to Continue to Improve the Energy Efficiency of the Louisville, Jeffersonville, Philadelphia, and Other National Agency Offices—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 934–58).*

Response:

a. *The General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Center, Louisville, Kentucky*

The Presbyterian Center began its quest to become more energy efficient in 1998 after an energy audit performed by a local engineering firm showed areas of potential savings on energy costs. These items included the installation of an energy management system (EMS) for controlled heating and cooling, changing lamps from T12’s to T8’s, and changing incandescent lamps to fluorescent lamps wherever possible.

Other items listed in the audit that have been completed were: changing exit lights to LED, turning off lights in vending machines to conserve energy, and putting timers on several outside lights.

After the installation of a state-of-the-art EMS in 1998, additional energy-saving changes were implemented through the years as new energy efficient products became available and affordable. To this end, the Presbyterian Center was honored in April 2009 with an ENERGY STAR award for positive changes made to conserve energy. The federal ENERGY STAR program recognizes buildings that rate among the top 25 percent of facilities of similar use across the country for energy performance. The Center was one of only nine Louisville buildings to earn the award in 2008.

A recycling program was started in 1998 that consisted of aluminum cans and white paper only. Since 2000, the program has grown to include ALL paper, magazines, books, plastic, glass, and batteries. Employees are encouraged to bring items from home if they are not already involved in a recycling program.

The Center has begun to concentrate on water conservation. Our facility is using more “green” chemical, recycled, and biodegradable paper products, low-flush mechanisms, and other products.

When all of this started in 1998, the word “green” was not a household name as it is now. Since then, the Center has conscientiously progressed in its efforts to be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly. That commitment is as strong today for becoming an even “greener” facility. For us, this is an extension of being good stewards of all of God’s resources.

b. *The Presbyterian Foundation, Jeffersonville, Indiana*

The Presbyterian Foundation has always strived to be a good steward of all of God’s resources. The Foundation takes seriously its obligation to conserve and recycle where appropriate. Programs to recycle paper, cans, and other items have been in place for many years. The Foundation has recycle bins in every area, by every copier, and in the break room by the vending machines. Even computer equipment is recycled. At times past, the Foundation has given computer equipment to another Presbyterian ministry for use. If there are no ministries that can benefit from its use, the Foundation takes the equipment to the local environment recycling program. The Foundation continues to encourage recycling and proper disposal and continues to research new and improved ways to dispose of waste.

All light fixtures in the building have been upgraded to conserve more power. That includes replacing the types of light bulbs used in the light fixtures that are more energy efficient. All exterior lighting is on timers such that areas are lighted only when needed, which substantially reduces power consumption.

All heating and air conditioning units have been replaced in the last five years. Each time a unit is replaced priority is given to choosing units with the highest efficiency ratings. To take this a step further, thermostats have locks on them to prevent changes and spiking demands in power consumption.

The Foundation has made a commitment to be environmentally friendly and energy efficient with its computer infrastructure and workstations. To this end, the Foundation is migrating to a virtual server environment. The result is reducing the number of servers from twelve to four with an estimated savings of component waste, landfill materials, and power consumption of 40–60 percent. While this incurs substantial capital cost, the resulting benefits to the environment and the bottom line are well worth the investment. The Foundation is developing plans for workstation virtualization that will result in similar savings as the server virtualization.

Finally, the Foundation strives to maintain its property in a manner befitting of the church. In 2007, the Foundation was recognized with the “CityPride” award from the city of Jeffersonville, Indiana, for the Foundation’s contribution to the pride and appearance to the city of Jeffersonville.

Over the years the Foundation has made a tremendous investment to ensure the ongoing efficiency of its building and operations and to ensure they are environmentally friendly. The Foundation stands ready to make this investment in the future as we strive to good be stewards of God’s blessings.

c. *The Board of Pensions, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

As a guide in its efforts to conserve and responsibly use God’s resources, the Board of Pensions has joined the Greater Philadelphia Green Business Commitment Program. The Board of Pensions was a founding member of the program and has been certified by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council as a “Green” business. This measuring stick allows the Board of Pensions to ensure that it is living up to the church’s commitment to make the most of what God has entrusted to us.

In its effort to improve the energy efficiency of its rented Philadelphia offices, the Board of Pensions has installed thermal window blinds to reduce solar heat gain and the air conditioning load, purchased and installed compact computer servers, reduced the number of computer servers running through the use of “virtual” computer servers, set office equipment to a power-saving standby mode when not in use, and committed to purchase certified energy efficient office equipment.

As part of its broader commitment to becoming a “Green” organization, the Board of Pensions has expanded its recycling efforts; replaced standard fluorescent bulbs with high-efficiency, low mercury bulbs; purchased low VOC (volatile organic compound) carpet and paint; and reduced paper usage.

All of this is in an effort to minimize the impact of operations on the environment, serve as an example of a responsible corporate citizen, and maximize the Board of Pensions’ stewardship of God’s resources.

103.2008 Referral: Item 09-12, Resolution to Explore the Study of the Status of Women At All Levels in the PC(USA), Recommendation 2. That the General Assembly Council Provide Sufficient Funding and Staff Support for the Task Force to Study the Status of Women at All Levels of the PC(USA), to Explore Additional Funding for Research, Data Collection, and Analysis, and to Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54–55, 961–64).

Response: The necessary funds for the Task Force to Study the Status of Women at All Levels of the PC(USA) were provided at the 218th General Assembly (2008) by increasing the Per Capita Budget for 2009–2010 to cover the expected expenses of this task force. The 2009 expenses were not incurred. Should the task force wish to spend more money than allot-

ted for 2010 and/or extend their work beyond 2010, those requests would need to be made of the 219th General Assembly (2010). No additional funding is available for research, data collection, and analysis.

G. Office of the General Assembly

1. *2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 04-07. That the Stated Clerk Be Instructed to Prepare an Advisory Opinion Outlining Existing Remedies to Address Abuses of Judicial Process, and the Office of the General Assembly Be Instructed to Prepare Any Necessary Constitutional Amendments for Presentation to the 219th General Assembly (2010) in Order to Provide for Responses Following Due Process, for Permanent Judicial Commissions and Sessions to Censure Persons Found Guilty of Abusing Judicial Process Through Frivolous and/or Harassing Complaints and/or Allegations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 49, 249).*

Response: In response to this referral from the 218th General Assembly (2008), Item 04-07, to address the issue of limiting abuse in disciplinary process by the filing of multiple complaints and/or allegations with a possible amendment to the PC(USA) Constitution, the Office of the General Assembly issued Constitutional Musing 23 (<http://www.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/musings/note23.pdf>).

In addition, the Office of the General Assembly is proposing an amendment to D-2.0203b, which can be found as Item 05-25, Recommendation 4.

2. *2008 Referral: Item 05-03. On Directing the Stated Clerk to Collect and/or Develop Models of Examination Procedures (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 42, 353).*

Response: Models were collected from a number of presbyteries. A sample of those models are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/ministers/com/sampling.htm> and presbyteries have been notified.

3. *2008 Referral: Item 14-Report 2. GA PJC Review, Recommendation 2. Compile an Electronic Digest of All Cases Adjudicated from 1983 to Present (Minutes, 2008, pp. 38, 1338).*

Response: The Report on the Review of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) brought to the 218th General Assembly (2008) included a recommendation that the GAPJC and the Office of the Stated Clerk compile an electronic digest of all cases adjudicated from 1983 to the present. This recommendation was referred to the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). An electronic Topical Digest is being developed to gather GAPJC cases under overarching or recurring topics.

In response to this referral, the OGA reviewed what is already available electronically relating to GAPJC adjudicated cases. All the GAPJC cases since reunion (1983) are available on-line (www.pcusa.org/oga; then under the *Annotated Book of Order* topic listing on that web page) and in electronic disc format. Since March 2003, head notes highlighting the key points of the decision have been prepared for each case.

The cases and head notes are electronically searchable by key words and phrases. The search tool allows a wide variety of search parameters to be used.

Additionally, cases relating to specific section(s) of the *Book of Order* are cross referenced in the *Annotated Book of Order* under that section(s). The *Annotated Book of Order* is on-line and in disc format. The cross references for a given section also include General Assembly authoritative interpretations, if any.

Further, there are already two sources of periodic commentary on constitutional topics. Under Section IV.B.2.b. of the *Organization for Mission*, the Stated Clerk issues advisory opinions on the meaning of particular provisions of the *Book of Order*. These opinions are found and indexed on the PC(USA) web site (pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/advisory-opinions). The Office of Constitutional Services offers comments on constitutional topics in Constitutional Musings. These are also found and indexed on the PC(USA) web site (pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/musings).

In view of the existing electronic search capabilities for the GAPJC cases and *Annotated Book of Order*, an electronic digest of all adjudicated GAPJC cases seems unnecessary. However, as a compliment to the electronic subject matter search tools and the periodic commentary in the Advisory Opinions and Constitutional Musings, the OGA is developing an electronic digest (Topical Digest) of overarching or recurring, substantive or procedural topics, e.g., Governing Body Responsibility and Authority, Due Process in Disciplinary Cases, Ordination Issues. Gathered under each topic are selected GAPJC cases relevant to the topic, particularly cases where the GAPJC has taken the opportunity to provide significant background and rationale for the decision. By its nature, the Topical Digest can be expanded as new cases are adjudicated. An initial edition of the Topical Digest will be available on line and in disc format later this year.

4. *2008 Referral: Item 14-Report 2. GA PJC Review, Recommendation 4. That the OGA, in Cooperation with the Office of the Stated Clerk, Develop a Process for Using Alternative Forms of Resolution Starting at the Presbytery Level and Present Its Recommendation to the 219th General Assembly (2010) (Minutes, 2008, pp. 38, 1338).*

Response: The Report on the Review of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) brought to the 218th General Assembly (2008) included a recommendation that the Office of the General Assembly, in cooperation with the Office of the Stated Clerk, develop a process for using Alternative Forms of Resolution (AFR) starting at the presbytery level and present its recommendation to the 219th General Assembly (2010) for action.

The Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (hereinafter referred to as PC(USA)) provide clear processes for resolving two very specific forms of conflict that may arise within the context of PC(USA). The PC(USA) Constitution in the Form of Government allows for the church community to resolve most all conflicts that arise within the context of the PC(USA) by utilizing creative means through committees and commissions of governing bodies to bring the conflicted parties together to resolve their conflict. Congregations, sessions, presbyteries, synods, and even the General Assembly use these creative means to resolve conflicts on an ongoing basis.

For the two specific types of conflict, the Rules of Discipline provides a process of resolution that is fair and reasonable to all parties involved and allows for a neutral third party to resolve the conflicted issue. This process looks similar to the secular judicial process in that all parties are accorded due process to present their “side” of the conflict to a neutral entity that ultimately decides or resolves the conflict on behalf of the parties and the broader church.

These Rules of Discipline delineate this process for situations where a governing body has taken an action it is not empowered to take under the PC(USA) Constitution or has failed to take an action that it has a duty to take. The process to resolve and correct this type of conflict is called Remedial and provides a mechanism for a member of the governing body or sister governing body to challenge the actions or inactions of a particular governing body. It is a means for the minority to challenge the action of the majority if the majority action is not in accord with the PC(USA) Constitution.

The Rules of Discipline further delineate a process for resolving those instances where individuals act outside the boundaries created by Scripture or the PC(USA) Constitution. The process to resolve and correct individual behavior within the context of the PC(USA) is called Disciplinary and provides a mechanism for the community to first inquire into whether the individual engaged in the prohibited behavior, then gives the individual a process to defend either whether they engaged in the behavior or their right to engage in the behavior, then finally gives the community a process to correct the behavior if the individual wants to continue in relationship either as member or officer with the PC(USA). Disciplinary correction of this behavior, also called “offense,” ranges from public rebuke to temporary removal from office to removal from membership and can include a supervised rehabilitation.

Both of the processes delineated in the Rules of Discipline are intended to provide a fair and economical means of resolving the correction of governing body behavior or the correction of individual behavior. If in the context of using these processes, the persons involved would prefer not to use the specific process, but rather be more creative in the resolution of the correction of governing body behavior or the correction of individual behavior, there is opportunity to use Alternate Forms of Resolution.

In the Disciplinary procedure, the Rules of Discipline state that prior to charges against an individual that the individual has committed an offense, a committee is formed to investigate allegations of offensive behavior by an individual member or officer. Once this committee determines that there is probable cause to believe the individual member or officer committed an offense, the committee determines whether they could reasonably prove and then prove beyond a reasonable doubt to a neutral body that the individual committed the offensive behavior. If the committee believes that it can prove beyond a reasonable doubt then it will file charges against the individual and the individual has the right to challenge or defend those charges in front of the neutral body (session or a permanent judicial commission). This precludes any coercion of an individual by a group of other individuals within the church and gives the right to any individual to defend their behavior.

Prior to the filing of charges, the committee formed to investigate the allegation could choose under the Rules of Discipline to begin alternative forms of resolving correction of the behavior of an individual rather than filing charges to the neutral body, session, or permanent judicial commission. This alternative form of resolution could result in an agreement between the committee and the individual who committed the behavior that includes the agreed upon correction. Any agreement must still go to the neutral body, session, or permanent judicial commission, for approval (again to prevent coercion). This process of Alternative Form of Resolution is a means of resolving the correction of individual behavior without going through a full trial. The same sort of resolution without going through a full trial can also be accomplished by the neutral body, session, or permanent judicial commission, if the individual is willing to admit to the behavior and show repentance (in the form of guilty plea). How the settlement agreement is procured may take the form of negotiation or mediation between the individual and the committee. The Rules of Discipline also seem to allow the committee and the individual accused to employ arbitration. However, binding arbitration requires an outside third party to make a decision for both the parties since the rest of the rules require the permanent judicial commission (PJC) to approve any settlement agreement. This has never been used for fear of being contrary to the rest of the Rules of Discipline.

In the Remedial procedure, a person or persons with standing may challenge a governing body through the filing of a complaint. Those persons who have standing are usually a member of the governing body, a sister governing body, or an em-

ployee of the governing body if the action he/she is challenging has allegedly harmed them in their employment. The responding party will always be a governing body that is being challenged such as a session, presbytery, synod, or entity of the General Assembly. When a complaint has been filed against a governing body, the governing body appoints a committee to represent them and then files an answer or a response. The neutral body that will hear the case is the permanent judicial commission of the next higher governing body. Under the Rules of Discipline, that permanent judicial commission (PJC) may initiate and facilitate a conference between the parties that occurs prior to any trial on the issues within the complaint. During the pretrial conference, the PJC may encourage the parties to resolve the issues raised in the complaint between themselves. If the parties agree, the PJC may encourage the parties to use any alternative form of resolution such as negotiation or mediation to resolve the issues raised rather than use the process delineated by the Rules of Discipline. However, either party has the right to engage in the process delineated by the Rules of Discipline, which provides a fair process for the resolution of the complaint in front of a neutral body that will decide the issue for the parties.

These processes are available within the context of the Discipline and Remedial and need no further action of the General Assembly.

5. *2006 Referral. Item 05-29. Request 06-13. Interpretation of D-6.0103 Re Stay of Enforcement—From the Manager of Judicial Process and Social Witness Policy, Office of the General Assembly (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 40, 445).*

Response: This referral is answered by Item 05-26, Office of the General Assembly recommendation to amend D-6.0103.

H. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc (PILP)

1. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.d. That the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), and Board of Pensions (BOP) Participate in the PC(USA)’s Goal of Assuring Gender Equity in Pay for its Employees By Providing the following Data to Entities of the PC(USA) as Requested for Pay Equity Studies: Salary, Position Help, Part-Time or Full-Time, Gender and Race/Ethnicity, Date of Hire, and Highest Level of Educational Achievement--From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, Part I, 2008, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Response: The PILP has provided data by race and ethnicity, gender, age, and pay grade to the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns and PILP participated in the annual consultation process.

2. *2008 Referral. Item 09-13, Report, Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies, Recommendation 8. That All Agencies Collect, Organize, and Report Data for All Research in the Church in a Disaggregated Form by Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Age, so That Data on Women of Color and Young Adult Women of Color May Be Identified Separately for Analysis, Where Possible and As Permissible by Law--From the Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54–55, 964-77).*

Response: The PILP has provided data by race and ethnicity, gender, age, and pay grade to the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns and PILP participated in the annual consultation process.

3. *2008 Referral: Item 09-16, Report, Creating a Climate for Change Within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Recommendation 1. That All Agencies Prepare a Written Plan for the Continuing Implementation of Cultural Proficiency—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 1009–055).*

Response: The PILP is committed to the cultural proficiency initiative and prepared a written report of our plan for continuing implementation for the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns on March 31, 2009.

I. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)

1. *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.d. That the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), and Board of Pensions (BOP) Participate in the PC(USA)’s Goal of Assuring Gender Equity in Pay for its Employees By Providing the following Data to Entities of the PC(USA) as Requested for Pay Equity Studies: Salary, Position Help, Part-Time or Full-Time, Gender and Race/Ethnicity, Date of Hire, and Highest Level of Educational Achievement--From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, Part I, 2008, pp. 54, 55, 897–923).*

Response: The PPC provided data by race and ethnicity, gender, age, and pay grade to the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns and PPC participated in the annual consultation process in the spring of 2009. In addition, PPC participated in a conversation on the “Theology of Compensation in the PC(USA)” with a study team appointed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

2. *2008 Referral. Item 09-13, Report, Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies, Recommendation 8. That All Agencies Collect, Organize, and Report Data for All Research in the Church in a Disaggregated Form by Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Age, so That Data on Women of Color and Young Adult Women of Color May Be Identified Separately for Analysis, Where Possible and As Permissible by Law--From the Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54–55, 964–77).*

Response: The PPC has provided data by race and ethnicity, gender, age, and pay grade to the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns and PPC participated in the annual consultation process.

3. *2008 Referral: Item 09-16, Report, Creating a Climate for Change Within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Recommendation 1. That All Agencies Prepare a Written Plan for the Continuing Implementation of Cultural Proficiency--From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 1009–055).*

Response: The PPC is committed to the cultural proficiency initiative and prepared a written report of its plan for continuing implementation for the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns on March 31, 2009. Representatives from the PPC management team also met with the Climate for Change Task Force in October 2009.

Item 01-03

[The assembly approved Item 01-03 as amended. See p. 2.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following list of referrals of business:

00 PLENARY

- 00-01 GANC Nominations.
- 00-02 Committee Structure.
- 00-03 Moderator's Nominations for GANC.

01 BUSINESS REFERRALS

The moderators and vice moderators of the assembly committees, as a group, shall function as the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall function as the moderator and vice moderator of this committee as well. This committee shall report to the assembly for its action at the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

- 01-01 Proposed Docket.
- 01-02 Plenary Consent Agenda.
- 01-03 Referrals to Assembly Committees.
- 01-04 Suspend Standing Rules

02 BILLS AND OVERTURES

Docket of the assembly and referrals of business to assembly committees after commencement of General Assembly (Standing Rule C.4.b.); appeal of persons denied the right to speak at a public hearing (Standing Rule E.5.b.); review requests for distribution of material to commissioners (Standing Rule E.6.c.); review requests from agencies to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings during assembly meeting (Standing Rule E.6.d.); recommend approval of time limits on debate (Standing Rule F.1.b.); review and recommend approval of General Assembly Minutes (Standing Rule F.1.c.); review and recommend approval of General Assembly Minutes (Standing Rule F.1.d.); review protests, determine if entered in the Minutes, prepare response if needed (Standing Rule F.1.e.); report on assembly committee requests for establishment of special committees or commissions (Standing Rule K.1.a.–b.).

03 GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Consider matters related to: meetings of the assembly; per capita budget; Standing Rule amendments; operation of the Office of the General Assembly; statistics; publishing of reports; General Assembly Nominating Committee process; special committees; commissioners and advisory delegates credentials/leaves of absence.

For Plenary Action

- ~~[03-01 On Amending G 13.0103r. Regarding Authoritative Interpretations From the Presbytery of the Mid-South.] [Note: See 05-28]~~
- 03-02 On Amending Standing Rule H.2.b.(4) Regarding Provisions for the Election of the Stated Clerk—From the Presbytery of Detroit.

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

- 03-03 On Stewardship of Time During Plenary Sessions of the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.
- 03-04 On Amending G-13.0102b Concerning the Number of General Assembly Commissioners—From the Presbytery of San Diego.
- 03-05 On Eliminating G-13.0103q Concerning the Responsibilities of the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of San Diego.
- 03-06 On Amending G-18.0301 c. and d. to Require Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote—From the Presbytery of San Diego.
- 03-07 On Amending Standing Rule A.3. by Outlining a Procedure for Dealing with Overtures That Request Amendment to the *Book of Order* That Have Been Dealt with By One of Two Previous GAs—From the Presbytery of New Harmony.
- 03-08 On Amending Standing Rule C.4.a. to Give Priority to Controversial Items—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.
- 03-09 On Amending Standing Rule K.1.b. Regarding Special Committees—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.
- 03-10 On Amending the Standing Rules Regarding GA Timelines—From the Presbytery of Flint River.
- 03-11 On Adding Standing Rule F.5.h. Regarding Timing of Committee Reports—From the Presbytery of Flint River.
- 03-12 On Amending Standing Rule E.2.e.–g. Regarding Privilege of the Floor—From the Presbytery of Shenandoah.
- 03-13 On Amending Standing Rule B.2. and D.1.g. Regarding Floor Access and TSAD and YAAD Deadlines—COGA.
- 03-14 On Amending SR K.1.c., Commission and Special Committees—COGA.
- 03-15 On Amending IV.C.1. of the *Organization for Mission* to Correct and Clarify—COGA.
- 03-16 Amend IV.C.7. of the *Organization for Mission* Regarding the Committee on Ecumenical Relations—COGA.
- 03-17 On Establishing an Annual General Convocation Meeting and Moving Meetings of the General Assembly to Every Six Years—From the Presbytery of Foothills.
- 03-18 On Expanding the Scope of the Review of Biennial Assemblies—From the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.
- 03-19 On Accountability for Presbyterian Organizations at General Assembly Sponsored Meetings and Events—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.
- 03-20 On Young Adult Advisory Delegate Participation—From the Presbytery of Central Washington.
- 03-21 A Resolution to Adapt the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR)—ACWC.
- 03-22 Election of Associate Stated Clerks—COGA.
- 03-23 Election of Persons to the Board of the Presbyterian Historical Society—COGA.
- 03-24 On Amending the “Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies”—COGA.
- 03-25 Per Capita Budget—COGA/GAMC.
- 03-26 Sexual Misconduct Policy—COGA/GAMC.
- 03-27 Invitation for next GA—OGA.
- 03-28 Regarding Per Capita—From Manager of Budgets, Office of the General Assembly—ACC.
- 03-29 Changes to the Session Annual Statistical Report.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

- 03-A Minutes, COGA.
- 03-B Minutes, Presbyterian Historical Society.

Information

- 03-Info Agency Summaries: COGA, OGA.
Per Capita Payments by Presbytery.
Moderator’s Report.

04 MIDDLE GOVERNING BODY ISSUES

Consider matters related to: amendments to Chapters IX–XII of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; MGB boundaries; MGB-related referrals.

For Plenary Action

- 04-01 On Amending G-12.0100 and D-5.0101 Regarding Synod Function—From the Synod of the Rocky Mountains.
- 04-02 On Amending the *Book of Order* by Deleting Chapter 12 to Eliminate the Middle Governing Body of the Synod—From the Presbytery of New Hope.
- 04-03 On Amending G-12.0000 Regarding Creation of a “New Synod”—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.
- 04-04 On Amending G-11.0000 to Provide Flexibility in Presbytery Membership—From the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler.

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

- 04-05 On Creating a Special Committee to Explore the Roles and Relationships of Synods and Presbyteries to Each Other, to the Agencies, and to Congregations—From the Synod of the Southwest.
- 04-06 On Appointing a General Assembly Commission on Middle Governing Bodies—COGA.
- 04-07 Report of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén in Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries (SCARB).
- 04-08 On Organizing a Non-Geographic Korean Language Presbytery—From the Synod of the South Atlantic.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

[No items.]

05 CHURCH POLITY

Consider matters related to: amendments to Chapters I, III–V, VII–VIII, XII–XIV, XVI–XVIII of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; amendments to the Rules of Discipline with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice. Advisory Committee on Litigation.

For Plenary Action

- 05-01 On Amending D-6.0101 and D-10.0101 Regarding Conciliation and Mediation—From the Presbytery of Northern Kansas.
- 05-02 On Restoring Previous Provisions of D-13.0102 and D-13.0106 to Deny the Prosecuting Committee the Ability to Appeal a Verdict of “Not Guilty”—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.
- 05-03 On Amending G-14.0560 Expanding the Role of the Commissioned Lay Pastor—From the Presbytery of South Louisiana.
- 05-04 On Amending G-11.0407 and G-4.0560, and Adding a New G-11.0408b. Regarding Commissioned Lay Pastors—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.
- 05-05 On Amending G-13.0108 and G-13.0111a. Regarding Nominations Process—GANC.
- 05-06 On Amending G-9.0801, G-13.0108, and G-13.0000 Regarding Participation and Representation—GACOR.
- 05-07 On Amending G-14.0553c to Allow an Interim Associate Pastor to Become the Next Installed Associate Pastor with Two-Thirds Vote—From the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley.
- 05-08 On Amending G-14.0480 Regarding Ordinations—From the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.
- 05-09 On Amending G-5.0300 and G-10.0302a to Include the Designation of Associate Member—From the Presbytery of Mackinac.
- 05-10 On Amending G-5.0101 Regarding Covenantal Membership—From the Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley.
- 05-11 On Amending G-13.0103r to Reduce Vexatious and Improper Litigation in the Church—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.
- 05-12 On Amending G-7.0400, Articles of Incorporation Be Provided to Presbytery—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Western North Carolina—ACC.
- 05-13 Pandemic Provisions—From the Director of Operations, Office of the General Assembly—ACC.
- 05-14 Authoritative Interpretation—Officer, Moderator, or Stated Clerk Fails to Carry Out Duties of Office, What Recourse Does Governing Body have to Address the Problem?—Member of the Presbytery of New York City—ACC.
- 05-15 Interpretation (G-13.0112c) Re: Renunciation—From the Stated Clerk, Synod of Lincoln Trails—ACC.
- 05-16 Ethical and Polity Implications of Financial Gifts Made Directly by Individuals to Ministers—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy—ACC.
- 05-17 Interpreting G-14.0440 Regarding Circulation of Personal Information Forms by Candidates—From Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Columbia Theological Seminary, Presbytery of St. Augustine—ACC.
- 05-18 Is a Session Bound to Consider Only Those Items Published in the Call for a Called/Special Meeting—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of New Covenant—ACC.
- 05-19 Definition of Youth, Overture 90-18—From the Manager, General Assembly Nominations—ACC.
- 05-20 D-10.0303, Reviewing Work of Investigating Committee—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Seattle—ACC.
- 05-21 Responsibility of General Assembly to Provide Authoritative Interpretations of *Book of Order* (G-13.0103r)—From Member, Presbytery of St Augustine—ACC.
- 05-22 Section G-7.0306. Pastor Moderator of All Meetings of Congregation—From the Stated Clerk, Synod of Southern California & Hawaii—ACC.
- 05-23 Work within Bounds—From Manager, Polity Guidance and Training—ACC.
- 05-24 On Amending G-13.0103r. to Clarify the Role of the General Assembly and its Permanent Judicial Commission—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.
- 05-25 Amendments to the Rules of Discipline—OGA.
- 05-26 Amendment to D-6.0103—OGA.
- 05-27 On Adopting a Gracious Dismissal Policy—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

~~[03-04]~~ 05-28 On Amending G-13.0103r. Regarding Authoritative Interpretations—From the Presbytery of the Mid-South.

~~[07-08]~~ 05-29 On Receiving the Report of the FOG Task Force, Dismiss the Task Force with Thanks Taking Specific Actions on the Report's Recommendations—From the Presbytery of Mississippi.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

05-A to

05-P Review of Synod minutes

Information

05 Info Voting of Presbyteries on Amendments to the *Book of Order*—OGA.
Agency Summary, Advisory Committee on Litigation.
Governing Body Statements of Compliance.
Roster and Decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission.
Agency Summary, Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

06 CHURCH ORDERS AND MINISTRY

Consider matters related to: Amendments to Chapter VI of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; recruiting, enlistment of persons to service of church. Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

For Plenary Action

- 06-01 On Amending G-11.0407 and G-14.0730 to Affirm the Role of Certified Christian Educators—From the Presbytery of Mission.
- 06-02 On Calling for a Moratorium Until 2012 for Requests to Change, Alter, or Remove the Current Standards of Ordination—From the Presbytery of Prospect Hill.
- 06-03 On Declaring a Season of Rest by Taking No Action Modify or Eliminate G-6.0106b for Not Less Than Two Years—From the Presbytery of the Pines.
- 06-04 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0106—From the Presbytery of San Diego.
- 06-05 On Homosexual Practice and the Church: An Authoritative Interpretation—From the Presbytery of Shenandoah.
- 06-06 On Amending G-6.0106b, G-14.0240, and G-14.0450 Regarding Requirements for Ordained Office—From the Presbytery of Detroit.
- 06-07 On Deleting G-6.0106b—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.
- 06-08 On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.
- 06-09 On Amending G-6.0106b—From the Presbytery of the Western Reserve.
- 06-10 On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text—From the Presbytery of Southern New England.
- 06-11 On Amending G-6.0106b to give Broader But Specific Scope to the Ordination Standards—From the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler.
- 06-12 On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text—From the Presbytery New York City.
- 06-13 On Amending G-6.0106b—From the Presbytery of Albany.
- 06-14 On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text—From the Presbytery of Chicago.
- 06-15 On Amending G-6.0106(b) of the *Book of Order*—From the Presbytery of Des Moines.
- 06-16 On Amending G-6.0106b and G-14.0450 Regarding Requirements for Ordained Office—From the Presbytery of Heartland.
- 06-17 On Deleting G-6.0106b and Substituting New Text—From the Presbytery of National Capital.
- 06-18 Overture on Behavioral Standards for Ordained Office—From the Presbytery of Central Washington.
- 06-19 On Establishing a Process to Evaluate the Current Call System—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.
- 06-20 On Calling All Individuals in the Majority and Minority to Wait Actively Upon the Lord in a Season of Fasting and Forbearance—From the Presbytery of the Miami Valley.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

[No items.]

07 FORM OF GOVERNMENT REVISION

Consider matters related to: The report of the General Assembly Task Force on the revision of the Form of Government.

For Plenary Action

07-01 Form of Government Revision.

07-02 On Amending 3.0109 of the Report of the Form of Government Task Force to Allow Flexibility in the Composition of Committees—From the Presbytery of the Western Reserve.

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

- 07-03 On Adding a New G-3.0303, “Relations with Other Presbytery and Ecumenical Partners” to the Proposed Form of Government—From the Presbytery of Huntingdon.
- 07-04 On Commending the Work of the FOG Task Force to the Church for Additional Study and Discernment—From the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.
- 07-05 On Developing the Form of Government as an Enabling Constitution Instead of a Manual of Operations—From the Presbytery of Foothills.
- 07-06 On Amending G-3.0103 and G-3.0111 of the New Form of Government—From the Presbytery of San Fernando.
- 07-07 On Receiving the Report of the FOG Task Force and Posting a Draft on the Website Inviting Presbyteries to Propose Specific Amendment to the Present Form of Government—From the Presbytery of Central Washington.
- ~~[07-08 On Receiving the Report of the FOG Task Force, Dismiss the Task Force with Thanks Taking Specific Actions on the Report’s Recommendations—From the Presbytery of Mississippi.]~~
- 07-09 On Amending the G-3.0103 of the Report of the Form of Government Task Force—From the Presbytery of San Juan.
- 07-10 Amendment to Proposed Form of Government—COGA/GAMC.
- 07-11 Effect of a Major Revision of the *Book of Order* on Previous Authoritative Interpretations—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation—ACC.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

[No items.]

08 ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

Consider matters related to: amendments to Chapter XV of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; matters dealing with relationships with, and attitudes toward, other religious movements or bodies including papers on Christian/Jewish and Christian/Muslim relations; conversations with other Presbyterian denominations; nominations for ecumenical advisory delegates; nominations for delegations to corresponding churches; reports of corresponding bodies.

For Plenary Action

- 08-01 On Referring the Covenant to Adopt the Lund Principle, and its Codicil, to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations—From the Synod of the Northeast.
- 08-02 On Removing the Confusing and Theologically Incompatible Call for Presbyterians to Engage Other Faiths—From the Presbytery of Yukon.
- 08-03 Approve the Paper “Christians and Jews: People of God”—GAMC.
- 08-04 Approve “Toward an Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations”—GAMC.
- 08-05 Invitation to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 220th General Assembly (2012)—GACER.
- 08-06 On Relationships Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church—GACER.
- 08-07 Dialogue with 7th Day Adventists—GACER.
- 08-08 Review of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches/Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches—CER.
- 08-09 On Referring “Christians and Jews: People of God” and “Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations”—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.
- 08-10 Full Participation in Christian Churches Together—GACER.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

- 08-Info Report of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches Covering 2008 and 2009 to the PC(USA).
- 08-Info World Council of Churches Annual Report (2008).

09 MISSION COORDINATION

Consider matters related to: Mission programs authorized by General Assembly; PC(USA) vision and mission goals; Organization for Mission and General Assembly Mission Council Manual of Operations; mission budget; audits; consult with Assembly Committee 10 Social Justice Issues A regarding the Fair Compensation Paper.

For Plenary Action

- ~~09-01 On Strengthening the Peacemaking Program—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh. [Note: See 13-11]~~

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

- 09-02 On Considering That All Undesignated Funds from the Foundation to the GA Level Be Allocated Directly to Individual Presbyteries—From the Presbytery of Sierra Blanca.
- 09-03 On Amending the Process for Forming Social Witness Policy Approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993)—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.
- 09-04 On Support of Missionary Funding—From the Presbytery of Shenango.
- 09-05 On Amending the Manual of the GAMC to Require Certain GAMC Staff to Actively Participate in the Work/Worship of a Congregation—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.
- 09-06 On Reestablishing an Office of Collegiate Ministries as a Vital Part of Ministry and Mission—From the Presbytery of North Central Iowa.
- 09-07 On Affirming the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association—From the Presbytery of Elizabeth.
- 09-08 On Supporting Mission and Ministry in North Korea—From the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse.
- 09-09 On Reinstating “Criminal Justice Sunday” in the PC(USA) Calendar, and Establishing an Office of Criminal Justice Issues—From the Presbytery of New York City.
- 09-10 Confirm the Election of Linda B. Valentine—GAMC.
- 09-11 Mission Partnership Funds to End December 31, 2013—GAMC.
- 09-12 Communications and Funds Development Recommendation for Approval of Revised Criteria and Guidelines for Special Offerings—GAMC.
- 09-13 Approve the Update on the Mandate of the Presbyterian Self-Development of People—GAMC.
- 09-14 Covenant Between Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA), Inc. and the GAMC of the PC(USA)—GAMC.
- 09-15 On a Task Force to Review Mission Funding—ACREC.
- 09-16 Extension of Time Regarding Renaming ACREC—ACREC.
- 09-17 That Unused Funds Designated for the Status of Women Task Force Be Redesignated—ACWC.
- 09-18 WITHDRAWN-5/11/10. A Resolution to Ensure Staffing for Women’s Advocacy in the PC(USA)—ACWC.
- 09-19 Report of the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee.
- 09-20 On Supporting Young Adults in Mission and Leadership Development in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the Presbytery de Cristo.
- 09-21 Budgetary and Financial Concerns—Mission Budget.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

- 09-A Audit.
- 09-B Minutes, GAMC.
- 09-C Minutes, PC(USA), A Corp.

Information

- 09-Info Report on GAMC Current Task Forces, Work Groups, Ad Hoc Committees.
Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Report of Progress for 2008–2009.
Changes to the Appendixes in GAMC Manual of Operations.
Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel (PCCMP) 2008–2010 Report.

10 SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES—A: THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

Consider matters related to: Concerns of church in national affairs; national military matters; matters relating to righteousness and justice of persons/organizations. General Assembly Committee on Representation. Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns; consult with Committee 09 Mission Coordination regarding the Fair Compensation Paper.

For Plenary Action

- 10-01 On Protesting the Blatant Disregard for the Sanctity of Our Lord’s Name in Motion Pictures and Public Broadcasting—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.
- 10-02 On Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the First Social Pronouncement of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.—From the Presbytery of Chicago.
- 10-03 On Urging the U.S. Congress to Cap Interest Rates on Credit Card Lending—From the Presbytery of Salem.
- ~~[10-04 A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—ACREC.] [Note: See 11-09]~~
- ~~[10-05 On Forming a Committee to Study the Nature of the Church for the 21st Century—ACREC.] [Note: See 11-10]~~
- 10-06 A Resolution to Study Violence Against Women and Children on the Mexico-U.S. Border—ACWC.
- 10-07 A Resolution to Explore the Intersection of Gender and Race—ACWC.
- 10-08 A Resolution Supporting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)—ACWC.
- 10-09 Living Through Economic Crisis: The Church’s Witness in Troubled Times: A Social Involvement Report for the 219th General Assembly (2010)—ACSWP.

- 10-10 Neither Poverty Nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church—ACSWP.
~~10-05~~ 10-11 Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K–12)—ACSWP.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

- 10-A Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Representation.

Information

- 10-Info Agency Summaries:
 Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns,
 Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns,
 General Assembly Committee on Representation.

11 SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES—B: THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD

Consider matters related to: Concerns of church in national affairs; national military matters; matters relating to righteousness and justice of persons/organizations. General Assembly Committee on Representation. Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

For Plenary Action

- 11-01 On Lifting up the “Call to Restore the Creation”—From the Presbytery of Charlotte.
 11-02 On Endorsing “The Charter for Compassion”—From the Presbytery of National Capital.
 11-03 On Making Resources Available Regarding Destruction and Loss of Coastal Wetlands—From the Presbytery of South Louisiana.
 11-04 Human Rights Update (2010)—ACSWP.
~~[11-05] — Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K–12)—ACSWP.~~ [Note: see 10-11]
 11-06 Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call—ACSWP.
 11-07 On Living a Human Life before God—ACSWP.
 11-08 On a National Moratorium on the Imposition of the Death Penalty—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.
~~[10-04]~~ [11-09] On Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—ACREC.
~~[10-05]~~ [11-10] On Forming a Committee to Study the Nature of the Church for the 21st Century—ACREC.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

[No items.]

12 CIVIL UNION AND MARRIAGE ISSUES

Consider matters related to: Report of the Civil Unions Task Force; amendments to the Form of Government, Rules of Discipline and Directory for Worship related to marriage and civil unions; referrals defining marriage.

For Plenary Action

- 12-01 On Affirming the Biblical Teaching on the Topic of Marriage—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.
 12-02 On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage—From the Presbytery of Baltimore.
 12-03 On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.
 12-04 On Amending the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Discipline to Support Equal Protection and Foster Greater Inclusiveness—From the Presbytery of Boston.
 12-05 On Marriage—From the Presbytery of Prospect Hill.
 12-06 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000—From the Presbytery of Albany.
 12-07 On Amending W-4.9000 to Uphold Session and Pastoral Discretion in Their Responsibility for the Covenant of Marriage—From the Presbytery of East Iowa.
 12-08 On Approving an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Uphold Session and Pastoral Discretion in Their Responsibility and Accountability for Worship—From the Presbytery of Des Moines.
 12-09 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation Regarding Marriage—From the Presbytery of Heartland.
 12-10 On Amending W-4.9000 and D-14.0202 Regarding Marriage—From the Presbytery of National Capital.
 12-11 On Reaffirming the Historic Teaching of the Church on the Topic of Marriage—From the Presbytery of Central Washington.
 12-12 The Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
 12-13 Minority Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

[No items.]

13 PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Consider matters related to: Peacemaking, international military affairs, and the arms race except matters touched upon by the Middle East Special Committee; consult with the Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues; international matters; human rights; plight of refugees worldwide; international economic justice; global evangelism and education.

For Plenary Action

- 13-01 On the War in Afghanistan—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.
- 13-02 On the War in Afghanistan—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.
- 13-03 On the War in Afghanistan—From the Presbytery of Scioto Valley.
- 13-04 On Partnering for Peace in Sudan—From the Presbytery of Trinity.
- 13-05 On Protecting Christians in the Muslim World—From the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.
- 13-06 On Entering a Six-Year Term of Discernment to Seek Clarity on Whether God is Calling Us to Embrace Nonviolence as Our Response to War and Terror—From the Presbytery of National Capital.
- 13-07 Twenty-first Century Peacemaking and Seminaries, Colleges, and Congregations—From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.
- 13-08 On Assisting with a Process for Negotiation of a Peace Accord in Colombia—From the Presbytery of Chicago.
- 13-09 On the War in Afghanistan—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.
- 13-10 Commitment to Peacemaking—GAMC.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

[No items.]

14 MIDDLE EAST PEACEMAKING ISSUES

Consider matters related to: Peacemaking, international military affairs and the arms race primarily involving the nations of the Middle East; consulting with the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues concerning the Middle East; the report of the Middle East Special Committee; MRTI recommendations concerning Middle East nations.

For Plenary Action

- 14-01 On Divestment from Caterpillar, Inc.—From the Presbytery of Newark.
- 14-02 On Divestment from Caterpillar, Inc.—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.
- 14-03 MRTI Report of Its Engagement with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank—GAMC.
- 14-04 On Recognition that Israel's Laws, Policies, and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against the Palestinian People—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.
- 14-05 On Commending "A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith and Hope from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering" as an Advocacy Tool—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.
- 14-06 On Middle East Peacemaking—From the Presbytery of San Joaquin.
- 14-07 On Iraq—From the Presbytery of Providence.
- 14-08 "Breaking Down the Walls"—From the Middle East Study Committee.
- 14-09 On Seeking Compliance to U.S. Government Policy in the Use of Military Aid by All Parties in the Middle East—From the Presbytery of Chicago.
- 14-10 Toward Peace and Reconciliation in the Middle East—From the Presbytery of Baltimore.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

[No items.]

15 CHURCH GROWTH, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & PILP

Consider matters related to: Items concerning evangelism, outreach, and church growth as they relate to congregations and governing bodies of the church; higher education; matters relating to Christian education; church transfers; Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP).

For Plenary Action

- 15-01 On Transferring Community Church of Seattle from the Presbytery of Seattle to the Presbytery of North Puget Sound—From the Synod of Alaska-Northwest.
- 15-02 On Establishing the United Church of the San Juans in Ridgway, Colorado, as a Union Church—From the Presbytery of Western Colorado.

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

- 15-03 Renew Commitment to Help Grow Christ's Church Deep and Wide—GAMC.
- 15-04 Presbyterian Multicultural Network (PMN) Church Growth Report.—GAMC.
- 15-05 Confirm Election of PILP Board of Directors—GAMC.
- 15-06 Partnership Covenant Between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions—GAMC.
- 15-07 Approve the List of Colleges and Universities as Related to the PC(USA)—GAMC.
- 15-08 Task Force to Study Racial Ethnic and New Immigrant Church Growth—ACREC.
- 15-09 On Convening a Conversation to Develop a Strategy for Addressing Hispanic/Latino Participation at All Levels of the Church—COTE.
- 15-10 Youth Task Force Report.
- 15-11 On Establishing the Christ Community Church in Cortland, New York, as a Union Church—From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.
- 15-12 On Establishing the United Church of the Plains as an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Union Church—From the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks.
- ~~15-13 President of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary.~~ [Note: See 16-14.]
- ~~15-14 President of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.~~ [Note: See 16-15.]

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

- 15-A Women of Faith Awards—GAMC.
- 15-B Sam and Helen Walton Awards, 2009.
- 15-C Minutes, PILP.

Information

- 15-Info Report of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., For the Years 2008 and 2009, to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

16 THEOLOGICAL ISSUES AND INSTITUTIONS

Consider matters related to: Amendments to The Book of Confessions, the Directory for Worship and Chapter II of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; authority and interpretation of Scripture; theological institutions; celebration of Lord's Supper requests.

For Plenary Action

- 16-01 On Commending Confessions that Uphold the Oneness of All Believers, and Discontinuing Efforts to Include the Belhar Confession in the Book of Confessions—From the Presbytery of Sacramento.
- 16-02 On Amending W-4.4000 by Adding Prayer—From the Presbytery of Western New York.
- 16-03 On Amending W-2.3008b Regarding Baptism of Children—From the Presbytery of Missouri Union.
- 16-04 On Amending W-4.4006 to Include Questions to the Presbytery—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.
- 16-05 Nominees to the Mountain Retreat Association Board—GAMC.
- 16-06 Baptism Requirement for Participation in Lord's Supper—GAMC.
- 16-07 Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper—COTE.
- 16-08 On Approving the Revised Covenant Between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and El Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico—COTE.
- 16-09 New Trustees to PC(USA) Theological Institutions—COTE.
- 16-10 Approve Stephen A. Hayner as President of Columbia Theological Seminary—COTE.
- 16-11 Report of the General Assembly Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism to the 219th General Assembly (2010).
- 16-12 Report of the Special Committee on the Belhar Confession.
- 16-13 Term "Offices" in W-4.4001b of the Directory for Worship—From Pastor from Presbytery of Peace River—ACC.
- 16-14 President of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary.
- 16-15 President of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

[No items.]

17 REVIEW OF GA PERMANENT COMMITTEES

Consider matters related to: Review of the work of the General Assembly Permanent, Advocacy, and Advisory Committees as Scheduled [2010: COTE, GANC, CER, ACSWP] (See Organization for Mission, Section IV.D.2.).

For Plenary Action

[No items.]

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

- 17-A Minutes, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.
- 17-B Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations.
- 17-C Minutes, Committee on Theological Education.

Information

- 17-Self-Study, ACSWP.
- 17-Self-Study, GACER.
- 17-Self-Study, COTE.
- 17-Self-Study, GANC.
- 17-Info ACSWP Agency Summary.
- 17-Info GACER Agency Summary.
- 17-Info COTE Agency Summary.
- 17-Info GANC Agency Summary.

18 BOARD OF PENSIONS, FDN, PPC

Consider matters related to: Report of Board of Pensions; business related to the church's pension, annuity, and medical plans; other forms of such programs, including government or private retirement programs; business related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation; report of the Special All Agency Review Committee.

For Plenary Action

- 18-01 On Directing the Board of Pensions to Extend Benefits to Same-Gender Spouses and Domestic Partners—From the Presbytery of Boston.
- 18-02 Gifts program and Wills Emphasis—FDN.
- 18-03 Confirm Tom Taylor as President and Chief Executive Officer—FDN.
- 18-04 On Evaluating the Future Use of El Sombroso Oaks—BOP.
- 18-05 Report of the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee.
- 18-06 On Directing the Board of Pensions to Extend Benefits to Same-Gender Spouses and Domestic Partners—From the Presbytery of New Castle.
- 18-07 On the Medical Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church and Medications Requiring Pre-Authorization—From the Presbytery of Sierra Blanca.
- 18-08 Regarding Review and Revision of the *Organization for Mission* Regarding Responsibilities of the GAMC and Its Executive Director, and the OGA and the Stated Clerk—CoR-PC(USA).
- 18-09 Regarding the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee—CoR-PC(USA).
- 18-10 Regarding Future Reviews of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Six Agencies—CoR-PC(USA).
- 18-11 Regarding the Review of Biennial Assemblies.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

- 18-A Report Regarding Amendments to the Benefits Plan.
- 18-B Committee on Review of Whole of the PC(USA).
- 18-C Minutes, Board of Pensions.
- 18-D Minutes, Foundation.
- 18-E Minutes, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

Information

- 18-Info Agency Summaries: Board of Pensions, Foundation, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.
Report of the New Covenant Trust, N.A.
Board of Pensions Bylaws Changes.

19 HEALTH ISSUES

Consider matters related to: Health, managed care, disabilities, abortion.

For Plenary Action

- 19-01 On Designating May 1 Every Year as a Day of Prayer for Healing—From the Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley.
- 19-02 On Encouraging All Presbyterians to Know Their HIV Status—From the Presbytery of New York City.
- 19-03 On Violence of Pregnant Women—From the Presbytery of Boise.
- 19-04 On Taking a Stand Against Forced and Coerced Abortions—From the Presbytery of Prospect Hill.
- 19-05 Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action—ACSWP.
- 19-06 On Full Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Services in U.S. Correctional Facilities—From the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley.
- [19-07 Resource Materials on Subject of Reproductive Options—From the General Assembly Mission Council]

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[No items.]

Information

[No items.]

Item 01-04

[The assembly approved Item 01-04. See p. 2.]

The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals recommends that Standing Rule A.2.a. be suspended in order to receive late business.

March 12	01-02, I.C.34	Creating a Climate for Change Task Force Interim Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010)
March 12	03-13	Amend S.R. B.2./D.1.g. Floor Access & TSAD/YAAD Deadlines—COGA
	03-14	On Amending SR K.1.c., Commission and Special Committees—COGA
	03-15	Amend IV.C.1. of <i>Organization for Mission</i> to Correct and Clarify—COGA
	03-16	Amend IV.C.7. of <i>Organization for Mission</i> Regarding CER—COGA
	03-22	Election of Associate Stated Clerks—COGA
	03-23	Election of Persons to Board of Presbyterian Historical Society—COGA
	03-24	Amend “Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies”—COGA
	04-06	Appoint General Assembly Commission on MGBs—COGA
March 12	03-25	Per Capita Budget—COGA/GAMC
	03-26	Sexual Misconduct Policy—COGA/GAMC
	07-10	Amendment to Proposed Form of Government—COGA/GAMC
March 15	04-07	Report of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén in Puerto Rico
March 18	05-Info	Compliance Report and General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Report
March 24	18-04	On Evaluating the Future Use of El Sombroso Oaks—BOP
	18-A	Report Regarding Amendments to the Benefits Plan
	18-Info	Board of Pensions Agency Summary
April 23	05-25	Amendments to the Rules of Discipline—OGA
	05-26	Amendment to D-6.0103—OGA
April 28	05-Info	Advisory Committee on Litigation Report
May 17	13-10	Commitment to Peacemaking
May 17	15-Info	PILP Agency Summary
May 14	09-21	Mission Budget Reports
May 18	09-A	Audit
May 19	03-Info	Report on Per Capita Payments by Presbytery
May 24	08-Info	Corresponding Body Reports

Item 01-05

[The assembly approved Item 01-05. See p. 2.]

The 219th General Assembly (2010) approves that the Opening Worship Service on Sunday, July 4, 2010, include a baptism, authorized by the session of Kwanzaa Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Item 01-06

[The assembly approved Item 01-06. See p. 2.]

The 219th General Assembly (2010) authorizes the celebration of Communion during the Opening Worship Service on Sunday, July 4, 2010.

Item 01-07

[The assembly approved with comment that this item not be referred for consideration by the assembly. See p. 2.]

Comment: In accordance with the authoritative interpretation of G-18.0301a, the committee voted that the late overture from the Presbytery of San Diego not be referred for consideration by this General Assembly.

Item 01-08

[The assembly approved Item 01-08. See p. 2.]

The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals recommends that the approval of the Reverend Paul T. Roberts as the new president and dean of Johnson C. Smith Seminary be referred to the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions (16) as Item 16-14, and that the approval of the Reverend Michael Jenkins as the new president of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary be referred to the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions (16) as Item 16-15.

Rationale

The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) has requested that these recent selections (inside the forty-five-day deadline) of seminary presidents be received for assembly consideration rather than wait until the next assembly. The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals met on Friday, July 2, 2010, and approved this recommendation.

Item 01-09

[The assembly approved Item 01-09. See p. 2.]

The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals recommends that the General Assembly invite and seat a representative from the National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala as an ecumenical advisory delegate.

Rationale

The 218th General Assembly (2008) invited the Presbyterian Church of Nicaragua to send an ecumenical advisory delegate to the 219th General Assembly (2010). The Presbyterian Church of Nicaragua has since disbanded. The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations recommended that a representative of the National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala be invited to send an ecumenical advisory delegate to fill that position. The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals met on Friday, July 2, 2010, in order to make this recommendation in time for the representative to participate in the assembly.

Item 01-10

[The assembly approved Item 01-10. See p. 2.]

The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals recommends that Item 05-29 be referred to the Assembly Committee on the Form of Government Revision (07) as Item 07-12.

Rationale

Item 01-03 indicates that this overture from the Presbytery of Mississippi was originally assigned to the Assembly Committee on the Form of Government Revision (07), but was shifted to the Assembly Committee on Church Polity (05) with the agreement of both committees at an earlier meeting of the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals. Upon communicating this decision to the Presbytery of Mississippi, a clear enough explanation of the overture's intent was presented to warrant moving it back to the Assembly Committee on the Form of Government Revision (07). This action was taken in a meeting of the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals on July 2, 2010.

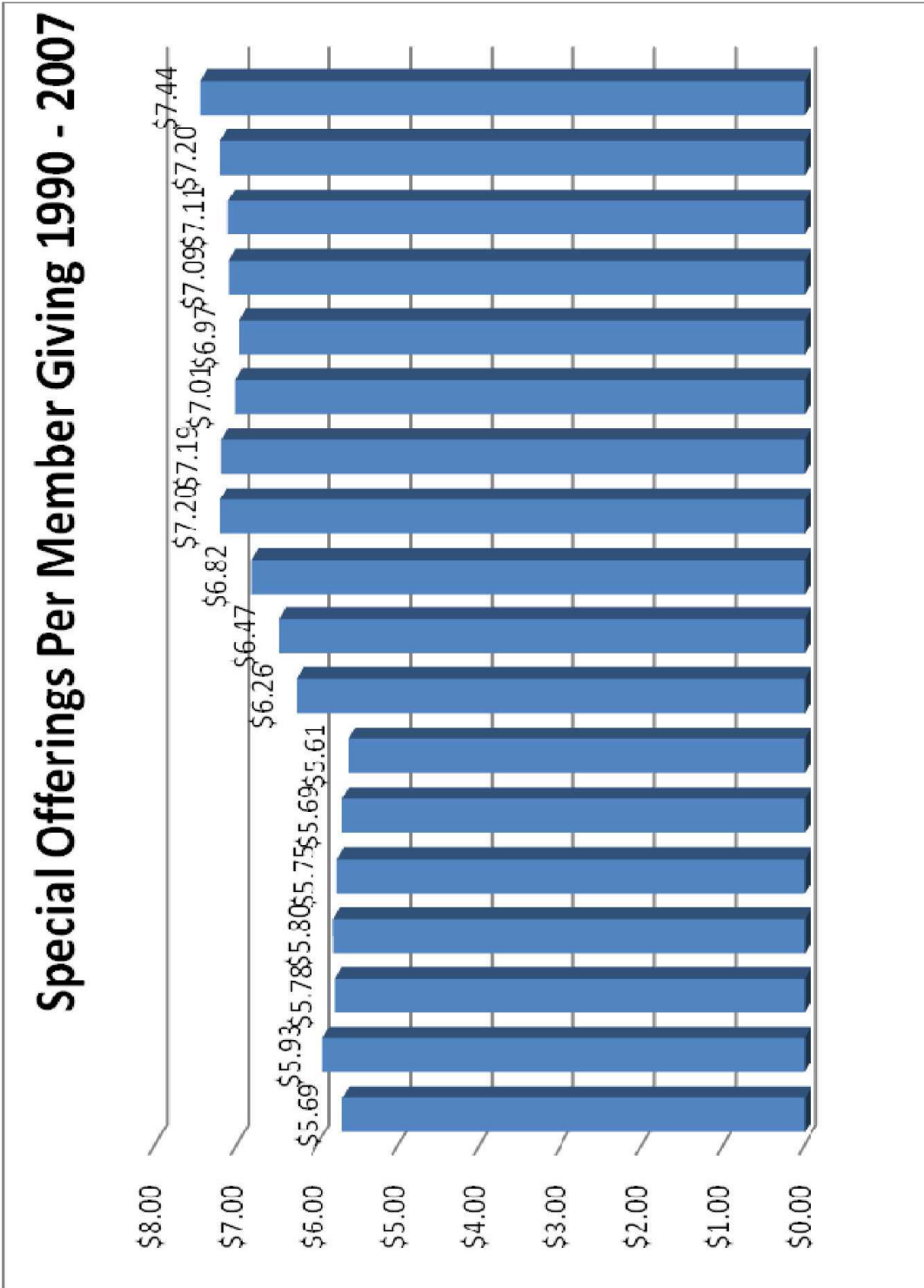
Item 01-11

[The assembly approved Item 01-11. See p. 2.]

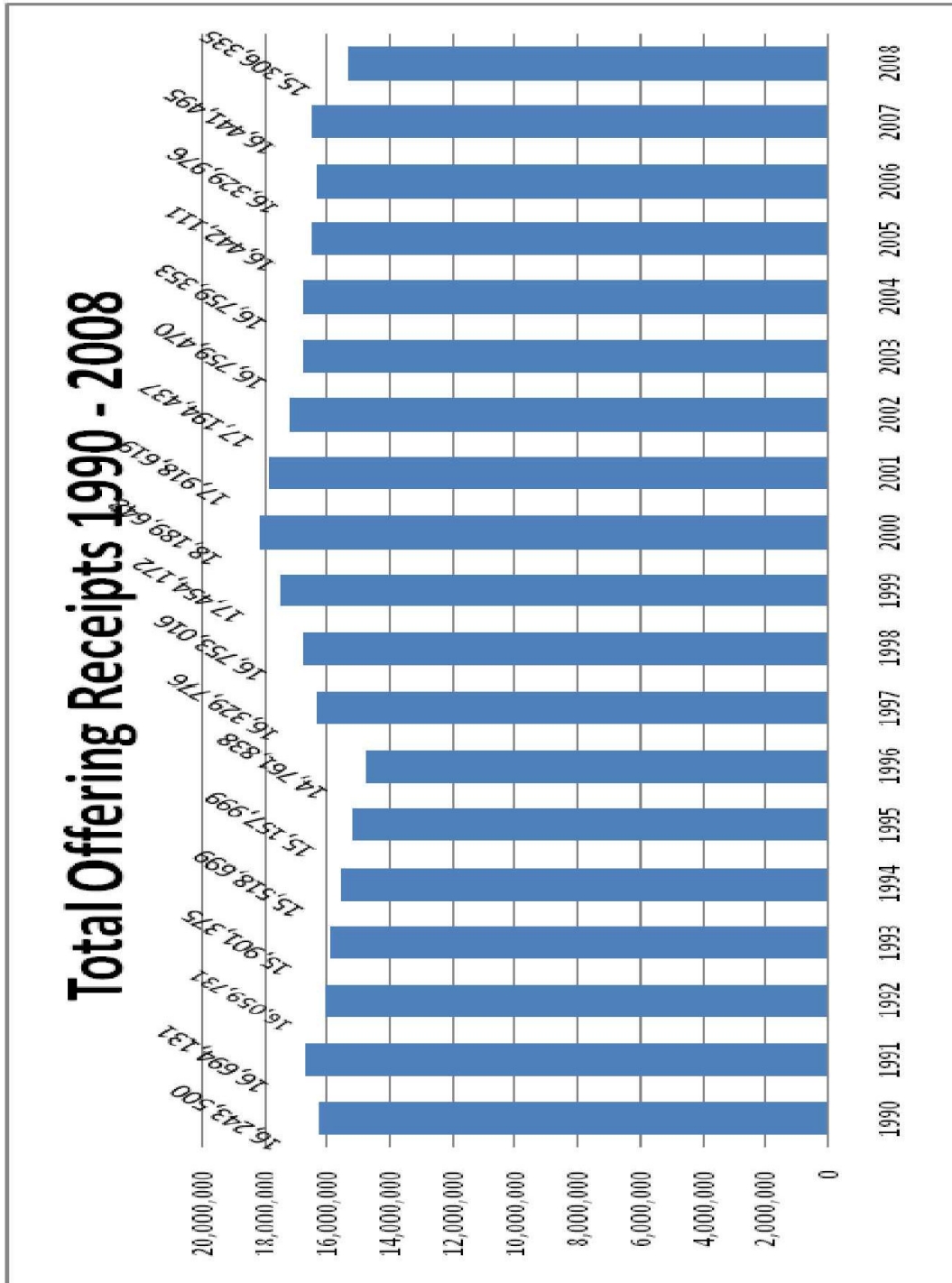
The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals recommends that Item 03-29 be referred to the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (03).

Rationale

This item was inadvertently left off the list of referrals in 01-03. It has to do with authorizing the Office of the General Assembly to make adjustments to the Annual Session Statistical Report in keeping with the Revised Form of Government if the revision passed the assembly and sufficient presbyteries to be adopted. This recommendation was approved by the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals at a meeting on July 2, 2010.



GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION COUNCIL
 February 24-25, 2010
 Communications & Funds Development – ITEM 234



Item 02-01

[The assembly received for information Item 02-01. See p. 6.]

Report One

I. For Information

Referrals Commissioners' Resolutions

1. *Commissioners' Resolution. On the Restoration of Sustainable Agriculture in Haiti.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues (13). (26-0)
2. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Appealing for Peace and Reconciliation in Korea.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues (13). (26-0)
3. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Discontinuing Payment for Abortion as a Covered Benefit in the Board of Pensions Medical Benefits Plan.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, FDN, PPC (18). (21-5)
4. *Commissioners' Resolution. On the Response to the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén in Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries (SCARB) Report (Item 04-07).* Decline. This matter is substantially before the assembly as Item 04-07 and the goal of the resolution may be achieved by defeating the present item of business. (25-1)
5. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Regarding a Call to Stand with Immigrant Presbyterians in Their Hour of Need.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues—B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World (11). (26-0)
6. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Ending Violence with Impunity Against Women and Girls.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues—A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness (10) (26-0)
7. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Renewing the Commitment to the Use of Inclusive and Expansive Language for God and the People of God.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues—A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness (10). (25-0-1)
8. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Assisting the Emmanuel Church of Tirana in Planting Churches and Forming a New Reformed Denomination in Albania.* Referred to: Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education & PILP (15). (26-0)
9. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Celebrating with Our Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the Tzeltal Synod of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (08). (26-0)
10. *Commissioners' Resolution 10. Withdrawn for lack of a second signature.*
11. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Restoring Democracy to Honduras and Madagascar.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues (13). (26-0)
12. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Theological Diversity in General Assembly Nominations.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (03). (26-0)
13. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Ministries Honored at Assembly Worship.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (03). (26-0)
14. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Transporting Food and Medical Aid to the Gaza Strip.* Decline. This matter is substantially before the assembly as Item 14 -08, and the goals of the resolution may be achieved by amendment. (25-0-1)
15. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Usury.* Refer to: Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues—A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness (10). (26-0)

Item 02-02

[The assembly approved Item 02-02. See p. 6.]

Minutes from Saturday afternoon, July 3, 2010.

Item 02-03

[The assembly approved Item 02-03 as amended. See p. 6.]

Minutes from Saturday evening, July 3, 2010.

Item 02-04

[There is no Item 02-04.]

Item 02-05

[The assembly approved Item 02-05. See p. 6.]

The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following as an adjustment to the docket for the remainder of the assembly:

Wednesday, July 7:

8:30 a.m.	Ecumenical Worship Service Lunch Break
1:30 p.m.	Opening Prayer BUSINESS MEETING 3 • Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures • Stated Clerk's Orientation II • Decade of the Child • Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications) • Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications) • Report of the Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education and PILP (15) • Report of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Issues (16)
Order of Day 4:00pm	Announcements
5:30 p.m.	Closing Prayer Recess Dinner Break
7:30 p.m.	Opening Prayer BUSINESS MEETING 4 • Speakouts • Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures • Ecumenical Greeting • Growing Christ's Church - 1 • Confirmation of Linda Valentine, GAMC Executive Director
Order of Day 8:30 pm	• Report of Assembly Committee on the Form of Government Revision (07) • Report of Assembly Committee on the Review of Permanent G. A. Committees (17) Announcements Closing Prayer Recess

Thursday, July 8

8:30 a.m.	Worship—Auditorium
9:30 a.m.	Opening Prayer BUSINESS MEETING 5 • Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures • Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications) • Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications) • 30 th Anniversary of the Peacemaking Program • General Assembly Nominating Committee
Order of Day 10:30 am	• Report of the Assembly Committee on Middle Governing Issues (04) • Report of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (08) Announcements Closing Prayer Recess Lunch Break

02 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

- 1:30 p.m. Opening Prayer
BUSINESS MEETING 6
• Speakouts
• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
• Ecumenical Greeting
- Order of Day 2:00 pm • UNICEF Recognition
• Report of the Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry (06)
• Report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues – A (10)
• Report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues – B (11)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
- 6:00 p.m. Recess
Group Dinner
- 7:30 p.m. Opening Prayer
BUSINESS MEETING 7
• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
• Memorial Minute for John Anderson, Moderator of the 1982 and 1983 PCUS Assemblies
• Ecumenical Greeting
• Confirmation of Tom Taylor, President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation
• Report of the Assembly Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues (12)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess
- Friday, July 9:**
- 8:30 a.m. Worship—Auditorium
- 9:30 a.m. Opening Prayer
BUSINESS MEETING 8
• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
• Ecumenical Greeting
• Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
• Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
• Growing Christ's Church - 2
• GANC Report Continued
- Order of Day 10:15 am • Report of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues (14)
• Report of the Assembly Committee on Health Issues (19)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess
Group Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Opening Prayer
- 1:30 p.m. **BUSINESS MEETING 9**
• Speakout
• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
• Report of the Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Pres. Pub. (18)
• Report of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (03)
• Report of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity (05)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
- 6:00 p.m. Recess
Group Dinner
- 7:30 p.m. Opening Prayer
BUSINESS MEETING 10
• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
• Big Tent 2011
• Report of the Assembly Committee Peacemaking and International Issues (13)
• Report of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (09)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess
- Saturday, July 10**
- 9:00 a.m. Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 11

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
 - Introduction of Presbytery of Pittsburg Committee on Local Arrangements
- Closing Worship in Plenary

11:00 a.m.

Item 02-06

[The assembly approved Item 02-06. See p. 6.]

Minutes from Sunday morning, July 4, 2010.

Item 02-07

[The assembly approved Item 02-07. See p. 6.]

Minutes from Sunday afternoon, July 4, 2010.

Item 02-08

[The assembly approved Item 02-08. See p. 6.]

Minutes from Sunday evening, July 4, 2010.

Item 02-09

[The assembly approved Item 02-09. See p. 6.]

Minutes from Monday, July 5, 2010.

Item 02-10

[The assembly approved Item 02-10. See p. 6.]

Minutes from Tuesday, July 6, 2010.

Item 02-11

[The assembly approved Item 02-11. See p. 49.]

Minutes from Wednesday morning, July 7, 2010.

Item 02-12

[The assembly approved Item 02-12. See p. 49.]

Minutes from Wednesday afternoon, July 7, 2010.

Item 02-13

[The assembly approved Item 02-13. See p. 49.]

Minutes from Wednesday evening, July 7, 2010.

Item 02-14

[The assembly approved Item 02-14. See p. 76.]

Minutes from Thursday morning, July 8, 2010.

Item 02-15

[The assembly approved Item 02-15. See p. 76.]

Minutes from Thursday afternoon, July 8, 2010.

Item 03-01

[This item has been moved to 05 Assembly Committee on Church Polity as Item 05-28.]

Item 03-02

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-02. See pp. 56, 79.]

On Amending Standing Rule H.2.b.(4) Regarding Provisions for the Election of the Stated Clerk—From the Presbytery of Detroit.

The Presbytery of Detroit overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to amend Section H.2.b.(4) of Standing Rules of the General Assembly, which govern the election of the Stated Clerk, by deleting paragraphs (m), (n), (o), and (p) by adding a new paragraph (m), as follows:

~~“(m) The candidates may not distribute any other materials, print or electronic, including flyers, buttons, tokens or other objects that would denote a campaign for the office of Stated Clerk.~~

~~“(n) Other organizations supporting the candidacy of a particular candidate may not distribute materials electronically, through the mail, or at the General Assembly with the knowledge, support, or permission of that candidate. Should a candidate discover that an organization is advocating or campaigning for him or her, it is expected that the candidate will request that organization to cease its activities. The same expectation will be true of organizations that are critical of a particular candidate for Stated Clerk.~~

~~“(o) Each candidate will be provided a place to meet and talk with commissioners and advisory delegates two days before the election. Only information provided by the Office of the General Assembly may be distributed in those rooms. Other materials, apart from that packet, are not permitted. Each candidate for Stated Clerk will be allowed to post the times when he/she will be available for conversation in that room.~~

~~“(p) Any questions concerning interpretation of the election process outlined in H.2.b. shall be determined by the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.~~

“(m) The Stated Clerk Nominating Committee shall monitor the activities of those standing for election to ensure the election is open, and fair, and that information given by the candidates is accurate and within the bounds of decorum. The Committee shall direct candidates who violate the spirit of the election process to amend their ways. Where a candidate does not properly respond, the Nominating Committee, after giving notice to all the candidates, may inform the General Assembly when the election occurs that in its opinion the named candidate(s) has violated the ideals and principles of the election process. The candidate may in his speech to the General Assembly address the allegations made by the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee.”

Rationale

After a difficult Stated Clerk election in 2004, the Office of the General Assembly was directed to “... investigate the integrity, openness, and fairness of the Stated Clerk’s electoral process...” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 191). With the following rationale, Paragraphs H.2.b.4 (m)–(p) were added to the rules: “The following changes are in recognition of the fact that the position of Stated Clerk is a calling, and not a popularity contest. Commissioners are entitled to and should receive the same unbiased information for each candidate” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 190).

The reasons for amending the rules are:

It rescinds an attempt to ensure that the bad things that happened in the election of 2004 never happen again. The resolution, proposed after a difficult time, had the effect of preventing the perceived problems, but unintended consequences: it severely limited the ability of any candidate to communicate his or her vision to the General Assembly and the church.

The church and the General Assembly have come to expect communication by leaders using all manner of communication strategies: e-mail, web sites, social networking systems, blogs, and such. To prevent candidates from using these means of communicating their visions to the church is out of synch with the times.

Prohibiting organizations not under the control of the candidate from taking stands is beyond the power of the assembly, and it limits the kind of advocacies that are permitted in other areas.

Limiting the ability of candidates in their expression of vision gives additional weight to the candidate brought forward by the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee. The effect is to leave to speculation the competence, motivation, and vision of

those nominated from the floor, while the committee nominee has been vetted by and met the test of knowledgeable and wise members of the committee.

Where there is a problem of trust, the better way of addressing the matter is by open and unfettered process rather than by the dictation of rules that limit activity.

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is one of the most important and powerful people in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). To prohibit the General Assembly and the church from learning of the beliefs, positions, and vision of the candidates is unwise and does not well serve the church in these times of great stress and change.

Protecting the integrity of the election process can better be accomplished by public disclosure rather than authoritarian rules.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-02

Comment on Item 03-02—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-02.

Rationale

This overture seeks to delete several sections of SR H.2.b. on the Election of the Stated Clerk. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) conducted a thorough review of SR H.2.b. in the year 2005. The amended SR H.2.b. was approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006) (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 188–199), two years before the last Stated Clerk's election.

The COGA believes that the current Standing Rules provide plenty of opportunity for the commissioners to know about the candidates for Stated Clerk, such as:

1. A press release announcement of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee's nominee and a press release for any candidate who has gone through the application process and decides to stand against the nominee.
2. A written statement and answers to the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee's questions printed in a booklet that is available to commissioners, delegates, and General Assembly participants.
3. Any church press interviews of the candidates.
4. A nomination speech is given for all candidates at the beginning of the General Assembly.
5. All candidates participate in a meet and talk with commissioners and advisory delegates two days before the election.
6. A speech by all candidates on the day of the election.
7. Responses to commissioners' questions before the election.

The members of the last Stated Clerk Nomination Committee were very satisfied working under the amended Standing Rules since it gave the right balance of opportunity for the candidates to get their message out versus burdening the commissioners with extra communications from the candidates and other organizations.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-03

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-03. See pp. 56, 76.]

On Stewardship of Time During Plenary Sessions of the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.

The Presbytery of Santa Barbara respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to give voice during plenary session of General Assembly only to those who also have a vote. All advisory delegates would continue to voice their opinions, thoughts, and questions at the committee level, where they also have a vote; but on the plenary floor, only voting commissioners could speak to the issues.

Rationale

Advisory delegates are youth, theological seminary students, mission workers, and ecumenical partners who add diverse and valuable perspectives to the General Assembly. There are currently more than three hundred advisory delegates at General Assembly. They are assigned to committees and attend all plenary sessions like their commissioner counterparts. In committee, advisory delegates have full “voice and vote” during deliberations. In plenary session they have voice, but vote in a separate tally that serves in an advisory role.

Over three hundred items of business are deliberated and processed at each General Assembly. This requires each elder, clergy, and advisory delegate to seek the mind of Christ to be faithful to their calling. While General Assembly lasts one week, commissioners have found that they are rushed through many decisions due to serious time constraints. The opportunity for over three hundred people to continue to debate the issues, when their voice has already been heard at the committee level, would seem to be a time management area that is currently being squandered. The voices of the voting delegates need to be given full priority for more efficient use of plenary time. This would go a long way toward ameliorating the frustrations felt by so many commissioners to past General Assemblies. Good stewardship of valuable plenary time means allowing only the clergy and elder commissioners directly elected by the presbyteries to fulfill their mission by allowing them alone to debate the issues on which they alone cast the deciding vote.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-03

Comment on Item 03-03—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-03.

Rationale

This overture seeks to limit the participation of advisory delegates in the plenary sessions of the General Assembly meeting.

The Standing Rules of the General Assembly provide for the participation of advisory delegates in the GA. “Advisory delegates are persons who are active members in one of the constituent churches or governing bodies of the General Assembly (or, in the case of ecumenical advisory delegates, of a denomination of Christians designated by the General Assembly) who are selected to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in an advisory role so that the assembly may be assured of hearing and taking cognizance of their special viewpoints” (*Manual of the General Assembly*, B.2.a.).

The role of each of the categories of advisory delegates is to make certain that particular groups are heard by the commissioners (e.g., young adults, theological students, and missionaries). Each of their perspectives contributes to the discernment of the whole church. Ecumenical advisory delegates are present as a witness that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) understands itself to be part of the one holy catholic and apostolic church and that its decisions are both informed by and influence ecumenical partners. While the ultimate responsibility for decision making rests upon elder and minister commissioners, each category of advisory delegates offers the assembly perspectives not otherwise available.

To limit the advisory delegates’ participation in plenary debate as proposed, particularly on floor amendments, would not save time. With the current electronic notification system at the microphones, which indicates whether a person is an advisory delegate or commissioner, the Moderator of the General Assembly already has the flexibility to choose in a fair and balanced way among all those who wish to speak.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-03

Comment on Item 03-03—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly to disapprove this overture.

Rationale

When we gather in community to discern God’s will for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), one facet of our discernment is to provide an opportunity for underrepresented groups to be heard. To facilitate this, we elect Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAAD), Theological Student Advisory Delegates (TSAD), Mission Advisory Delegates (MAD), and invite Ecumeni-

cal Advisory Delegates (EAD). These voices connect us to the contexts in which the church is called, and in which it ministers in the present. It aids commissioners in visioning for the future.

The process of giving voice on the floor of the plenary sessions is important. To exclude the Young Adult Advisory Delegates from active participation in the work of the full body, we deprive ourselves of the valuable insights of younger members who will inherit the structures being designed today. We also send the message that the church does not have ears for young people and is not willing to listen to what is being said. Doing this we risk turning those young adults who are already active in the life of the church (called through baptism, confirmation, and participation in their congregations and presbyteries) into outsiders. To exclude the Theological Student Advisory Delegates means we deprive ourselves of the insights that come from their in-depth study, and of the interaction with those God has called to leadership in the church. To exclude the Mission Advisory Delegates is to cut ourselves off from the voices of those who are actively involved in ministry beyond the borders of the United States and can give us personal insight into the needs of communities beyond our nation and connect us to the joys of our wider mission work. To exclude the Ecumenical Advisory Delegates means that we risk closing the church off to the voices of willing partners in ministry who are dealing with similar issues and join in our parallel struggles.

Throughout the witness of Scripture, God chooses prophets and apostles from individuals who would ordinarily not be listened to by the culture of the day. When Samuel was but a child, God awakened him repeatedly until Eli recognized that it was God calling Samuel to hear God's word and become a prophet (1 Sam. 3). Jesus discerned a new thing when he encountered the Syrophenician woman, whom Jesus himself acknowledged that he would not have ordinarily helped (Mark 7:24–30). God worked through Cornelius, a Roman soldier, to awaken the fledgling church to a new ministry among the Gentiles (Acts 10). Then, with a blinding light and the voice of Jesus speaking to him, Saul was changed from a zealot who avidly persecuted the early Christians into an advocate whose words have spoken to all Christians for the same Christ he once persecuted (Acts 9).

If we Presbyterians trust that our commissioners and advisory delegates have been chosen by God to come together and discover with one another the discernment of God's will for the Presbyterian church, then what right do we have to limit those voices to only those times when we are gathered in smaller, disparate groups? The young adults (youth), theological seminary students, mission coworkers, and ecumenical partners have been chosen to enter the assembly community and bring voices that inform the discussion of the whole body. The church may need to hear God's word through these particular voices in order to discern from the many voices what new, or old, thing God is calling the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be and do. These advisory delegates, while speaking in plenary, may also bring to the full discussion perspectives that may have been mentioned and discussed in committee, but are not reflected in the recommendations that the full body will be voting on.

While some may argue that limiting the opportunities for advisory delegates to participation in committees could save time and perhaps money, the comment from the COGA demonstrates this impression is in error. Such a limitation excludes a generation from the discussion of how to be the body of Christ in this time and place, perhaps to the peril of the PC(USA), losing a generation of leaders and members of our denomination, making the discussions more insular, and interfering with the fulfillment of God's vision of the ministry of the church.

Item 03-04

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-04. See pp. 56, 79.]

On Amending G-13.0102b Concerning the Number of General Assembly Commissioners—From the Presbytery of San Diego.

The Presbytery of San Diego overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Amend G-13.0102b as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. When the General Assembly meets biennially, it shall consist of equal numbers of elders and ministers from each presbytery, in the following proportion: Each presbytery consisting of not more than ~~8,000~~ *15,000* members shall elect one elder and one minister. Presbyteries consisting of more than ~~8,000~~ *15,000* members shall elect one additional elder and one additional minister for each additional ~~8,000~~ *15,000* members, so that:

“Presbyteries of ~~8,001~~ *15,001* to ~~16,000~~ *30,000* members shall elect 2 elders and 2 ministers;

“Presbyteries of ~~16,001~~ *30,001* to ~~24,000~~ *45,000* members shall elect 3 elders and 3 ministers;

“~~Presbyteries of 24,001 to 32,000 members shall elect 4 elders and 4 ministers;~~

~~“Presbyteries of 32,001 to 40,000 members shall elect 5 elders and 5 ministers;~~

~~“Presbyteries of 40,001 to 48,000 members shall elect 6 elders and 6 ministers;~~

~~“Presbyteries of 48,001 to 56,000 members shall elect 7 elders and 7 ministers;~~

“Presbyteries of 45,001 or more members shall elect 4 elders and 4 ministers.

“These persons, so elected, shall be called commissioners of the General Assembly.”

Rationale

When the General Assembly voted to move from annual assemblies to biennial assemblies, one of the reasons given to make the change was to save the denomination money. However, the move to biennial assemblies was also accompanied by an increase in the number of commissioners. The extra expense in paying for these additional commissioners meant that no financial savings were ever realized. The promise of reducing expenses never materialized. In the economy in which we live, we must continually look for ways to save money. While it may be nice to have extra commissioners, we can no longer afford this unnecessary luxury. It is time to return to the original, yet never realized, promise. As the income of the church continues to decline, we must look to reduce costs in unnecessary areas, so that funds can be directed toward more necessary areas. Because we live in the worst economy since the Great Depression, it is time to return to a leaner number of commissioners.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 03-04

Advice on Item 03-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 03-04 presents the following issues that the assembly should consider.

Rationale

This proposal for reducing the number of commissioners at a meeting of General Assembly is consistent with our historic practice of directing presbyteries to elect pairs of commissioners in number proportionate to the presbytery’s membership. That being said, it is inevitable that a change in the rule determining the number of commissioners a presbytery is to elect would increase the relative voting influence of some presbyteries and decrease the relative voting influence of others. These variations are a proper matter to be evaluated through a proposed amendment to the Form of Government approved by the General Assembly, which would then need to receive the affirmative votes of a majority of the presbyteries.

Reducing the total number of commissioners according to this proposal would cause the quorum of the assembly (defined in G-13.0105 as fifty elder commissioners and fifty minister commissioners representing presbyteries from at least one fourth of the synods) to constitute a larger percentage of the total number of commissioners. This change would increase the risk of an assembly being incapacitated by the absence or loss of a quorum. The General Assembly’s deliberation on approving this proposed amendment for submission to the presbyteries is the appropriate forum to determine whether this risk of losing a quorum would be acceptable.

There is no constitutional requirement for a General Assembly to enroll advisory delegates as the General Assembly’s *Manual* provides. If the General Assembly’s *Manual* is not simultaneously amended to reduce the number of advisory delegates, this proposal would increase the influence of advisory delegates within the assembly’s committees. The potential increase in voting influence within the General Assembly’s committees is a policy matter that the assembly is competent to evaluate for itself.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution takes no position on the advisability of Item 03-04.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) believes that the intent of Item 03-04 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with that intent.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 03-4 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-04

Comment on Item 03-04—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The COGA respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove this overture.

Rationale

This overture seeks to reduce the number of commissioners attending the meetings of the General Assembly by amending G-13.0102b.

Currently a presbytery with 8,000 or fewer members elects one elder and one minister. One elder and one minister are added for each additional 8,000 members, so that a presbytery having between 8,001 and 16,000 elects two elders and two ministers and continuing that ratio for each additional 8,000 members.

The overture substitutes the number 15,000 for 8,000 in each instance.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly opposes this change for several reasons:

- Under the current system, only 35 percent of presbyteries elect the minimum number of commissioners. Under the proposed system, 72 percent of the presbyteries would elect just one commissioner and one minister every two years.
- Limiting almost three quarters of the presbyteries to electing just one minister and one commissioner makes it more difficult to provide a diverse, dynamic representation of the church in commissioners.
- The current system keeps the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners lower than 25 percent of those in attendance. The proposal would increase that to nearly a third of all participants being advisory delegates.
- The overture gives as its rationale the conclusion that there has been no savings in biennial assemblies. Our experience and simple logic go counter to that conclusion. The cost of bringing commissioners to a biennial assembly and providing lodging and meals is only a part of the cost of the assembly. The costs of staff resources, facility rental, and business management would be little reduced by the reduction in the number of commissioners proposed by this overture.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-05

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-05. See pp. 56, 76.]

On Eliminating G-13.0103q Concerning the Responsibilities of the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of San Diego.

The Presbytery of San Diego overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Strike the text of G-13.0103q and re-letter items “r.” through “x.” as “q.” through “w.”:

~~“q. to decide controversies brought before it and to give advice and instruction in cases submitted to it, in conformity with the Constitution.”~~

Rationale

Section G-13.0103 lists twenty-four responsibilities of the General Assembly. One of these responsibilities, letter “q.” has become overly dominant and has expanded way beyond the intent of the Constitution. Most General Assemblies spend an inordinate amount of time on trying to decide controversies, and not enough time on its more important responsibilities, such as “[setting] priorities for the work of the church in keeping with the church’s mission under Christ ... [and developing] overall objectives for mission ...” (*Book of Order*, G-13.0103a–b).

Our General Assembly process, procedures, and responsibilities are in need of reform. More and more commissioners return from the assembly experience frustrated, confused, and unfulfilled. The General Assembly can no longer successfully decide controversies that are brought before it. In fact, in its attempts to decide controversies, the assembly often creates more or bigger controversies. This drives members and congregations farther away from the national church, in a time where more and closer connections are needed.

As a part of the necessary reform of the General Assembly process and procedures, it is time for the assembly to shift its time and energy to more important matters. What congregations need now are not more and more ill-fated and unsuccessful attempts to decide controversies, but a body that will study Scripture together, pray together, seek the will of God and the mind of Christ together. We need an assembly that focuses on theology, relationships, and mission. It is time to begin shifting to a new and more fulfilling paradigm of a national assembly. One key step in this process is the elimination of G-13.0103q.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 03-05

Advice on Item 03-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-05.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that deciding matters of controversy is a basic responsibility of all governing bodies, including the General Assembly. The *Book of Order* provides that “[Governing bodies] may ... bear testimony against evil in doctrine and immorality in life, resolve questions of doctrine and discipline, give counsel in matters of conscience ...” (*Book of Order*, G-9.0102b), and that among the Great Ends of the Church are “the preservation of the truth” and “the promotion of social righteousness” (G-1.0200). Thus the stated aim of the overture to relieve the General Assembly from spending “... an inordinate amount of time on trying to decide controversies” (03-05) would not necessarily be accomplished through the deletion of G-13.0103q.

Section G-13.0103q stands as the General Assembly’s warrant to speak to the church and to society on matters of question and debate, whether social, political, economic, or ecclesiastical in nature. As the “highest governing body of this church” that is “representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations” (G-13.0101) of the church, the General Assembly is the appropriate and necessary forum to address matters affecting the whole church. Within this forum should be brought to bear the resources of Scripture, the confessional traditions of the church, and the best and clearest theological thinking available on matters that concern or divide us. Such endeavor seems to us to be among the most important matters to which the General Assembly must and should attend, precisely because it addresses matters of “theology, relationships, and mission.”

While pronouncements of the General Assembly on matters of conscience and controversy are not binding, except as delivered under the provisions of G-13.0103r and G-13.0112, they do deserve the careful and prayerful consideration of all members and governing bodies of the church, because they represent the guidance of the only body elected from the whole church. The deletion of this paragraph would weaken the General Assembly by hampering or removing a crucial venue in which the whole church seeks together for the “will of God and the mind of Christ.”

In 1983, the 194th General Assembly of the now unified Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted the report of the Special Committee on Historic Principles, Conscience, and Church Government. This significant document meditated at length on the dynamic relationship between the freedom of the individual conscience and the responsibility of governance within the life and history of the church. It offered these prescient thoughts about the presence and role of controversy in the church’s life:

There is always a necessary tension between freedom of one’s individual conscience and belonging to any organization. One’s personal point of view will most likely not always be that of the larger body. Every person who participates in a governing body must accept the fact that compromise is necessary for any body to function. The church cannot always express the will of each individual member and still take corporate action. Many decisions will involve saying “yes” to some, and “no” to others. The only alternative is for the governing body to delay or avoid making a decision. There are times when delay is a valuable way of avoiding premature decisions, especially when the minority position is held by a fairly large number of people. At other times, however, a decision must be made and the consequences of the decision may be painful... (*Minutes*, 1983, Part I, p. 149)

As in 1788, so today, the church is called upon to deal with diversity both within itself and within the culture beyond itself. Now as then, there are persons who wish that the church were more explicit about matters of faith and practice so that it might have clearer identity and less diversity. There are also those who seek for greater breadth of opinion and practice and who are fearful of a narrow point of view which limits freedom. Whenever the church seeks to clarify its own position, there will be those who are disturbed and believe that they are being forced into compliance against their will and may feel that, for the sake of their integrity, they need to withdraw. Every time the church seeks to resolve ambiguity or conflict, it does, in fact, close doors to other options. Painful conflict over the definition of who we are and how we function continues to be a central part of our history... (*Minutes*, 1983, Part I, p. 147)

Presbyterianism, with its insistence on individual responsibility and its tradition of educated leadership, has always known controversy, conflict and rigorous dissent. Conflict is often the result of different perspectives which people have and these differences may be important. Agreement may not necessarily be a sign of faithfulness, but may instead be a sign that we do not care very deeply about the particular issue. The more we care, the more likely it is that we may disagree. (*Minutes*, 1983, Part I, p. 147)

The people of God in Scripture are often engaged in conflict. There is no such thing as a biblical picture of serenity as the reality of God’s covenant people. The three different values which must always be before us—peace, purity, and unity—will always be in tension. Those who seek a church free of conflict are seeking something that cannot be had in this world except at the price of disobedience, avoidance of difficult issues, or subservience to the will of a few. The diversity of the church is its strongest asset in seeking to discover God’s will and that diversity will be expressed in very different opinions. (*Ibid.*, p. 147)

This biblical perspective on God’s will for the church means that Presbyterians are willing to be uncomfortable, uneasy, disturbed, as these experiences are required. If God’s will could be neatly circumscribed or limited to “religious” questions, it might be somewhat easier to achieve a kind of peace within the church. Because God’s will is so all encompassing, however, the church is thrust into questions which are confusing, about which there is no absolute clarity, and over which there will be heated differences. (*Ibid.*, p. 147)

Spiritual questions have to do with all of life, and spiritual solutions will never come without conflict. Unity is not something which can be had at the price of forced consensus or avoidance. Our unity is best expressed by our continued willingness to hang in when the going is tough. (*Minutes*, 1983, Part I, p.147)

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 03-05 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 03-05 be disapproved.

Rationale

Item 03-05 seeks to reduce the amount of time that General Assemblies spend on controversial matters. It encourages the use of Bible study, prayer, and seeking the will of God and the mind of Christ, which are all essential components of discernment. Item 03-05 also calls, commendably, for the General Assembly to focus on theology, relationships, and mission. Here, however, is where the overture unravels. A review of the issues brought to the last several General Assemblies shows that the controversies that have stirred heated debate actually grow out of discussions about the theology, relationships, and mission of the church.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-05

Comment on Item 03-05—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove this overture.

Rationale

This overture seeks to eliminate some of the responsibilities of the General Assembly.

While the COGA is deeply committed to helping the church think through ways in which the business of General Assemblies is conducted in this new season, it is difficult to differentiate “controversial issues” and the “mission of the church.” Our mission and theology are inextricably linked, and our polity serves as the mechanism through which each are discerned. Further, as the church gathers in its General Assembly, it is called to give witness to its theology and mission in the world, what the Great Ends of the Church call “the promotion of social righteousness” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0200).

For a further explication of this recommendation *we urge commissioners* to see the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) that highlights one of the primary reasons for the church to gather in General Assembly: discerning and then giving voice to the world of the church’s concerns.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-06

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-06. See pp. 56, 76.]

On Amending G-18.0301 c. and d. to Require Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote—From the Presbytery of San Diego.

The Presbytery of San Diego overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the State Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

1. Amend G-18.0301c as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“c. Proposed amendments must be approved by *a two-thirds vote* by the General Assembly and transmitted to the presbyteries for their vote. Presbyteries shall transmit their votes to the Stated Clerk by the next ensuing stated meeting of the General Assembly, but no later than one year following adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendments.”

2. Amend G-18.0301d as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“d. When the Stated Clerk has received written advice that a proposed amendment to the Book of Order has received the affirmative votes of ~~a majority of all~~ *two-thirds of* the presbyteries, said amendment shall become effective as of one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendment.”

Rationale

Many of the controversial issues in the denomination today are being “decided” by very close votes, which while they may gain a little more than a majority, certainly do not indicate that a consensus, or a broad section of the church is in favor. On issues where emotions run hot, moving forward with a slight majority can do more harm than good. There are some issues that unless they have the support of a larger majority of the church, will end up splitting and dividing the church.

Many presbyteries across the denomination get increasingly frustrated and irritated with a General Assembly process that allows issues to continue to be sent to the presbyteries for repeated votes by a slim majority, only to see them get voted down again and again at the local level. A simple solution to the problem is that changes to the *Book of Order* would not be sent to presbyteries unless the assembly approved them with a two-thirds vote. We already require a two-thirds vote on amending *The Book of Confessions*. It is time we require a two-thirds vote on amending the *Book of Order*, as well. Instead of having a majority vote for one part of the Constitution and a two-thirds vote for another part of the Constitution, it is time to make both amendment processes equal, and require a two-thirds vote for both parts.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 03-06

Advice on Item 03-06—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-06.

Rationale

The overture seeks to amend the threshold for approval of overtures to a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly, and to amend the threshold for approval of amendments to the affirmative votes of two-thirds of the presbyteries. Presently, simple majorities are required in both cases. Similar overtures were addressed by the 205th General Assembly (1993) in Overtures 93-23 and 93-44, and by the 212th General Assembly (2000) in Overture 98-7.

The principle of majority rule is foundational to Presbyterian polity. The Historic Principles of Church Government, adopted in the 1790s, established this principle: “... a representation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part, and to all the parts united: that is, that a majority shall govern ...” (*Book of Order*, G-1.4000). This historic principle is repeated in G-4.0301e: “Decisions shall be reached in governing bodies by vote, following opportunity for discussion, and a majority shall govern ...” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0301e). The 10th edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order (Newly Revised)* defines a majority as “more than half” (p. 387), that is, a simple majority.

In 1983, the newly united PC(USA) General Assembly received the report of the Special Committee on Historic Principles, Conscience, and Church Government, which states in part,

The responsibility of the majority to govern must be seen in the context of the requirement that the whole governs the parts. Majority rule is not a mystical or abstract concept. It is simply a reflection of the fact that the whole church, as it acts, can do only that which most of the church is willing to do. When through the violation or short circuit of proper procedure the will of a minority is imposed on a judicatory or on the church, seriously divisive conflict is often the result.... (*Minutes*, 1983, part I, p. 153)

The clear intent of the rule of the majority is to preserve, except in the most foundational matters, the judgment and will of the simple majority against that of an unwilling minority. To amend this principle would involve a substantial change in the governing philosophy of the Presbyterian church, and should not be adopted without considerable study and review.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that in the deliberations of the General Assembly, parliamentary procedure provides a mechanism by which minorities can seek to persuade the majority that a particular action would be injurious to the church, or to modify the action in order to increase support in the church. In addition, the *Manual of the General Assembly* provides for consensus processes prior to a vote that may persuade a majority to amend or defer an action in view of the concerns of the minority.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution also notes with particular concern that the proposed amendment would empower a slim majority to enshrine its will against future amendment, even should that majority erode to as little as one-third. It is contrary to the principles of Presbyterian polity for one particular assembly to adopt a rule that would allow a future minority to thwart the will of a majority of a future assembly or for the church in one age to enshrine its judgment as inherently wiser than that of future ages.

Should the assembly concur with the intent of the overture, the language proposed is clear and adequate to achieve its intent. However, it should be noted that currently the *Book of Order* contains no specific provision requiring a majority vote of

the assembly to approve an overture, but is governed by G-9.0302, which states, “Meetings of governing bodies, commissions, and committees shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order*, except in those cases where this Constitution provides otherwise” (*Book of Order*, G-9.0302).

If both are adopted, this overture would have the effect of amending the proposed Form of Government at G-6.04c and G-6.04e: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“c. The same General Assembly approves the proposal *by a two-thirds vote* to amend and transmits the proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their vote.”

“e. The Stated Clerk receives written advice that a proposed amendment to the Book of Order has received the affirmative votes of ~~a majority~~ *two-thirds* of all the presbyteries. The proposed amendment so approved shall become effective one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendment.”

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 03-06 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-06

Comment on Item 03-06—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA)

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) concurs with the recommendation and advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) to this overture and respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-06.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-07

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-07. See pp. 56, 76.]

On Amending Standing Rule A.3. by Outlining a Procedure for Dealing with Overtures That Request Amendment to the Book of Order That Have Been Dealt with By One of Two Previous GAs—From the Presbytery of New Harmony.

The Presbytery of New Harmony overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to amend Standing Rule A.3. of the General Assembly by adding a new section “A.3.b.” and renumbering the remaining existing sections (A.3.b.–e.) sequentially as A.3.c.–f. The new A.3.b. would read as follows:

“b. *Should an overture require an amendment to the Constitution that proposes substantially the same action as that which was approved by one of the two previous sessions of the General Assembly and subsequently failed to receive the necessary number of affirmative votes for enactment when transmitted to the presbyteries, it shall not be considered as an item of business unless and until 75 percent of the commissioners present and voting vote to do so.*”

Rationale

This amendment to the Standing Rules is intended to relieve the commissioners to each General Assembly of the burden of having to consider, debate, and take action on proposed amendments to the Constitution that have been addressed by previous General Assemblies and voted down by the presbyteries. It is similar in purpose and content to Standing Rule A.8.f. dealing with repetitious commissioners’ resolutions.

Unlike that Standing Rule that delegates the authority for the decision to just one individual, the Stated Clerk, this proposal would allow the commissioners themselves to make it an item of business, albeit by a super-majority. Because this addresses items of constitutional import and, therefore, necessarily entails submission to the presbyteries, the entire General Assembly should be empowered to address this threshold issue, but more than a simple majority vote should be required before mandating the repeated expenditure of time and resources on actions that have already been thoroughly vetted and rejected.

Concurrence to Item 03-07 from the Presbytery of Cherokee.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

Item 03-07 requests that General Assemblies not re-consider matters that have been considered in the past one of two assemblies.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 03-07 be disapproved.

Rationale

This overture neglects that we are “reformed and always reforming” and assumes that conserving the status quo, especially on a matter that has been up for debate recently, is the best way forward. The overture also assumes that the make-up of the General Assembly does not change significantly from assembly to assembly and leaves no room for major changes in public opinion that might occur due to large societal events. With growth in the church occurring mostly in racial ethnic congregations, the overture does not acknowledge the changing nature of the church and God’s action in “doing a new thing” in emerging faith communities.

Item 03-08

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-08. See pp. 56, 79.]

On Amending Standing Rule C.4.a. to Give Priority to Controversial Items—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.

The Presbytery of Santa Barbara respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to amend its “Standing Rules of the General Assembly,” Section C.4.a., to read as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italics.]

“a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a tentative docket. *In establishing the docket, the Stated Clerk and all subsequent committees who shape the docket shall give priority of order and time to those items of the most controversial nature.* After making any necessary adjustments, this committee shall present a proposed docket to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend the docket to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.”

Rationale

The current scheduling of the docket sometimes results in controversial or difficult overtures being debated and voted on late in the evening or late in the week when delegates are tired and have less energy to devote to thought, prayer, and deliberation.

When controversial matters are debated and deliberated late at night or late in the week, it can give commissioners the sense that matters are being manipulated.

It seems reasonable that debate and deliberation on the most difficult and controversial matters should occur when delegates are fresh and not dulled by fatigue.

With this new format, General Assembly meetings are more likely to end on a positive, unifying note thus promoting the peace and unity of the church.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-08

Comment on Item 03-08—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-08.

Rationale

This overture seeks to amend the Standing Rules to require the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and subsequent committees responsible for shaping the docket to give priority of order and time to those items of the “most controversial” nature. The COGA offers the following comments:

Under Standing Rule C.4.a, the Stated Clerk presents a tentative docket that includes blocks of time for plenary sessions of the General Assembly following committee meetings. However, no items of business that will come out of committee sessions are slotted into those blocks of time. The General Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures (B&O) is responsible for proposing to the General Assembly the docket for each plenary session (Standing Rule F.1.a and b).

The B&O Committee works closely with the moderators of the various committees, the Stated Clerk, and the Moderator of the General Assembly in preparing the order and time for items of business for a particular session. They take into account such things as items which may be controversial and require lengthy debate; which committees are ready to report, still meeting, or still in the process of preparing their reports; and what the best order for the most effective and efficient flow of business before the assembly might be. The report of the B&O Committee given at the beginning of each plenary session can be approved or changed by the General Assembly.

Therefore, we believe the current Standing Rules already provide for priority consideration of controversial items in the context of the total business of the assembly. The assembly itself can reprioritize its business at the beginning of, or even during, each plenary session if it should feel that particular item(s) of business are not being considered in a timely manner.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-09

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-09. See pp. 56, 76.]

On Amending Standing Rule K.1.b. Regarding Special Committees—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

The Presbytery of Great Rivers respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to amend the *Manual of the General Assembly*, Standing Rule K.1.b. as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“b. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall be notified by any assembly committee whenever there is discussion about the creation of a special committee. In discussing the possible creation of a special committee, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall hear from related corporation or entity representatives as well as representatives from the assembly committee considering the proposal. Financial implications of special committees should accompany any recommendation for action by the assembly. The written comment of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures must be incorporated as background in the report of the assembly committee containing a recommendation to create a special committee. *Special committees and commissions should be appointed only in very rare and exceptional circumstances, i.e. national or denominational crisis.*

Rationale

The General Assembly has a procedure for nominating members of standing committees and other entities, which is detailed both in the *Book of Order* and in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. This process is designed to provide for balance among the members of the committees and entities with regard to geography, ethnicity, age, and so on. The process for nomination to and election by the General Assembly also gives the whole church, through its elected commissioners, a voice in naming the members of groups that recommend policy to the whole church. Only in very rare circumstances should this careful procedure for nomination and open method of election, with the possibility of nominations from the body at-large, be set aside in favor of some time-sensitive or emergency decision to be made.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-09

Comment on Item 03-09—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove this overture.

Rationale

This overture seeks to restrict the General Assembly from creating a special committee and commissions.

The process for the creation of special committees already provides for the rigorous review of criteria for their establishment. It is difficult to anticipate beforehand the nature of the need for any such committee or commission, or the proportions of such business at any particular General Assembly. It is important to preserve the right of a General Assembly to establish, or decline to establish, such an entity, based on the specific case presented to it.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-10

[The assembly referred Item 03-10 to the Biennial Review Committee. See pp. 56, 76.]

On Amending the Standing Rules Regarding General Assembly Timelines—From the Presbytery of Flint River.

The Presbytery of Flint River overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to amend the *Manual of the General Assembly*, the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, as follows:

1. Amend Standing Rule B.1.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. Presbyteries shall elect commissioners in sufficient time to permit the list of commissioners to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly ~~120 days~~ *six months* prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are commissioned.”

2. Amend Standing Rule C.2.a. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. ~~Forty-five days~~ *Five months* before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner and advisory delegate to one of the assembly committees by the random selection process described in this standing rule.”

3. Amend Standing Rule C.2.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. No later than ~~thirty days~~ *four months* before the convening of the assembly, commissioners shall receive the number and designation of committees. At the same time that the number and designation of committees is communicated, the Stated Clerk shall notify each person of the assignment, the time of their first electronic meeting, and the necessity to confirm appropriate housing and travel arrangements.”

Rationale

Under current rules, it is impossible for commissioners to fully digest the materials they must discuss and vote on. There are simply too many pages. With biennial assemblies it is not unreasonable to expect presbyteries to elect their commissioners at least six months prior to the assembly; and with the electronic communication tools we have today it would greatly enhance the decision-making process if committee members were to begin communicating with each other in regard to these issues well before the formal beginning of General Assembly. Each committee moderator could be given a secure site within PC-biz for conversation. All commissioners could have access, but only committee members could post notes.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-10—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly to refer Item 03-10 to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

Rationale

While we believe that a longer timeline might assist commissioners in their preparation for General Assembly by allowing a longer period for reflection, these changes have implications for a number of other deadlines (e.g. overtures and commissioner resolutions) that would all require adjustment. Whether twice the amount of time is the right amount is a practical question. What we commend is the presbytery’s concern that substantial reports on substantial topics receive careful reading by prepared commissioners. We also note the increase in the number of committees at this General Assembly, allowing for more concentration on fewer items in each committee. Hence, our advice that this recommendation be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to evaluate the necessity and/or the feasibility of extending these deadlines.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-10

Comment on Item 03-10—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-10.

Rationale

This overture seeks to amend the Standing Rules to change the election of General Assembly (GA) commissioners and their assignment to GA committees to a much earlier time prior to the meeting of the General Assembly: election would occur six months ahead, instead of 120 days; committee assignment would occur five months ahead, instead of forty-five days; and notification of committee assignment would be four months ahead, instead of thirty days.

The COGA offers the following comments:

The current timetable for selection of commissioners and assignment to committees dovetails with the timetable in the Standing Rules for the submission of business (overtures and reports) to the General Assembly. Although some overtures and

reports are required to be submitted by 120 days before the start of the assembly, many overtures and reports can be submitted up to forty-five days before (Standing Rules A.1., A.2.a., and A.3.c.(1)). Although some committees are “standard” from assembly to assembly, there are committees unique to each General Assembly depending on the business coming to that assembly.

Currently assembly committees are proposed and committee leadership appointed by about sixty days before the start of the General Assembly when most of the business of the assembly is known. Commissioner assignments to committees are made forty-five days before the start of the General Assembly.

To elect commissioners prior to 120 days before the start of the assembly is unnecessary and would not give commissioners more time to review reports and overtures since items of business are not required to be submitted before that time. It is impractical to move the timetable for the formation of committees and assignment of commissioners to those committees to a time months before the business placed before a particular General Assembly is known. It would undoubtedly require reformation of committees and commissioner assignments.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-11

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-11. See pp. 56, 76.]

On Adding Standing Rule F.5.h. Regarding Timing of Committee Reports—From the Presbytery of Flint River.

The Presbytery of Flint River overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to amend the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, F.5. by adding a section “h.” to read as follows:

“h. All committee reports and votes upon committee motions shall be scheduled to be completed prior to the dinner recess on the days of plenary sessions of the assembly.”

Rationale

Time after time, commissioners have been required to debate and vote on highly controversial issues late into the evening. They are exhausted, unable to fully focus, and eager to move on to the next batch of issues before them. Hours of prime time during assembly meetings are devoted to greetings, local advocacy presentations, and video messages... These are all well-intended, but far less critical to the work at hand. All of these nonbusiness items should be scheduled ONLY after adequate provision is made for timely discussion of business coming before the commissioners. If the volume of business requires evening reports and voting, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may always move that this Standing Rule be set aside; but this should always be a deliberate action, taken out of necessity, and not for convenience.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-11

Comment on Item 03-11—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-11.

Rationale

This overture seeks to change the Standing Rules to limit the duration of plenary sessions of the General Assembly during which committee reports and recommendations can be acted upon, i.e. prior to the dinner recess each day.

The COGA offers the following comments:

The COGA acknowledges the challenge of acting on all of the committee reports and recommendations as well as the rest of the business during the plenary sessions of a General Assembly (Wednesday afternoon to Saturday noon under the current format) that has in many cases required evening sessions on two evenings (Wednesday and Thursday).

In the recent assemblies, efforts have been successfully made to schedule non-committee report business in the evening sessions. For example, in 2008, consideration of committee recommendations on ordination issues was taken up at on Friday morning, and committee recommendations on Middle East issues were acted on during the Friday afternoon session. Also, although evening sessions have been held during GA, all evening sessions at the last two assemblies adjourned no later than 12:36 a.m. (2006) or 11:40 p.m. (2008).

The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures proposes the docket at the beginning of each session. Current Standing Rules allow the General Assembly itself to adjust the docket of any given session to take into account the scheduling of committee reports prior to the dinner recess, if that is the will of the body (majority vote to change the docket).

To require such a limitation as proposed by putting it in the Standing Rules would restrict the flexibility of the assembly to get its work done. Suspending such a rule would require a 2/3 vote of the commissioners (instead of the majority vote to change the docket). If the vote to suspend the rule is not sustained, it could lead to further restrictions on debate of important issues, and actually increase pressure to move on to the next item in order to get done before dinner each day of plenary sessions.

Most importantly, the expenses of commissioners' and delegates' housing and per diem, and the rental of the facilities are already obligated. It would be poor stewardship not to use space that has already been paid for.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-12

[The assembly approved Item 03-12 with amendment. See pp. 56, 77.]

On Amending Standing Rule E.2.e.–g. Regarding Privilege of the Floor—From the Presbytery of Shenandoah.

The Presbytery of Shenandoah respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to amend the General Assembly Standing Rules E.2.e., E.2.f., and E.2.g., as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strikethrough; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“Privilege of Floor to Speak~~

“e. During the deliberations of the committee, in contrast to public hearings, only the following persons, *having been recognized by the moderator*, may speak:

“(1) Members of the committee;

“(2) Committee assistant, ~~when recognized by the committee moderator~~;

“(3) Persons with special expertise, including elected members or staff members of General Assembly entities;

“(4) Overture advocates and signers of commissioners’ resolutions; ~~(see below in this standing rule) who [shall be entitled to] speak [address the background and intent of an overture or resolution when the overture or resolution or response to the referral of an overture is first considered by the committee and may be asked to provide additional information to the committee to correct misunderstandings or to clarify] and then shall have the same privilege of the floor as other persons with special expertise listed in Standing Rule E.2.e.(3) above;~~

“(5) Persons invited by the committee through a majority vote of the committee; and

“(6) Representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, who may speak to overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, or other business on which the Advisory Committee on the Constitution has presented advice or recommendations, or matters that propose amendments to the Constitution, or that affect compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.

“(7) In the event that business being considered by an assembly committee has been referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for advice, representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall be entitled to speak.

“(8) The committee moderator shall provide that the total time allotted to persons, other than members of the committee, who speak for or against a recommendation be equal so far as possible.

“Overture Advocates Signer of Commissioners’ Resolution

“f. Overture advocates and one signer of each commissioners’ resolution shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by any assembly committee considering the matter. The overture advocate or one of the signers of a commissioners’ resolution shall be entitled to speak, *as an individual (or in cooperation with other overture advocates in a pre-arranged presentation)*, to the background and intent of the overture or resolution immediately after the mo-

tion is made and seconded, placing the overture or resolution on the floor of the committee or subcommittee, ~~or immediately after any motion that might logically be expected to affect the overture or resolution is moved and seconded, and during debate of such motions to correct misunderstandings or to clarify.~~

“[Responsibilities of Overture Advocate

“[g. Overture advocates who have been designated by their presbytery or synod to speak to the response from a General Assembly entity to a referral of an overture shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by the assembly committee considering the response. The overture advocate shall be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture] immediately after the motion is made and seconded, placing the response to the referral of the overture on the floor of the committee or subcommittee, or immediately after any motion that might logically be expected to affect the response is moved and seconded, and during debate of such motions to correct misunderstandings or to clarify.” [or as asked for clarification by the committee concerning the original intent of the overture].

Rationale

The idea of privilege of the floor is a part of parliamentary process that is often misunderstood. Incorrectly cast as allowing a person the opportunity to speak during a meeting, this phrase actually means only that a person is permitted to enter the meeting area. (See *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised (RONR)*, §3, p. 28, footnote referenced in line 27). This imprecise language is used in sections E.2.e and following of the General Assembly’s Standing Rules.

It is clear that the Standing Rules intend to state guidelines for obtaining (or having) the floor in a committee setting during a General Assembly meeting. *RONR* is clear that obtaining the floor begins with being recognized by the chair or moderator, before beginning to speak. Although *RONR* is the parliamentary authority for meetings (G-9.0302 and S.R. E.2.b), this standing rule would be strengthened by stating this procedure.

Over the years, a matter of great concern has been the fair and equitable treatment of those who are permitted to speak to assembly committees, particularly in regards to the balance of time afforded to overture advocates, persons with special expertise (who often are members of General Assembly entities or are staff persons), and others the committee may ask to speak. The participation of these persons is still governed by section (8) of S.R. E.2.e, “The committee moderator shall provide that the total time allotted to persons, other than members of the committee, who speak for or against a recommendation be equal so far as possible.” This part of the Standing Rule makes redundant and unnecessary the phrase, in E.2.e.(4) “... shall have the same privilege of the floor [*sic*] as other persons with special expertise listed in Standing Rule E.2.e.(3) above.” The committee moderator rightly is given the authority to see that this rule is implemented, subject to the standard parliamentary options available to the committee, such as to appeal the decision of the chair.

The other proposed amendments to E.2.e.(4) seek to bring clarity to the role of overture advocates by harmonizing this section with E.2.f., which immediately follows. The amendments clarify to what the overture advocate is permitted to initially speak (to the background and intent of an overture, as provided in E.2.f), and that the committee may ask or permit the overture advocate to address misunderstandings or bring additional clarity to the issue.

In this latter matter, it is important to note that once an overture or resolution has been submitted to the General Assembly and, according to the assembly’s rules and procedures, assigned to a committee, it is no longer the presbytery’s overture or commissioners’ resolution. It is an item of business that belongs to the General Assembly, and to the committee to which it has been assigned. *RONR* expects a committee to fully examine the business assigned to it in drafting its recommendations to the full General Assembly.

Paragraph E.2.g. should be struck out completely as it is essentially the same paragraph as E.2.f. If it is not stricken, then the same amendments applied to E.2.f should be applied to E.2.g.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-12

Comment on Item 03-12 – From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises the 210th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 03-12.

Rationale

This overture seeks to amend the Standing Rules (E.2.g), in order to re-establish basic parliamentary procedure in committee deliberations. Once an overture is before the committee, the overture advocate would have the privilege to speak to it. But after that, committee members would have the priority of the right to speak and debate. Overture advocates could be invited by the committee to give additional information.

This would create the proper balance between the right of the committee members to debate and the opportunity for overture advocates to give information.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-13

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) do the following:

[The assembly approved Item 03-13, Recommendation 1. See pp. 56, 77.]

1. Amend Standing Rule D.1.g. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Access to Commissioner and Advisory Delegate Seating

“g. The only persons who shall be permitted access to the commissioner and advisory delegate seating area during plenary sessions are commissioners, advisory delegates, assistants enrolled by the Stated Clerk to assist commissioners having a disability warranting assistance, the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other staff and assembly assistants who are assigned responsibilities that require access to this area, including assisting at the floor microphones, delivery of official messages to commissioner and advisory delegates, and locating commissioners who are needed on the platform. The Stated Clerk will provide special credentials for the particular staff and assembly assistants who are authorized to enter the commissioner/advisory delegate seating area. *Registered presbytery staff may have access to the seating area to contact their commissioners and advisory delegates during breaks in business.*”

Rationale

Presbytery staff provide a valuable service to the General Assembly in supporting and encouraging the commissioners and advisory delegates from their presbyteries. By limiting access to the commissioners and advisory delegates on plenary days, even during breaks, we have made it more difficult for presbytery staff to be a part of the support team for the assembly.

[The assembly approved Item 03-13, Recommendation 2. See pp. 56, 77.]

2. Amend Standing Rule B.2.d. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates

“(1) Each presbytery shall appoint an active member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who shall be between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three years on the date the General Assembly convenes, to be a young adult advisory delegate.

“(2) Each presbytery will request each candidate for young adult advisory delegate to submit an application/questionnaire and be interviewed by an appropriate presbytery committee in order to ensure the selection of the best qualified person to serve as young adult advisory delegate. The youth ministries staff shall prepare and distribute to each presbytery a sample/suggested questionnaire for use in reviewing candidates for election as young adult advisory delegates.

“(3) *Presbyteries shall elect young adult advisory delegates in sufficient time to permit the list of advisory delegates to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 120 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected.*”

Rationale

There is no language giving presbyteries a timeline for finding a YAAD and this can result in last-minute registrations and confusion. This language mimics the same paragraph in the commissioners’ section (Standing Rule B.1.b).

[The assembly approved Item 03-13, Recommendation 3. See pp. 56, 77.]

3. Amend Standing Rule B.2.e. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates

“There shall be a delegation of theological student advisory delegates each year: two from each of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); one from each of the theological institutions in a covenant relation-

ship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and one each from three selected other theological seminaries. The selection process for these delegates is as follows:

“(1) Each theological institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate three students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. Two of these students shall be designated by the institution as delegates and the other student shall be designated as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery, or a student nominated by the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk *of the General Assembly 120 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected*, who shall transmit the names of the two students to be delegates to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

“(2) Each theological institution in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate two students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. One of these students shall be designated by the institution as the delegate and the other student as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk *of the General Assembly 120 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected*, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

“(3) All non-Presbyterian theological schools represented by corresponding members on the Committee on Theological Education and one additional non-Presbyterian theological seminary shall be asked to nominate one theological student advisory delegate and one alternate. The additional non-Presbyterian seminary shall be chosen on a rotating basis, descending alphabetically, from those that have at least twelve Presbyterian enrollees (either inquirers or candidates under the care of a presbytery) as of October 1 in the year preceding the assembly. *These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 120 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.*

“(4) Nominated students shall have at least one more year of study following the assembly remaining in their degree program. The Stated Clerk shall forward the name of the nominated students to the presbyteries of jurisdiction for election and confirmation.”

Rationale

Same as the *Rationale* for Recommendation 2. above. It provides consistency for reporting advisory delegates and commissioners.

Item 03-14

[The assembly approved Item 03-14. See pp. 56, 77.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following amendment to Standing Rule K.1.c. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Appointed by Moderator

“c. Any commission or special committee authorized by the General Assembly, unless otherwise designated, shall be appointed by the Moderator *in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee*. The Moderator is also authorized to fill by appointment any vacancies that may occur in any of such commissions or committees. No minister, elder, or other person shall be appointed to serve on more than one such commission or committee except by consent of the General Assembly.”

Rationale

The General Assembly Nominating Committee has a pool of almost 300 Presbyterian persons who wish to be considered for service at the General Assembly level. The General Assembly Moderator(s) and the church will benefit from a process of collaboration between the General Assembly Moderator(s) and the General Assembly Nominating Committee as members for special committees and commissions are considered and appointed.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-14

Comment on Item 03-14—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

Item 03-14 recommends amending Standing Rule K.1.c., about Commissions and Special Committees to consult with the GA Nominating Committee.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 03-14.

The *Book of Order* outlines the functions of the Committee on Representation. It serves "... both as an advocate for the representation of racial ethnic members, women, different age groups, and persons with disabilities, and as a continuing resource to the particular governing body in these areas. ...The committee on representation shall consult with the nominating committee of its own governing body" (*Book of Order*, G-9.0105c.). In addition, the committee on representation is to consult with those groups prior to nomination to discover potential members (*Book of Order*, G-9.0105d.). It would be appropriate for the consultation to include GACOR, but there is remedy in the current *Book of Order* for this function. The committee on representation often has names of qualified persons who have not yet completed an application in the nomination process.

Item 03-15

[The assembly approved Item 03-15. See pp. 56, 77.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following amendments to Section IV.C.1. of the *Organization for Mission*: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“IV.C. Committees of the General Assembly**“1. Serving on Assembly Entities**

“a. Each person nominated shall be an active member of a congregation, or a continuing member of a presbytery, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the exception of nominees for election to the *Presbyterian National Committee on the Fund for the Self-Development of People and the Women Employed by the Church Committee*.

“... ”

“c. Persons nominated for election by the General Assembly shall ordinarily be eligible to serve a four-year term, and be eligible for election to one additional term. No person may serve more than two *consecutive* terms, full or partial. ~~After serving as a member of a General Assembly entity for two terms, full or partial~~ *At the conclusion of their term of service, a person shall not be eligible for nomination or re-nomination to a General Assembly entity until two years have elapsed.*”

Rationale

The General Assembly Nominating Committee requests amendment of this section of the *Organization for Mission* to correct the name of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People and to remove the Women Employed by the Church Committee that is no longer in existence.

In addition, the General Assembly Nominating Committee wishes to clarify the amount of time persons completing service on a General Assembly entity must wait before they are eligible again for nomination for service.

Item 03-16

[The assembly approved Item 03-16 with amendment. See pp. 56, 77.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) make the following change in the *Organization for Mission*, Section IV.C.7., related to the name and mandate of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations. [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“7. Committee on Ecumenical *and Interreligious* Relations

“a. The Committee on Ecumenical *and Interreligious* Relations shall function to give a high profile to the vision of the ecumenical *and interreligious* involvement and work as central to the gospel and key to the life of the church; plan and coordinate, in consultation with the agencies and governing bodies of the church, the involvement of

the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ecumenical *and interreligious* relations and work; connect the ecumenical *and interreligious* efforts of all governing body levels of the church; provide a common point for all ecumenical *and interreligious* efforts connecting us with those outside our church; keep a unity of vision that includes the ecclesiastical, programmatic, ecumenical, and denominational (organizational) parts of our ministries and commitments; articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our ecumenical commitments; and promote awareness of the role of the unity of all humankind in the search for the unity of the church; and promote the unity of the church as an exhibition of the kingdom to the world.

“b. The Committee on Ecumenical *and Interreligious* Relations shall be composed of twenty members. Twelve shall be members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) nominated for at-large positions by the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and elected by the General Assembly in as nearly equal classes as possible. Four shall be members of four churches invited by the Stated Clerk to appoint one member each from their communion to serve as voting members of the committee. One of the four churches shall be one of our ecumenical church partners. The other three shall be our full communion partners. One member shall be appointed by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. One member shall be appointed by the General Assembly Mission Council. The other members of the committee shall be the Stated Clerk or the Associate Stated Clerk for Ecumenical Relations and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council or designee.

“In addition, the following GAMC persons may be corresponding members: the Deputy Executive Director for Mission and up to three ministry directors appointed by the Deputy Executive Director for Mission.

“c. Elected members of the committee shall be elected to a four-year term, and be eligible for election to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial. Appointed members from ecumenical church partners shall serve for four years and be eligible for appointment to one additional term.

“d. The Committee on Ecumenical *and Interreligious* Relations will meet twice annually and shall have the responsibility to do the following:

“(1) Envision, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, how the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) leads and participates in the search for the unity of Christ’s Church within this nation and worldwide, and propose appropriate strategies to the General Assembly, its agencies, and other governing bodies;

“(2) Provide oversight to the implementation of the responsibilities given to the General Assembly in Book of Order, Form of Government, Chapter XV. Relationships, G-15.0000–.0302;

“(3) Act on and process recommendations and proposals addressing ecclesiastical ecumenical work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

“(4) Propose to the General Assembly, for election, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) members to serve on ecumenical delegations to the National Council of Churches of Christ (USA), the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Caribbean and North American Area Council assemblies;

“(5) Represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in negotiation and coordination of the search for Christian unity with other communions as authorized by the General Assembly;

“(6) Select Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) representatives to serve on ecumenical dialogues, ecumenical negotiations on church unions, multilateral and bilateral dialogues, and representatives from the PC(USA) serving as PC(USA) ecumenical representatives to other church assemblies;

“(7) Oversee the implementation of “A Formula of Agreement” (Full Communion) with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Reformed Church in America, and the United Churches of Christ, and represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in planning and coordinating structures to carry this out;

“(8) Give guidance to the nurturing of unity among Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the U.S.A., with one another and with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

“(9) Empower all agencies of the General Assembly and governing bodies to carry out their mission program with an ecumenical consciousness and in close coordination with one another and to model this consciousness in their own work;

“(10) Propose and advocate to appropriate bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that they share in funding ecumenical and conciliar ministry;

“(11) Propose to the General Assembly names of churches to be invited to send ecumenical advisory delegates to the General Assembly meeting (see Standing Rule B.2.g.);

“(12) *Select three religious traditions to be invited to send representatives to the General Assembly as interfaith [representatives] [observers] (see Standing Rule B.2.f.);*

“(12) (13) Give guidance to the Stated Clerk and General Assembly agencies on ecumenical (church-to-church) relations, helping to carry out the General Assembly’s G-13.0103s and responsibilities;

“(13) (14) Give guidance to General Assembly agencies on new opportunities to strengthen the relationships with other faith communities and on strategies for fulfilling the General Assembly mandates on ~~[interfaith]~~ [interreligious] relationships;

“(14) (15) Give guidance to the Mission Agency on ecumenical mission opportunities in partnership with churches in the United States and around the world; and

“(15) (16) Give guidance to program entities on ecumenical formation of Presbyterians, both ministers and lay members.

“e. The committee shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly. The co-chairs of the Ecumenical Staff Team will have primary staffing responsibilities. The Ecumenical Staff Team shall be a staff resource to the committee.”

Rationale

During the self-study process, the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) considered the adequacy of its mandate. It noted,

Since the formation of GACER, the complexity of interreligious relations in the world, and the need for more attention to interreligious cooperation, and relationship-building in the wider ecumenical arena, have dramatically increased. Currently, particular interreligious matters that require attention are cared for by the General Assembly Mission Council. There is a need for an elected body to oversee the involvement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in interreligious relations and work; to connect the interreligious efforts of all governing body levels of the church; and to provide a common point for all interreligious efforts connecting us with those outside our church; and to articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our interreligious. GACER is positioned well to do this work in the wider context of our ecumenical mandate; it would be appropriate to include responsibilities for both ecumenical and interreligious relationships in the overall mandate of GACER. With this change it would be appropriate to change the name of GACER to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships.

“Interreligious Relations” is proposed, rather than the former “Interfaith Relations” for two reasons. First, this is the terminology used by many of our ecumenical partners. More importantly, this change shifts the focus, and basis for relationship, away from belief and the particularly Christian understanding of “faith,” to the whole life and practice of religious communities.

Item 03-17

On Establishing an Annual General Convocation Meeting and Moving Meetings of the General Assembly to Every Six Years—From the Presbytery of Foothills.

The Presbytery of Foothills overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to amend the appropriate sections of the *Book of Order* to

[The assembly referred Item 03-17, Recommendation 1, to the General Assembly Mission Council. See pp. 57, 79.]

1. establish an annual General Convocation meeting for the purposes of worship, mission celebration, and building up relationships within the Body of Christ; and

[The assembly referred Item 03-17, Recommendation 2, to the Biennial Review Committee. See pp. 57, 79.]

2. move meetings of the General Assembly Governing Body to every six years.

Rationale

1. We believe the following:

- The vast majority of Presbyterians are happy with their congregations, their presbyteries, their synods, and the ongoing work of General Assembly staff to ensure the smooth day-by-day running of the mission of the denomination.

- On the other hand, we believe that Presbyterians of all theological perspectives find themselves frustrated with the manner in which discussions occur and decisions are made by the General Assembly, and that General Assembly in its present functioning, presents a significant threat in our beloved church and to its peace, unity, and purity.¹

2. Further, based on our experience, and reports of General Assembly commissioners, we believe that

- the volume of information presented to commissioners at the assembly, including, but not limited to annual reports, denominational positions on particular issues, repeated actions to amend the constitution, etc.,
- the committee structure and process employed to introduce business to the floor of the assembly,
- the lack of relationships between commissioners,
- the lack of time to process issues that are often enormously complicated and multifaceted,
- the consequent pressure to give in to the emotion of the moment,
- the disparity of knowledge about specific subjects between commissioners, General Assembly staff, special interest groups;

all often

- lead to confrontation without reconciliation, (2 Cor. 5:18–19²),
- contribute to a heightened emphasis on winners and losers, rather than winners and winners (see 1 Cor. 6:7–8³),
- lead to a tendency for our national body to act legislatively rather than pastorally (see Paul’s approach to meat offered to idols in 1 Cor. 10:23–33⁴),
- promote stagnation rather than growth in our common life together (Eph. 4:15–16⁵),
- lead to the predominance of single-issue thinking (party-spirit, see Gal. 5:20⁶)
- reinforce a growing sense of anxiety in a significant number of our congregations every time assembly meets, (see John 14:27⁷)
- and erode denominational pride, loyalty, and commitment.

We propose this change to truly support the peace, unity, and purity of the denomination; to upbuild the historic Presbyterian polity of connectionalism between congregations and presbyteries; to reinvigorate the work of synods; to transform the diversity-within-unity of our denomination into a powerful positive force that increasingly stimulates the creative proclamation of the Gospel in our nation’s diverse regions and cultures; to modernize our operations; and to provide time for wise reflection and broad discussion on matters central to us all.

This overture will require fresh thinking on the church’s operation in many areas. For example, the title “Moderator of the General Assembly” can be changed simply to “Moderator of the National Assembly”—whether the assembly is the General Assembly, or the annual General Convocation.

Endnotes

1. See <http://www.pcusa.org/research/panel/reports/0505panelreport.pdf>, “Trust in Governing Bodies’ Use of Mission Dollars,” p. 4, second paragraph.

2. 2 Corinthians 5:18–19—“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.”

3. 1 Corinthians 6:7–8—In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud—and believers at that.

4. 1 Corinthians 10:23–33—“‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things are beneficial. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of others. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, for ‘the earth and its fullness are the Lord’s.’ If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, ‘This has been offered in sacrifice,’ then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—I mean the other’s conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else’s conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks? So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved.”

5. Ephesians 4:15–16—“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

6. Galatians 5:20—“The works of the flesh are “idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions,”
7. John 14:27—“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 03-17

Advice on Item 03-17—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-17.

Rationale

The overture makes two proposals which shall be addressed separately:

1. The request to establish an annual general convocation meeting.

This does not require constitutional amendment. The General Assembly has the authority to establish such an annual meeting under G-13.0103c, f, and j. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that if the General Assembly concurs with the intent of this amendment, that intent would better be accomplished by a resolution instructing the appropriate entity or entities than by constitutional amendment.

Nevertheless, should the assembly wish to enact such a requirement, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends the following amendment be proposed:

Shall section G-13.0103 be amended to include a new subsection as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

y. to convene annually a general convocation for the purposes of worship, mission celebration, and building up relationships within the Body of Christ.

2. The request to change the frequency of meetings of the General Assembly.

a. The overture does not specify which amendments would be necessary to accomplish its intent. An analysis of the *Book of Order* indicates at least the following amendments would be required: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline; text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with strike-through.]

G-13.0104: “The General Assembly shall hold a stated meeting [~~at least biennially~~] [every six years]. [The rest of the section remains unchanged.]”

G-13.0111a: “... Members shall be elected by the General Assembly for a term of six years [~~and the terms shall be so arranged as to provide that one third of the members shall complete their service at the conclusion of each regular meeting of the General Assembly~~]. [The rest of the section remains unchanged.]”

G-13.0111b: “The committee shall elect its own officers [~~at the last meeting prior to the regular meeting of the General Assembly~~]. [The rest of the section remains unchanged.]”

G-13.0112a: “... Voting members shall be nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly and shall serve a term of six years [~~in three classes~~]. ... [The rest of the section remains unchanged.]”

D-5.0102: “The term of each member of a permanent judicial commission shall be six years, with the exception that membership on the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly shall end when that member transfers membership to a church or presbytery outside the synod from which nominated. [~~In each even numbered year, the General Assembly shall elect members for a term of six years to fill the vacancies then occurring. Their terms of office will begin with the dissolution of the General Assembly at which they are elected.~~]”

Comment: The constitutional provisions regarding establishment of classes for the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, General Assembly Nominating Committee, and General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission are designed to provide for sufficient institutional continuity so as to ensure the effective performance of tasks and to safeguard these bodies from excessive influence by and reliance on non-elected staff. Without rotation of classes, membership of these bodies would change completely with each General Assembly. Vacancies could not be filled in the interim without a called meeting or other mechanism. This would create the greatest stress on the work of these groups at the very time when the work is most intense. Similarly, there would be a loss of institutional memory and knowledge in these groups resulting in greater reliance on General Assembly staff.

b. In addition, the proposal would render difficult or impossible the exercise of the following rights, responsibilities, and requirements of the General Assembly:

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

- The authorization of services of the Lord's Supper by entities under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly as noted in G-9.0102b and W-3.6204
- Granting exceptions to the composition of a Committee on Representation as detailed in G-9.0106b.
- Exercising accountable oversight of councils, boards, agencies, commissions, and committees as in G-9.0403.
- Developing the budget of the General Assembly as instructed in G-9.0404d and G-13.0103i.
- Reviewing the biennial reports of the moderator, stated clerk, the councils, commissions, committees, boards, agencies, and organizations of the General Assembly as in G-9.0407c.
- Reviewing the records of synods at least biennially, as instructed in: G-9.0407d(3), G-12.0304; and G-13.0103k and l.
- Exercising special administrative review over lower governing bodies in a timely manner as instructed in G-9.0408.
- Timely approval of executives of General Assembly agencies as in G-9.0703.
- Approving new presbyteries or changes in the configuration or boundaries of existing presbyteries as detailed in G-12.0102k and G-13.0103n.
- Providing recommendations to synods regarding the adoption of budgets as in G-12.0303.
- Establishing and superintending the agencies and task forces necessary for its work, including a General Assembly Mission Council, providing for the regular review of the functional relationship between the General Assembly's structure and its mission as instructed in G-13.0103h.
- Warning or bearing witness against error in doctrine or immorality in practice in or outside the church as instructed in G-13.0103p.
- Deciding controversies brought before it and giving advice and instruction in cases submitted to it, in conformity with the Constitution as instructed in G-13.0103q.
- Providing authoritative interpretation of the *Book of Order* which is binding on the governing bodies of the church as instructed in G-13.0103r.
- Authorizing synods to exercise similar power in receiving ecclesiastical bodies suited to become constituents of those governing bodies and lying within their geographic bounds as instructed in G-13.0103v.
- Reviewing the work of the Office of the General Assembly in consultation with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly as instructed in G-13.0103x
- Approving changes in the descriptions of standardized ordination examinations, the subjects, the schedule, and the procedures for their administration as in G-14.0432.
- Resolving conflicts in the constitutions governing Union churches as in G-16.0201v and G-16.0401p.
- Consenting to the union of particular churches with churches of non-Reformed bodies as in G-16.0301.
- Resolving conflicts in the constitutions governing Union governing bodies as in G-17.0201c(7).

Comment: At the heart of our connectional system are the foundational principles of Presbyterian polity that "... presbyters shall come together in governing bodies (traditionally called judicatories or courts) in regular gradation" (*Book of Order*, G-4.0301c); "[e]cclesiastical jurisdiction is a shared power, to be exercised jointly by presbyters gathered in governing bodies" (*Book of Order*, G-4.0301h); and "[a] higher governing body shall have the right of review and control over a lower one and shall have power to determine matters of controversy upon reference, complaint, or appeal" (*Book of Order*, G-4.0301f). Essential to the exercise of these principles is a process for regular and timely discernment of the will of God for the church's governance and mission. When the time between the convening of representative assemblies increases, the effectiveness of any timely discernment process will inevitably diminish, and the connectional unity of the church will suffer.

In addition to reducing the ability of the General Assembly to exercise its oversight and control of General Assembly entities, agencies, councils, and other bodies, the proposed overture would increase the church's reliance on elected and non-elected staff during the period between assemblies. Moreover, the extended period between General Assemblies will affect the constitutional checks and balances between judicial and administrative processes of authoritatively interpreting the Constitution, and could increase the case load and influence of judicial commissions under G-9.0411.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 03-17 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-17

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-17—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

Item 03-17 requests General Assemblies be held every six years.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 03-17 be disapproved.

Rationale

Approval of this overture would impede the work of the General Assembly and the church at-large and lessen the power of the voice from the pews. By centralizing decision-making in the offices and permanent General Assembly committees that handle the work and decisions between assemblies, this overture would take power from the assembly and give it to a small, centralized group. Further, in a six-year cycle, the church at-large would lose its ability to come together and be in community.

Permanent General Assembly committees such as ACREC would find it practically impossible to implement any work with which they are mandated. The ACREC's work includes monitoring the work of GAMC in between assemblies, identifying new policy needs, and reporting its findings to General Assembly for implementation. If this were done in a six-year cycle, ACREC could not report to the GAMC in between assemblies because of its monitoring role that would be a conflict of interest. The pace of change would make implementation of recommended new policy nearly impossible. Growth in the church is occurring most noticeably in the racial ethnic communities and it is imperative for the church to be nimble enough to implement change and keep up with the needs of these emerging churches. Going to a six-year cycle would make help arrive too late, if at all, for these new congregations.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-17

Comment on Item 03-17—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-17.

Rationale

This overture seeks to move the regular meeting of the General Assembly from every two years to every six years.

To move the adoption, review, oversight, and possible revision of the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by the broadest cross-section of the church to once every six years would undermine the connectional nature of our church and leave such actions to a much smaller group of elected members (the General Assembly Mission Council has forty elected members).

In addition, the General Assembly commissioners' evaluations have and continue to reinforce a positive experience, greater knowledge and understanding of the PC(USA)'s polity and mission, deep sense of connection to the denomination, and increased participation in the ministry of their local congregations and middle governing bodies.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-18

[The assembly approved Item 03-18 with amendment. See pp. 56, 77-78.]

On Expanding the Scope of the Review of Biennial Assemblies—From the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.

The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to lead the church in considering the form and function of our General Assembly meetings by expanding the action of the 214th General Assembly (2002) that charged the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to prepare an evaluation of biennial assemblies after the 219th General Assembly (2010) (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, pp. 159–64, Item 02-01) and instructing this study committee to consider the whole of the General Assembly meeting in its form and function.

This review is to include, but is not limited to, matters of financial stewardship, the use of alternative forms of discernment, the number of commissioners and advisory delegates as well as the role of advisory delegates, the schedule for moderatorial elections, the environmental impact of assemblies, the frequency of meetings, and models for governance for future generations.

In appointing the members of the special task group or committee (outlined in the 2002 action), the Stated Clerk and Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council shall pay particular attention to appointing a generous representation of members younger than age forty.

[Five additional persons will be added to the Review Committee as outlined in the 2002 action, three of whom will be commissioners or advisory delegates from the 219th General Assembly (2010) under the age of 40, and two from the church at large.]

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$17,720; 2011: \$26,705; 2012: \$8,735 (Per Capita—OGA)]

The report of this study and any recommendations shall come to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

Rationale

The Committee on the General Assembly was charged by the 214th General Assembly (2002) to prepare an evaluation of biennial assemblies, instructing the committee to consider the whole of the General Assembly meeting in its form and function. This group was asked to review the following:

The assigned task shall be to ascertain the impact of biennial assemblies on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in terms of its ministry and mission; stewardship including per capita apportionment, mission dollars, and special offerings; communication including knowledge of the General Assembly and its work in the church, on governance of the church; the Form of Government and overtures sent to the General Assembly; use of judicial process and ways of dealing with conflictual issues, as well as addressing the theology of our Form of Government and how it has been impacted by biennial assemblies;] and bring a report to the 220th General Assembly (2012). (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 159)

Since the charge was given to COGA to review biennial General Assemblies, the church has benefited from the work of the Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, which modeled decision making utilizing discernment and consensus and challenged the church to adopt new methods of decision making at all governing body levels. Sessions, presbyteries, and synods across the church have experimented with different ways of making decisions. The General Assembly, as the most formal governing body, has been less adaptive and slower to respond to the growing enthusiasm for alternative methods of discernment in decision making. This is a conversation that needs to occur at the General Assembly level. The review of biennial assemblies provides an opportunity for it to occur within a larger conversation about the form and function of the General Assembly.

The expanded review should address the effectiveness of the current standing committee model and whether a different organizational model might better facilitate the use of discernment as a core value. It should consider the effectiveness of the current overture process and potential alternatives to it that could free the assembly to spend more time on larger, more strategic questions of vision and mission that will shape the future of the church. The review should address the number and role of commissioners and advisory delegates and how the General Assembly might engage the wisdom of middle governing body leaders (staff and officers). The review should assess the environmental impact of General Assembly meetings and whether there are ways to increase efficiency and reduce the overall environmental impact. Because this review will affect the General Assembly's function in the foreseeable future, the review team should intentionally include many members under the age of forty.

This proposed expansion of the review functions of the committee would allow the church to have more than just a tweaking of the existing biennial model; it would allow a vehicle to explore a new way of being the church when we meet in assembly.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-18

Comment on Item 03-18—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 03-18.

Rationale

This overture seeks to expand the scope of the review of biennial General Assemblies.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) concurs with the request the overture makes regarding expanding the scope of the review of biennial General Assemblies. Given the expanded scope of the review committee, the COGA recommends that five additional persons be added to the review committee, three of which will be commissioners from the 219th General Assembly (2010) under forty years of age, and two to be elected from the church-at-large.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-19

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-19. See pp. 56, 78.]

On Accountability for Presbyterian Organizations at General Assembly Sponsored Meetings and Events—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.

The Presbytery of Santa Barbara respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. Require events sponsored by PC(USA) aligned groups taking place at General Assembly or other General Assembly-sponsored gatherings to be evaluated by the Office of the General Assembly in advance of all General Assemblies or other General Assembly-sponsored events to assure that the activities of all PC(USA) aligned groups are conducted in a manner that honor the constitutional standards of the church.
2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to establish a Board of Oversight and Review whose task will be to hold accountable any Presbyterian organization conducting its affairs or events in violation of current constitutional standards. We also advise that this board be available to receive complaints from commissioners at General Assembly.
3. Direct that after a process of review is completed, a violation of the church's standards of behavior or Constitution shall result in the denial of the privilege of exhibiting at future General Assembly-sponsored meetings and events. Such violation shall also result in denied access to commissioner's mailboxes at future General Assemblies.
4. Advocate that a process of recourse be established for organizations charged with such violations. In order to be reinstated, the organization so charged would be required to go through an appeal process. The Office of the General Assembly would form a committee of the most recent General Assembly commissioners to hear appeals. This committee would be composed of a theologically balanced group within the denomination.

Rationale

On June 21, 2008, during the General Assembly that took place in San Jose, More Light Presbyterians held their traditional reception and dinner, advertised to all General Assembly attendees. At that gathering, a planned "wedding" took place between two gay men officiated by an ordained Presbyterian pastor.

The Directory for Worship, W-4.9001, was violated at that event, as "Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man." Also, since the officiating pastor proclaimed the couple "married," this violated the GAPJC's ruling that church officers authorized to perform marriages "shall not state, imply, or represent that a same-sex ceremony is a marriage" (<http://www.pcusa.org/gapjc/decisions/pjc21812withconcurrences.pdf>; Presbyterian Outlook, Sat, June 21, 2008, Katie Pate, Correspondent).

The fabric of our denomination includes and sanctions coalitions of like-minded Presbyterians for the purposes of strengthening the community of the PC(USA) and promoting dialogue between us as we seek to live together in our diversity. Thus, we have such groups within our church as Presbyterians for Renewal, More Light Presbyterians, Presbyterian Forum, Presbyterian Writers' Guild, and more.

These, and many others groups all fall under the banner of the PC(USA). These organizations identify themselves within the PC(USA) and seek to work within the denomination to further their particular ideas and concerns.

It is, therefore, of common interest to the denomination as a whole that each group conducts its endeavors in a manner that honors the constitutional standards of the church. While each coalition may seek to change the Constitution, it is nonetheless incumbent upon each to uphold the standards until such a time as they are legally modified. To do otherwise is divisive and undermines the unity and trust that we value in our church. This singular event of a homosexual wedding at the 218th General Assembly (2008), which was reported in various media, indicates the need for a new level of oversight.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-19

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-19—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 03-19 be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) for review and that any subsequent recommendations be submitted to the 220th General Assembly (2012) for consideration.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) understands some of the concerns of the presbytery and, without endorsing their remedies, has itself considered several approaches, if the item is not simply disapproved.

1. The Standing Rules of the General Assembly, as amended by the 218th General Assembly (2008), suggest that the proposed action may not be necessary. Standing Rule I. 2. d. Sponsorship of Events states “An event scheduled before, during, or immediately following a session of the General Assembly and extending an invitation to any or all participants of the assembly shall clearly identify the sponsor or sponsoring organization(s) in any invitations, announcements, or other publicity about the event” (*Manual*, p. 42). On this basis, a requirement for transparency and imputed accountability by all event sponsors would seem to be already in place.

2. Standing Rule E. 6.d. Requests to Schedule Events, invests the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures with the responsibility to review requests to hold events from entities related to the PC(USA) in any way. Thus, a mechanism for reviewing the appropriateness of such requests would appear to be already in existence.

3. The creation of a new organizational entity within the Office of General Assembly (i.e. a Board of Oversight) and the investment of that entity with certain powers is a matter that would require an amendment to the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has been charged with the responsibility for reviewing such proposals in light of existing arrangements and advising the General Assembly on an appropriate course of action (Standing Rule A. 5. a. Report; see also the *Book of Order*, G-13.0112.d).

4. Instead of referral to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, the General Assembly could also consider referral to the Office of General Assembly. A somewhat similar action was taken by the 207th General Assembly (1995) on Item 95-11. The 207th General Assembly (1995) referred *Commissioners’ Resolution 95-11* to the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). The resolution asked that the OGA continue to make exhibit space available to organizations that have a history of relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and whose membership consists entirely of those who are members of the PC(USA); and that those groups with “a history of relationship with the PC(USA)” have priority for exhibit space over new organizations. (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, p. 725–26, 70)

The Office of the General Assembly responded in 1996, noting that the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) approves and regularly updates “Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly Exhibit Hall” to clarify the oversight and management of the exhibit hall, establish eligibility for display space, and define additional responsibilities of exhibitors. “These guidelines are reconsidered and revised annually in light of circumstances at a particular assembly site, evaluations from the previous assembly, and other factors” (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 144). At the time, the COGA expressed concern that if such regulations were approved by the General Assembly, then any subsequent “... revisions would also require GA approval. This would hamper the ability of the Stated Clerk or exhibit committee to be responsive to new circumstances or information...” (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 144).

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-19

Comment on Item 03-19—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove this overture.

Rationale

This overture seeks to make an elected committee accountable for the behavior of Presbyterian organizations when constitutional standards are not upheld at General Assembly sponsored meetings and events.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly gives oversight to the biennial meeting of the General Assembly. While it is true that it is hoped that all activities at a particular General Assembly meeting honor the constitutional standards of the church, it is difficult to anticipate beforehand the consequences of any particular action, or to exercise control over any particular group.

General Assembly commissioners already have the means to register complaints or concerns. Additionally, all Presbyterians have access to the church’s judicial process, which may be utilized if it is perceived that constitutional standards have not been upheld.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office General Assembly.

Item 03-20

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-20. See pp. 57, 79.]

On Young Adult Advisory Delegate Participation—From the Presbytery of Central Washington.

The Presbytery of Central Washington overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to approve the following:

1. That young adult advisory delegates to the General Assembly not be polled for procedural votes and omnibus motions during plenary sessions. This would include, but is not limited to: motions to end debate, motions to adjourn or recess, motions to limit or extend debate, and motions to change the docket.
2. That young adult advisory delegates be allowed two opportunities to speak during plenary session debates on each topic of discussion or amendment that comes to the floor. One speaker shall speak in favor of the motion, the other shall speak against.
3. When a known issue will be coming to the floor, young adult advisory delegates (YAADs) shall be given an opportunity to caucus among themselves and select who will represent the caucus for each side of the motion, for and against. In such an occurrence, the young adult advisory delegates will be given the opportunity to speak first in the debate; and, if there is a time limit given to each speaker, the YAADs will be given an additional 50 percent allotment of time for their comments.

Rationale

With the General Assembly now meeting biennially, it finds there is more work and more commissioners than in past years. Using time wisely during the plenary sessions is more important than ever to be sure all of the voting commissioners are able to fully discuss and debate the motions at hand.

Advisory delegates play an important role in the process, but their advisory votes on procedural elements of the plenary sessions seldom have any real effect on how business transpires. While the sixty seconds it takes to record their votes is individually insignificant, these repeated votes add up and take away time needed for actual discussion and debate. The General Assembly could easily streamline the sessions by making this simple change.

Young adult advisory delegates are an important part of the General Assembly, but also need to play a role that facilitates the work of the commissioners, not one that prevents commissioners from fully participating. It should be remembered that in the recent past, YAADs did not vote on all matters of debate and had to selectively choose which motions they wanted to be polled on.

There is approximately one YAAD for every four voting commissioners on the floor of the General Assembly, but YAADs represent only about 3 percent of the Presbyterian church membership (712 elder/minister commissioners and 173 YAADs are on record for 2010). The YAADs will still have full voice and vote in committees, where much of the work of the General Assembly is done. Drawing reasonable limits during debates will still allow youth opinions to be fully voiced in a proportional manner, while providing more opportunity for voting commissioners to participate in the plenary discussions that they have the deciding votes on.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-20

Comment on Item 03-20—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-20.

Rationale

This overture seeks to limit the participation of young adult advisory delegates (YAADs) in the plenary sessions of the General Assembly meeting—no polling for procedural votes and only two YAADs to be allowed to speak on a given item of business.

The COGA offers the following comments:

Under Standing Rule B.2., there are four groups of advisory delegates to the General Assembly (GA): young adult (YAADs), theological student (TSADs), missionary (MADs), and ecumenical representatives (EADs). All advisory delegates currently have privilege of the floor during plenary sessions without vote. The advisory delegates may be polled prior to the vote of commissioners on particular issues to determine their advice (SR B.2.c).

The overture seeks to restrict the privilege of the floor and the advisory polling of one group advisory delegates—YAADs—creating two levels of advisory delegates. Adopting this overture would require amending Standing Rule B.2. Amendment to the Standing Rules requires a 2/3 vote.

To limit the advisory polling of the YAADs on procedural votes would not save any time since, to the extent the General Assembly seeks advice of advisory delegates on a given procedural matter, advisory delegates other than YAADs would still be polled.

To limit the YAADs participation in plenary debate as proposed, particularly on such matters as floor amendments, seems impractical. With the current electronic notification system at the microphones that indicates whether a person is an

advisory delegate or commissioner, the Moderator of the General Assembly already has the flexibility to choose, in a fair and balanced way, among all those who wish to speak.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-20

Comment on Item 03-20—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 03-20.

Attending and participating in the General Assembly is an important experience for youth and young adults, who are integral in the future of the church. There are many congregations where youth and young adults already serve in important leadership positions: on session, as young ministers, and more. The “hands on” experience gives YAADS the opportunity to gain confidence with and experience in the governing processes of the PC(USA) in ways rarely experienced by most church members, and this experience is of life-long value. YAAD participation is a value in the event and makes an investment for future engagement by those young people, influencing others in the process. People find passion for the work of the church in the experience of a General Assembly.

Often when youth and young adults are involved and engaged in the workings of any church governance, they are more tuned in, knowledgeable, and passionate about the issues at hand in the community of faith. Thus, they should have the opportunity to speak to and voice their thoughts not only in committee but in full plenary. Already, this small contingent has limited access to speak during plenary sessions. Only two microphones are available to them and there is much difficulty in reaching microphones to speak.

The YAADS are in an advisory role, yes, but it is critical that they are able to advise the entire assembly.

We long for our young people, with their energy and imaginations, to be an important part of our church. We long for them to be ready to take leadership roles as current members age and find themselves unable or unwilling to continue to do so. If we desire young people to be part of this church in a meaningful way, their voices must be heard wherever possible. This includes both in committee and at plenary sessions of the General Assembly.

The GACOR commented on Item 03-03 with additional rationale and suggests linking these items if it be the will of the body to do so.

Item 03-21

[The assembly approved Item 03-21 with amendment. See pp. 56, 78.]

A Resolution to Adapt the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

- 1. Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to adapt the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR) to collect disaggregated data on age, gender, race, and ethnicity.**
- 2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to incorporate into the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR) specifically by name the categories of [African], African American, Black, and Middle Eastern.**

Rationale

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) instructed the Office of the General Assembly to gather information regarding racial ethnic composition in the church (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 282). The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a commitment to being an inclusive representation of the body of Christ. For this reason, the *Book of Order* states that, “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life” (G-4.0403).

The 218th General Assembly (2008) directed the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) “to collect, organize, and report data for all research in the church (such as ... the Stated Clerk’s annual statistical report, etc.) in a disaggregated form by

race, ethnicity, gender and age, so that data on women of color and young adult women of color may be identified separately for analysis, where possible and permissible by law” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 965). The Women of Color Joint Working Group made this request to the OGA in a letter dated September 2009, but they were told that further approval was needed from the General Assembly.

Given that the 218th General Assembly (2008) already approved this, and given that the SASR is completed online and already collects information separately on age, gender, race, and ethnicity, it seems that adding to the reporting form or slightly adjusting it to gather disaggregated data on these same variables would be a simple and straightforward process. Whether the process is simple or not, the information that would be gleaned from such a change is essential to the church if we are indeed to move forward in our commitment to hearing and singing the songs of women of color (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 964ff.).

While the United States government does not break down race and ethnicity as far as we are requesting, given our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) caucuses and the racial ethnic identification of women and men in the church, we would request the categories be expanded to be more inclusive of the membership of our church. The church can and should lead the way toward being wholly inclusive of all people. Those who identify as African American in this country do not necessarily identify as Black. The two terms do not have the same meaning. In the same vein, those who identify as Middle Eastern most often do not identify themselves as white. Given the current cultural climate in our country for those of Middle Eastern heritage, this is understandable. To fail to offer these categories is to render many members of the body of Christ invisible.

Making these changes would allow the church to regularly assess the presence and participation of women of color and young women of color. In light of this decade of “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God” in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is lifting up and celebrating the voices and contributions of women of color in the church (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 964), now is an appropriate time to make such an adaptation to the way in which we gather this information.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-21

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-21—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 03-21 be approved.

Rationale

The ACREC agrees that data needs to be collected in a more detailed way, especially as the U.S. Census is now being collected with more detail. Middle Easterners are now a recognized group within our church membership structure and we believe this category needs to be added to the church’s data collection.

Regarding labeling of groups, as illustrated by the controversy over the use of “African American” and “Black,” ACREC believes that further study is needed to arrive at the right “labels” to use as consensus is difficult to find even within a particular racial ethnic community.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-21

Comment on Item 03-21—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) convenes a table currently reviewing the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR). The GACOR respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to refer this item and its rationale to the COGA for consideration. Increasing the accuracy of the data from this instrument assists in planning for full participation and representation at all levels of the church.

Item 03-22

[The assembly approved Item 03-22. See pp. 56, 78.]

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, with the concurrence of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

- 1. Elect the Reverend Thomas Hay to a first, four-year term as Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.**
- 2. Elect Elder Loyda P. Aja, the Reverend Kerry Clements, the Reverend Mark Tammen, and the Reverend Robina Winbush to a third, four-year term as Associate Stated Clerks of the General Assembly.**
- 3. Elect Elder Frederick Heuser to a fourth, four-year term as Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.**

Rationale

The Standing Rules of the General Assembly at H.2.d. states the following:

The General Assembly may elect one or more Associate Stated Clerks as the General Assembly shall determine. The Stated Clerk shall nominate persons to fill each such office after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be four years, subject to reelection at the pleasure of the General Assembly.

These six people give exemplary service as leaders of the major departments of the General Assembly, are in good standing as elders or ministers of Word and Sacrament, and are faithful Christian leaders who serve the church with “energy, intelligence, imagination and love.” The Stated Clerk enthusiastically nominates these six persons for reelection as Associate Stated Clerks of the General Assembly.

Item 03-23

[The assembly approved Item 03-23. See pp. 56, 78.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) confirm the election of the following persons as members of the Board of the Presbyterian Historical Society:

Class of 2012

Bergstrom, Betty—(Chicago, Illinois)—1st term—(2-year term)

Class of 2013

Ellis, Margaret Hoben (New York, New York)—2nd term

Tobyn, Myra L. (New York, New York)—2nd term

Mecray, Paul (Radnor, Pennsylvania)—1st term

Leonard, William L. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)—1st term

Roberts, Raymond R. (Westfield, New Jersey)—1st term

Satterfield, Shirley (Princeton, New Jersey)—1st term

Class of 2014

Grace, Steve (Midland, Michigan)—1st term

Chai, Kew (Skoakie, Illinois)—1st term

Asher, John (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)—1st term

Easley, Charles (Atlanta, Georgia)—1st term (elected for a three-year term beginning in 2011)

Bradford, Robert (Charlotte, North Carolina)—1st term

Bergsteinsson, Joan (Radnor, Pennsylvania)—1st term

Item 03-24

[The assembly approved Item 03-24 with amendment. See pp. 56, 78.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) amend the “Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies,” as found in “Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly” in the *Manual of the General Assembly*, as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“STANDARDS FOR REVIEW OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENCIES**“PURPOSE**

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to the understanding that ‘the unity of the Church is a gift of its Lord and finds expression in its faithfulness to the mission to which Christ calls it’ (G-4.0201). The basic principles of Presbyterian polity include the responsibility of a higher governing body to review those ministries for which it is accountable (G.-4.0301f). The purpose of the review process is to provide an equitable evaluation of the ministry of the agencies of the General Assembly. The review will focus on the quality of the relationship of the agencies’ ministry with the mission of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *the agencies’ collaborative efforts with other agencies*, and the quality of the agencies’ program based on the standards for review.

“THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

“The General Assembly Nominating Committee will nominate to *each meeting* of the General Assembly for election ~~two a~~ committees and its moderators *for each committee* to review the work of one of the agencies of the General Assembly based on a six-year schedule. The *agency review committee’s* responsibility is to provide an objective report to the General Assembly as to the *agency’s agencies’* compliance to the standards of review ~~and the quality and acceptability of the agencies’ self-study~~. The *agency review* committee may provide advice on areas of program improvement. The *agency review committee’s* role will be to examine the ~~agencies’~~ *agency’s* church relations, its policies and practice, *history of collaboration with other agencies*, and its program effectiveness. The *agency review* committee will review the ~~agencies’~~ *agency’s* self-study report and other documents. It will visit the agency and talk personally with leadership staff and the governing board or committee. The *agency review* committee is to conduct its work within the context of the General Assembly’s concern for the strong vital connections within the agencies of the General Assembly and the whole church. The governing board of the agency is responsible for the internal management of the agency and its operational details. The *agency review* committee’s role is to strengthen the bonds of the agencies to the General Assembly, the essential mission of the church, and the basic accountability of the governing board and executive leadership of the agency to the PC(USA). The *agency review* committee should celebrate with the whole church the successful ministries of the agency it is reviewing, and to consult with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding representation of employees. The *agency review* committee will report to the General Assembly through the General Assembly committee to which the agency ~~annually~~ reports.

“STAFFING AND FUNDING

“The Office of the General Assembly will provide adequate staffing for the *agency review* committee to complete its task. Staffing will be provided by the General Assembly *Mission* Council in the year the Office of the General Assembly is reviewed. The funding for the review process will be paid from per capita income.

“MANUAL

“A manual will be maintained to provide guidance in the review process to the *agency review* committee and the agencies. The manual will contain information on the process for self-study by the agency, the visit with the agency, and the report format for the *agency review* committee. The format will outline the opportunities for dialogue between the *agency review* committee and the agency in preparation of the final report. The manual will provide guidance for the whole *agency review* committee on its organization and the role of individual members in the review process.

“STANDARDS

“A. Church Relatedness

“1. Each agency was created by the church, and exists to serve and support the church’s mission in a particular area. The agency is expected to have the expertise necessary to accomplish the work it has been assigned, and is also expected to exhibit a constant awareness of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).

“2. The basic work, *programs, and services* of the agency ~~should~~ demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly. The agency should ~~also~~ exhibit leadership in guiding the church in its engagement with the work and resources in which the agency acts as the church’s expert.

~~“3. The agency should exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity.~~

“4. 3. When appropriate, printed materials of the agency ~~should~~ clearly identify the agency as a part of the PC(USA).

~~“5. 4. The agency honors the policy statements of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and the Constitution.~~

“6. 5. The agency includes in its administrative officers, and in *its governing board* in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, ~~its governing board~~, persons who understand and respect the relationship with the PC(USA).

“7. 6. The agency provides responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly.

“B. Policies and ~~Practie~~ Program Effectiveness

“1. The agency understands that its responsibility is to manage its assets for the good of the whole of the PC(USA).

“2. The governing board is properly constituted, clearly identified, and fully conversant with (a) the mission of the agency, (b) the current overall condition of the agency, (c) its specific responsibilities as directors, (d) the legal relationship of the agency to the church, and (e) its relationship to the president or chief officer.

“3. The agency exhibits full compliance with all appropriate external regulatory and accrediting agencies[, including consultation and review with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding principles of participation and representation in the employment of personnel, and conformity with ‘A Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action’ or subsequent guidelines].

“4. An annual audit of the financial affairs of the agency is conducted by qualified and disinterested parties.

“5. The governing board of the agency has a process for the selection and review of its chief officer or president.

“6. *The president or chief officer and the governing board have policies and procedures by which they assure that the agency staff hold the necessary and appropriate skills, licenses, and experience to make it reasonable to anticipate that they can perform their work satisfactorily and a functioning policy with expectations of staff development.*

“~~6. 7.~~ The agency has in place and operating a long-range and short-range planning process and a process for measuring its delivery of services and of monitoring the effectiveness of those services with its constituencies.

“C. Program Effectiveness

“~~1. The programs and services of the agency are consistent with its assembly mandate.~~

“~~2. The agency has a regular process for measuring its delivery of services and monitoring the effectiveness of those services with its constituencies.~~

“~~3. The president or chief officer and the governing board have policies and procedures by which they assure that the agency staff hold the necessary and appropriate skills, licenses, and experience to make it reasonable to anticipate that they can perform their work satisfactorily.~~

“~~4. The agency has a functioning policy and expectations of staff development.~~

“~~5. 8.~~ The agency exhibits an effective strategy for producing high-quality communication with its constituencies.

“~~6. 9.~~ The agency is currently structured to face effectively the challenges of the future and demonstrates appropriate attention to current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission.

“C. Collaboration

“1. *The agency presses beyond communication and consultation to genuine collaboration and, where appropriate and/or directed by General Assembly, shares agendas and work with other agencies toward fulfillment of shared goals.*

“2. *The agency maintains open and regular communication with, and provides timely and appropriate access to information to, other agencies and PC(USA) constituencies, including middle governing bodies.*

“3. *The agency has conducted an evaluation of the potential gains and risks associated with collaborative endeavors with other agencies whenever new programs are initiated.*

“4. *The agency seeks pragmatic solutions to operational challenges by relying on the assets, resources, and strengths of other agencies.”*

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral: *2008 Referral: Item 08-23, Recommendation 1. That CO-GA Evaluate the “Standards for Review” Before the Next Cycle of Review Commences (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 25, 728).*

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-24

Comment on Item 03-24—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

In the review of agencies, the submission, for regular review and accountability, of implementation plans for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action have been missing. This is an already assigned, but often neglected function that each entity has. It makes sense to include it in the review process to assure it happens in an efficient manner.

The GACOR respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 03-24, with the following two additional amendments to the text: [Text to be added is in italic.]

1. Under the section “The Role of the Committee”:

“The General Assembly Nominating Committee will nominate to each meeting of the General Assembly for election two committees and moderators for each committee to review the work of one of the agencies of the General Assembly based on a six-year schedule. The agency review committee’s responsibility is to provide an objective report to the General Assembly as to the agency’s compliance to the standards of review. The agency review committee may provide advice on areas of program improvement. The agency review committee’s role will be to examine the agency’s church relations, its policies and practice, history of collaboration with other agencies, and its program effectiveness, *and to consult with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding representation of employees.* The agency review committee will review the agency’s self-study report and other documents...[rest of the paragraph remains the same].

2. Under “Standards,” Section “B. Policies and Program Effectiveness

“3. The agency exhibits full compliance with all appropriate external regulatory and accrediting agencies, *including consultation and review with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding principles of participation and representation in the employment of personnel, and conformity with “A Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action” or subsequent guidelines.*”

Rationale

According to the *Book of Order*, G-9.0105e.:

The committee on representation shall advise the governing body on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of participation and representation (G-4.0403), and in conformity with a churchwide plan for equal employment opportunity (G-13.0201b)

By amending the recommendation to include these two additions, the review standards will be brought into compliance with the current *Book of Order*. In light of the pattern of restructuring and its impact on these capacities, we remain concerned about the accountability of each entity with regard to these employment practices. In May 2010, there was a reduction in staff of the Human Resources department of the General Assembly Mission Council. The effects of the elimination of these positions on the organizational capacity have yet to be understood, but the Human Resources Department of the General Assembly Mission Council does provide functions to other entities. The GACOR is concerned about the effect on AA/EEO issues and how these functions will be provided. Assuring accountability by reflecting it in the review by the General Assembly, reminds all involved of their roles and responsibilities.

The GACOR wishes to direct the attention of the assembly to a similar action before the assembly, Item 11-09 proposed by the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The methods suggested with regard to the cultural proficiency review are sound and may suggest a model for dealing with the consultation process with COR regarding each entity’s implementation plan and action steps in response to their constitutional responsibilities and “A Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.”

Item 03-25

Joint COGA/GAC Budget Proposals

[The assembly approved Item 03-25, Recommendation 1. See pp. 56, 78.]

1. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) recommend that the 219th General Assembly (2010) incorporate into the *Minutes* the 2008 and 2009 Per Capita Apportionment Budget and Statement of Activities, and the Comparative Statement of Financial Position at December 31, 2009 (see attachment A, p. 247).

[The assembly approved Item 03-25, Recommendation 2, with amendment. See pp. 56, 76, 78.]

2. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council approve and recommend that the 219th General Assembly (2010):

- a. approve the proposed 2011 expenditure budget totaling [~~\$13,719,940~~] [\$14,101,168] and a proposed 2012 expenditure budget totaling [~~\$14,047,690~~] [\$14,144,568];

[(1) That the Presbyterian Historical Society develop a five-year plan to reduce their annual per capita budget by 10 percent.]

b. approve that \$1,428,241 be designated from the 2011 per capita budget (about half the cost of the General Assembly meeting), and be reserved for use in the year of the General Assembly meeting (2012) (see attachment B, pp. 248–49);

c. approve the proposed revised 2010 expenditure budget totaling [~~\$13,483,826~~] **[\$13,625,101]** (which includes half the cost of General Assembly \$1,273,120 carried over from 2009).

[The assembly approved Item 03-25, Recommendation 3, with amendment. See pp. 56, 76, 78.]

3. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council approve and recommend that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve an increase in the per capita apportionment rate from \$6.15 to [~~\$6.35~~] **[\$6.50] per active member for 2011, and from \$6.35 to [~~\$6.55~~] **[\$6.63]** for 2012.**

Rationale

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) continue to be grateful to the whole church for its faithfulness in meeting per capita obligations (about 95 percent collection rate for 2008). We believe these funds have enabled the General Assembly to carry out its core ecclesial functions so that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can carry out its ministry in faithfulness to Scripture and the PC(USA) Constitution.

Building the per capita budgets for 2011 and 2012 was both a challenge and an opportunity, since the total revenue level is impacted by variables as diverse as stock market fluctuations, value of assets held, levels of membership loss, the ability of presbyteries to fully meet their per capita obligations, as well as the staff's commitment to be faithful stewards in spite of less available resources.

In order to hold to a minimal increase in the per capita rate, hard choices had to be made relative to reductions in the overall budget, personnel reductions, and withholding salary increases to staff in 2010. Moreover, the OGA reduced the previously approved budget for 2010 by almost \$870,000, which includes a total reduction of about \$180,000 by GAMC (Total Net Reduction \$608,179).

As a result, we are able to propose a per capita budget for 2011–12 that is slightly less than the total budgets previously approved for 2009–10. Consequently, we are proposing an increase of 20 cents (3.3 percent) in the per capita rate in 2011 and 20 cents (3.2 percent) in 2012. The details behind these calculations can be found on the attached sheets.

To balance the budget, we have included the planned use of reserves accumulated from prior year income in 2010, 2011, and 2012, in the amounts of \$119,621, \$245,619, and \$483,252 respectively. Such use of prior income from available funds (in excess of the General Assembly mandated minimum reserve of 30 percent of current budget), minimizes the increase necessary to the per capita apportionment rate. We believe that such restraint in the increase of the per capita rate and the expenditure level are necessary for the well being of the church and the fiscal integrity of the per capita budget. We would encourage a similar spirit of restraint by commissioners as other proposals are considered that might have financial implications at the 219th General Assembly (2010).

[The assembly approved Item 03-25, Recommendation 4. See pp. 56, 78.]

4. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council recommend that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the attached allocation of designated funds for COGA and GAMC task forces totaling \$1,641,700 for 2010, \$1,870,300 for 2011, and \$1,708,370 for 2012 for revenue, and the following for expenses: \$1,618,843 for 2010, \$1,864,830 for 2011, and \$1,688,799 for 2012.

Rationale

The allocation of designated funds are reserved for specified expenditures planned to augment the per capita budget, so that steep increases to the per capita apportionment rate may be minimized. These include the General Assembly session, Vocation resources and exams, the production and distribution of OGA publications, part of the Presbyterian Historical Society operations, revenue and expense for conducting some conferences, and GAMC task forces. The sources of these funds are mostly from independently generated revenue, including gifts and endowments. The beginning balances indicated are a result of the unused carryover from the previous year reserved for use in subsequent year (see attachment C, p. 251).

Item 03-26

[The assembly approved Item 03-26 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 56, 79.]

[Comment: The General Assembly strongly recommends that prior to vote on this amendment, presbyteries take time to educate the presbytery on the reasons for and value of a sexual misconduct policy. Resources are available on the PC(USA) Website.]

Joint COGA/GAMC Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures Recommendation

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council recommend that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

1. Approve the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures, as shown below, for employees and committee members of the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council.

2. **[Strongly] [U] [u]rge all [employees] [employers] of governing bodies and related entities to update or establish policies, procedures, and practices related to sexual misconduct using the guidelines set out in the following Sexual Misconduct Manual, published by the Office of the General Assembly.**

[3. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

[Insert a new paragraph G-9.0404e to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

["e. All governing bodies shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy".]

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES

I. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (hereinafter referred to as PC(USA)) that all church members, church officers, nonmember employees, and volunteers of congregations, governing bodies, and entities of the church are to maintain the integrity of the ministerial, employment, and professional relationship at all times. Persons who engage in sexual misconduct are in violation of the principles set forth in Scripture, and also of the ministerial, pastoral, employment, and professional relationship. It is never permissible or acceptable for a church member, officer, employee, or volunteer to engage in sexual misconduct.

Distribution

Copies of this policy and its procedures shall be made available to all governing body and entity offices. It is intended as guidance for churches, middle governing bodies, and related entities and if properly implemented by them can be used by church members, church officers, employees, and volunteers. This is a policy of the General Assembly of the PC(USA), which governs and protects employees of the General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly. This policy and its procedures should be made available to persons who accuse others of misconduct, including those who are or claim to be victims of sexual misconduct and their families. Other governing bodies of the PC(USA) may use this policy as a guide to develop their own policies and procedures related to sexual misconduct.

II. Standards of Conduct

... As [God] who called you is holy,
be holy yourselves in all your conduct;
... Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, ...
not under compulsion but willingly, ...
not for sordid gain but eagerly. ...
not lord it over those in your charge,
but be examples to the flock.
... You know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.
1 Pet. 1:15; 5:2-3; Jas. 3:1, *NRSV*

The ethical conduct of all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ is of vital importance to the church because through these representatives an understanding of God and the gospel's good news is conveyed. "Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world" (*Book of Order*, G-6.0106a).

The basic principles of conduct guiding this policy are as follows:

1. Sexual misconduct is a violation of the role of pastors, employees, volunteers, counselors, supervisors, teachers, and advisors of any kind who are called upon to exercise integrity, sensitivity, and caring in a trust relationship. It breaks the covenant to act in the best interests of parishioners, clients, co-workers, and students.

2. Sexual misconduct is a misuse of authority and power that breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relation to gain advantage over another for personal pleasure in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. If the parishioner, student, client, or employee initiates or invites sexual content in the relationship, it is the pastor's, counselor's, officer's, or supervisor's responsibility to maintain the appropriate role and prohibit a sexual relationship.

3. Sexual misconduct takes advantage of the vulnerability of persons who are less powerful to act for their own welfare, including children. It is antithetical to the gospel call to work as God's servant in the struggle to bring wholeness to a broken world. It violates the mandate to protect the vulnerable from harm.

Definitions

Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include:

1. *Child sexual abuse*; including, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the sexual abuse definition of a child is anyone under age eighteen.

2. *Sexual abuse* as defined in the *Book of Order*: "Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of office or position" (*Book of Order*, D-10.0401c).

3. *Sexual harassment*; defined for this policy is as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when

a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or their continued status in an institution;

b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual;

c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or

d. an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or children.

4. *Rape* or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.

5. *Sexual conduct* (such as offensive, obsessive or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling) *that is injurious* to the physical or emotional health of another.

6. *Sexual Malfeasance*; as defined by the broken trust resulting from sexual activities within a professional ministerial relationship that results in misuse of office or position arising from the professional ministerial relationship.

7. *Misuse of technology*; use of technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, including texting or emailing suggestive messages and images to persons with whom one has a ministerial relationship. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property. When this includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry.

III. Church Response to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

A. *Principles*

In responding to allegations of sexual misconduct, members, officers, and employees of the church should seek healing and assure the protection of all persons. Where possible, the privacy of persons should be respected and confidentiality of communications should be maintained.

In responding to allegations of sexual misconduct, members, officers, and employees of the church should seek to uphold the dignity of all persons involved, including persons who are alleging harm, persons who are accused of sexual misconduct, and the families and communities of each.

The PC(USA) has jurisdiction over its members, officers, and employees such that if a member, officer, or employee is alleged to have committed an offense against Scripture or the PC(USA) Constitution, the church has the duty to inquire into the allegations and, if the allegations are proven, to correct the behavior of the member, officer, or employee and ensure the safety of others in the community. Allegations of sexual misconduct are always considered allegations of offense against Scripture or the PC(USA) Constitution that trigger the disciplinary processes of the PC(USA) set forth in the *Book of Order*. In the case of an active non-member who is employed or volunteers with the church, the individual will be covered by the procedures of the written personnel policies of the governing body or entity.

If the person accused of sexual misconduct is no longer a member, officer, or employee of the PC(USA), but the conduct occurred while the person was acting on behalf of the PC(USA), the church does not have jurisdiction to correct the behavior, but it does have a duty to hear the allegations of offense and to take measures to prevent future occurrences of harm. The governing body may appoint an administrative committee or commission to hear the allegations of sexual misconduct. The governing body may also take measures to prevent future occurrences of harm through education and policy.

B. *Reporting Requirements*

1. *Reporting Sexual Misconduct*

A person needing to report that a member, officer, employee, or volunteer of the PC(USA) has committed sexual misconduct is encouraged to seek guidance from a PC(USA) minister or elder regarding filing the report.

Congregation: If the person who is accused of committing sexual misconduct is a member, elder, deacon, volunteer, or employee of a congregation, the report of allegations should be made to the pastor, the clerk of session, or the chair of the personnel committee. If the accused is a member or officer of the church, the church will respond by using the procedures set forth in the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If the accused is a nonmember employee or volunteer, the church will respond by using procedures set forth by the session of the congregation.

Presbytery: If the person who is accused of committing sexual misconduct is a minister member, the report of allegations should be made to the stated clerk of the presbytery. If the report of allegations is placed in writing, the presbytery will respond by using the procedures set forth in the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If the person who is accused of committing sexual misconduct is a volunteer or nonmember employee of the presbytery, the report of allegations may be made to any of the staff or volunteers of the presbytery. The presbytery will respond by using procedures set forth by policy or bylaws of the presbytery.

Higher Governing Body or Entity of the General Assembly: If the person who is accused of committing sexual misconduct is an employee or volunteer of the higher governing body or entity, contact the governing body or entity directly for the appropriate person to receive the report of allegations. The report of allegations may be made to any person with supervising capacity. The entity will respond by using procedures set forth by policy or bylaws of the entity.

2. *Receiving Reports of Sexual Misconduct*

Reports of allegations of sexual misconduct will occur in a variety of ways.

Because a governing body or entity cannot control to whom the victim of sexual misconduct will speak first, it is important that officers, employees, and persons highly visible to church members and visitors understand how reports of incidents are channeled to the proper person. The allegations may come from persons who have or who do not have a formal relationship with the PC(USA) and may be made to a variety of officers or leaders within the PC(USA). It is the duty of these officers to see that any allegation of sexual misconduct is reported appropriately keeping in mind the mandatory reporting requirements for allegations of child abuse.

Reports of allegations of sexual misconduct should never be taken lightly or disregarded and allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the victim, the accused, and the church. Reports of allegations should be dealt with as matters of highest confidentiality, both before and after they have been submitted to appropriate authorities as outlined below.

The first person to learn of an incident of sexual misconduct should not undertake an inquiry alone or question either the victim or the accused unless the incident is divulged in the process of pastoral care, counseling, or a therapy session. If the victim is hesitant to talk to “higher authorities,” the person who has received the initial report has a special pastoral responsibility to build trust and willingness to speak with the accuser, lest the church be unable to respond because no one is able to give firsthand information.

The person receiving the initial report of allegations of sexual misconduct shall analyze the relationship of the person accused of sexual misconduct with the PC(USA) and shall make sure that the allegations of offense are filed with the governing body with jurisdiction over the person accused. This may be done by the person alleging harm or by any member of the PC(USA).

If the report is made orally, the person receiving the report of allegations should request that the person making the report of allegations place it in writing. A report of allegations of sexual misconduct in writing from a member of the PC(USA) alleging another member or officer of the PC(USA) committed an offense must be acted on according to the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If a clerk or stated clerk receives a report of allegations in writing from a nonmember of the PC(USA) alleging another member or officer of the PC(USA) committed sexual misconduct, the report also should be acted on according to the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If the person who makes the report is unwilling or unable to place it in writing, any member of the PC(USA) may make the written statement that will automatically trigger the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*.

3. *Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse*

a. *Elders and Deacons*

All elders and deacons are required to report knowledge of child abuse to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities according to the *Book of Order*. The *Book of Order* requires that

- “An elder shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge, gained in the course of service to the church, of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of privileged communication; or (2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse” (G-6.0304b).

- “A deacon shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge, gained in the course of service to the church, of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of privileged communication; or (2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse” (G-6.0402b).

b. *Certified Christian Educators*

All certified Christian educators are required to report knowledge of child abuse to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities according to the *Book of Order*. The *Book of Order* requires that

Certified Christian educators [and certified associate Christian educators] shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge gained in the course of service to the church, of harm, or risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of privileged communication; or (2) he or she reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse (G-14.0732).

c. *Ministers*

All ministers of Word and Sacrament are required to report knowledge of child abuse to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities according to the *Book of Order*. The *Book of Order* requires that:

“A minister of the Word and Sacrament shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-6.0204a; or (2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse” (G-6.0204b).

All persons covered by this policy have an additional duty to report knowledge of child sexual abuse to the employing entity, supervisor, or governing body representative. All persons should be informed of and must comply with state and local laws regarding incidents of actual or suspected child sexual abuse. These reports should be made within a reasonable time of receiving the information.

These provisions of the *Book of Order* attempt to balance conflicting moral duties for officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

For ministers of the Word and Sacrament, the provision strives to balance the duty to protect children from future harm with the duty of a minister to hold in confidence any information revealed to them during the exercise of pastoral care in any ministry setting as defined in G-6.0204a in the *Book of Order*.

For elders, deacons, and certified Christian educators, the provisions strive to balance the duty of an officer of the church to protect children from harm and any secular duty the officer may have to hold in confidence any information revealed as a result of a secular relationship such as attorney/client, counselor/client, or physician/patient. The secular duties will be a function of secular law and may vary from state to state.

C. *Responding*

The appropriate governing body or entity response will vary according to the relationship of the PC(USA) with the person who is accused of sexual misconduct. Church members and officers are subject to inquiry and discipline (censure and

correction) under the *Book of Order*. Non church member employees and volunteers are subject to oversight and correction by the governing body or entity that employs them.

1. *Accused Covered by Book of Order*

When an allegation of offense of sexual misconduct has been received by the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery, the clerk of the governing body will report to the governing body that an offense has been alleged and that the governing body will proceed according to the procedures set forth in the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. The governing body should appoint an investigating committee to inquire into the allegations. The investigating committee must promptly begin its inquiry into the allegations. Delay may cause further harm to the victim and/or the accused.

Governing bodies and entities must cooperate with civil authorities in an investigation of child sexual abuse or other criminal sexual misconduct. Church disciplinary proceedings cannot interfere with a criminal investigation by civil authorities and may have to be suspended until these are completed.

The session has original jurisdiction in disciplinary cases involving members, elders, and deacons of the church, each congregation having jurisdiction only over its own members.

A presbytery has original jurisdiction in disciplinary cases involving ministers of Word and Sacrament. A presbytery may dissolve a pastoral relationship when the "Word imperatively demands it" (G-11.0103o). However, a presbytery may only place a minister on administrative leave when allegations of child abuse have been received and the presbytery has followed the *Book of Order* procedures to conduct its risk evaluation to determine whether or not a minister member accused of child abuse should be placed on administrative leave (D-10.0106). It is recommended that the permanent judicial commission (PJC) members who will conduct this risk evaluation based upon the allegations and a hearing should also take into account secular legal advice.

When a church officer renounces jurisdiction, the clerk or stated clerk shall report the renunciation at the next meeting of the governing body and shall record the renunciation in the minutes of the governing body. The status of any pending charges may be shared with the governing body at that time.

2. *Accused Not Covered by Book of Order*

When a governing body or entity of the General Assembly receives an accusation of offense of sexual misconduct against a nonmember employee or volunteer, the procedural response of the governing body or entity will be guided by the written personnel policies of the governing body or entity. Usually the governing body or entity will have a personnel committee that will be responsible for the inquiry. If a governing body does not have a personnel committee, it may appoint either a committee or administrative commission for the review of the allegation.

The committee or commission that will respond to the allegation of offense of sexual misconduct will do the following:

- a. Determine whether or not the allegation gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of sexual misconduct by the accused.
- b. If so, gather additional information necessary to make a decision about correcting the behavior.
- c. Determine any remedies, including limiting ministry, suspension, or termination necessary and advisable under the circumstances. If the accused is a member of another denomination, that denomination will be notified of the allegations and the response.
- d. Inform the victim and the accused of the remedy.
- e. In all cases, the personnel committee shall prepare a written report, which shall be included in the accused's permanent personnel file. The accused shall be allowed to attach any written statements to said documents, also for permanent inclusion in the permanent file.

All procedures shall follow the guidelines set forth by the governing body, employing agency, or entity of the General Assembly.

3. *Governing Body or Entity Record Keeping*

The governing body or entity should keep detailed records of its actions and minutes of its deliberations and its conversations with the accuser, the accused, and other parties involved, correspondence, and copies of the reports received from committees or commissions. Such records will be kept confidential as far as possible. In Case # 208-6, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) interpreted the Rules of Discipline to say that a governing body or entity may share the contents of inquiry reports with other governing bodies or entities of the PC(USA) when necessary. The clerk of the governing body or director of the entity will maintain the records while the inquiry is in process.

IV. Prevention and Risk Management

A. *Implementation*

The General Assembly urges all governing bodies and related entities including colleges, universities, and theological institutions, to establish policies and procedures that make it a violation of the employer's work rules to engage in sexual misconduct and that encourage reporting of sexual misconduct. Governing bodies and entities are strongly encouraged to take appropriate steps to inform members, employees, volunteers, and students of the standards of conduct and the procedures for effective response when receiving a report of sexual misconduct.

B. *Liability and Insurance*

A governing body or entity can be held liable for harm caused by sexual misconduct of an officer, minister, or employee based on a number of legal theories. Governing bodies and entities should take such potential liability into consideration when establishing hiring and supervisory practices.

Governing bodies and entities should regularly inform their liability insurance carriers of the activities and programs they operate or sponsor and of the duties and responsibilities of officers, employees, and volunteers. The standard insurance policy should usually be enhanced by endorsements to cover specific exposures such as camps, day-care operations, shelters, or other outreach programs.

It is also recommended that governing bodies and entities obtain an endorsement to their general liability insurance policy specifically covering sexual abuse and molestation. Such coverage may provide for legal defense expenses and judgments in civil suits brought against the governing body or entity, its officers, directors, or employees.

C. *Employment Practices*1. *Record Keeping*

Accurate record keeping is an essential part of hiring and supervision practices of churches, middle governing bodies, and related entities. Every governing body and entity should maintain a personnel file on every employee, including ministers. The file should contain the application for employment, any employment questionnaires, background checks, references responses, and all other documents related to an employee's employment, except records that may be required, by law, to be kept in separate files.

2. *Prescreening Applicants*

Governing bodies and entities are urged to establish thorough and consistent hiring practices. If an applicant is unknown to the employer, the employer should confirm the applicant's identity by requiring photographic identification such as a driver's license. The governing body should perform a background check, including a national criminal background check, on all applicants that may have interaction with children and youth.

Part of pre-employment screening should include specific questions related to discovering previous complaints of sexual misconduct. See Appendix B: Sample Exhibit E.

3. *References*

The employing governing body or entity is responsible for contacting references for prospective ministers, employees, or volunteers. A written record of conversations or correspondence with references should be kept in the minister or employee's personnel file. (See Appendix B: Sample Exhibit B for a sample reference form.)

In dealing with ministers when transferring from one position to another, the governing body could delegate responsibility for previous employer reference checks to the synod executive, executive presbyter, or to the authorized persons who would report to the committee on ministry or committee on preparation for ministry.

The person within the governing body or entity authorized to give a reference is obligated to give truthful information regarding allegations, inquiries, and administrative or disciplinary action related to sexual misconduct of the applicant.

If false or misleading information is given by the applicant, or relevant information is withheld, the applicant should be eliminated from consideration.

Applicants should be informed of negative comments regarding sexual misconduct and shall be given an opportunity to submit additional references or to give other evidence to correct or respond to harmful information obtained from a reference.

V. Educating and Training—Awareness

Since the issue of sexual misconduct has become a more present reality, there is an emerging need to educate and train a wide variety of persons. Persons needing this specific education include: ministers; volunteers; officers; nonprofessional and professional staff; ministerial candidates; professionals who will be working with this issue within the denomination; members of the congregation; and governing body staff including supervisors, employees, and stated clerks.

Education for these persons and groups will be different on a group-by-group basis. A primary requirement for all persons should be common knowledge regarding professional and ministerial boundaries, the General Assembly Sexual Misconduct Policy, and their own specific governing body or entity policy.

Theological institutions should include material in their existing curriculum on sexual ethics including the appropriate use of ministerial power, the General Assembly policy and its procedures on sexual misconduct, and other resources. It is further urged that the appropriate presbytery committee(s) include training for inquirers, candidates, newly ordained pastors, and new pastors to their presbyteries regarding sexual misconduct, especially including education on their specific policy and procedures.

Much of a congregation's education currently happens in response to an actual case of sexual misconduct. However, it is recommended that the congregation be as proactive in this area as possible offering education in a variety of settings. There are already numerous resource materials available that could be adapted to a congregation's setting.

Employing entities need to make sure all employees are well acquainted with, understand, and abide by their policy and procedures. Employing entities should offer additional training and resources, such as: a workshop during staff meeting; luncheon discussion group; articles and books made available; etc.

Any professional (therapists, attorneys, advocates, mediators, arbitrators) used by a governing body should have access to experts qualified in the field of sexual misconduct if they themselves are not.

Appendix A Definitions

Accused is the term used to represent the person against whom a claim of sexual misconduct is made.

Accuser is a term used to represent the person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy. The accuser may or may not have been the victim of the alleged sexual misconduct. A person such as a family member, friend, or colleague may be the accuser.

Church when spelled with the initial capitalized refers to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Church when spelled with the initial in lowercase refers to local churches. The word congregation is used loosely for members and participants.

Employee is the comprehensive term used to cover individuals who are hired or called to work for the Church for salary or wages.

Entity is the term used to refer to any program or office managed by a board, committee, council, or other body whose membership is elected by a governing body.

Governing Body is a representative body composed of elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament: sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. A governing body may establish entities such as day-care centers, conference centers, camps, or homes for the aged. A governing body may have both church members and nonmembers as employees.

Inquiry is the term used in the Rules of Discipline to determine whether charges should be filed based upon allegations of an offense received by a governing body. See *Book of Order*, D-10.0000.

Mandated Reporter is described by some states' laws as a person who is required to report any and all suspected incidents of child abuse, including child sexual abuse that come to their attention. State laws vary from defining "all persons having knowledge" as mandated reporters to specifying very limited lists of professions whose members are required to report.

Persons Covered by this policy includes church members, church officers, ministers, and nonmembers who are employees or volunteers of the General Assembly of the PC(USA). All other governing bodies or entities of the General Assembly are urged to create a sexual misconduct policy using the guidelines set out in this policy.

Response is the action taken by the governing body or entity when a report of sexual misconduct is received. It may include (1) inquiry into facts and circumstances, (2) possible disciplinary action (administrative or judicial or both), (3) pastoral care for victims and their families and others, and (4) pastoral care and rehabilitation for the accused and care for their families.

Secular Authorities are the governmental bodies, whether city, county, state, or federal, who are given the responsibility to investigate, criminally prosecute, and/or bring civil charges against individuals accused of sexual crimes or offenses against adults and children.

Secular Law is the body of municipal, state, and federal laws and is often referred to collectively as civil and criminal law. Prohibited behavior addressed by this policy may result in criminal and/or civil charges filed under secular law.

Victim is a person claiming to have been harmed and/or abused by a person covered under this policy.

Volunteer is the term used for those who provide services for the General Assembly of the PC(USA). Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups. For purposes of this policy, volunteers are treated the same as employees.

Appendix B

Employment Procedures—With Forms

Each “Employing Entity” should have already established and implemented entity personnel policies that include employment procedures for the search, selection, and call of entity staff. The employment procedures should spell out the process to be followed during the election of chief administrative officers and other staff, the appointment of exempt and nonexempt staff, and the call of ministers of the Word and Sacrament, chief administrative officers, and elected staff. These employment procedures should also include candidate/applicant reference checks prior to employment. Employing entity personnel policies should contain a clearly defined grievance process, a periodic performance review process, and a section that prohibits sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment). These provisions should be applicable to all full-time, part-time, temporary, and interim staff. The personnel policies should also provide for confidential communication channels whereby staff members can voice concerns or apprehensions without fear of retribution.

Churchwide and public advertisement of vacant positions as a part of an employing entity’s search procedures to fill vacant positions is required of General Assembly entities and related bodies and is recommended as a guideline for governing bodies by the churchwide personnel policies as well as the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment and Affirmative Action. In support of this policy and its procedures on sexual misconduct, all vacant positions of religious leadership forwarded to publications for advertisement, distributed to units of the church, as well as posted on local bulletin boards, will include the following statement: “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an equal opportunity employer. In addition the church has a strong policy opposing sexual harassment or abuse. References and records will be checked during the employment process.”

This statement will also be included in all information distributed through the Personnel Referral Services of the Office of Vocation.

The following forms are included in this appendix: Exhibit A, Employee Questionnaire; and Exhibit B, Confidential Employee References. These two forms will be used by General Assembly entities and institutions, and are recommended for use by all other employing units of the church. Exhibit C, a form for Implementing Policy of Sexual Misconduct, is to be used by each employing entity as it distributes its sexual misconduct policy to employees and others. Exhibit D, Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct, is for gathering basic information to be passed along to the appropriate person or group handling sexual misconduct cases for a unit or other entity.

As required by acceptable personnel procedures, an employee handbook should be written, published, and distributed to each employee of church employing entities. All existing personnel policies and employee handbooks should be updated to include a sexual misconduct policy.

It is advisable to seek legal advice as other governing bodies, related bodies, and entities develop and publish policy and procedures on sexual misconduct using this General Assembly policy as a guide.

All forms should be checked for compliance with state laws.

Sample Exhibits and Forms for Implementation

Sample Exhibit A

This is a sample employment questionnaire. In addition to the usual questions one finds on an employment questionnaire, the writing team has added certifications and releases that focus on past incidents of sexual misconduct. All entities are urged to have this or any substitute form they design examined by their legal counsel before using it.

Sample Employment Questionnaire

Name: _____

Last First Middle

Address: _____

Street

City State Zip

Business Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Have you ever been known by any other name? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please provide other name(s): _____

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Employment Record (List current and previous employers for the last five years)

Employed by: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Supervisor: ___ Phone: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Employed from _____ (month/year) to _____ (month/year)

Why did you leave? _____

Employed by: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Supervisor: ___ Phone: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Employed from _____ (month/year) to _____ (month/year)

Why did you leave? _____

Employed by: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Supervisor: ___ Phone: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Employed from _____ (month/year) to _____ (month/year)

Why did you leave? _____

I certify that (a) no civil, criminal, ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained or is pending against me for sexual misconduct; (b) I have never resigned or been terminated from a position for reasons related to sexual misconduct.

Signature

Date

Note: If you are unable to make the above certification you may instead give in the space provided a description of the complaint, termination, or the outcome of the situation and any explanatory comments you care to add.

Release

The information contained in this questionnaire is accurate to the best of my knowledge and may be verified by the employing entity. I hereby authorize (*Name of Employing Entity*) to make any and all contacts necessary to verify my prior employment history, and to inquire concerning any criminal records or any judicial proceedings involving me as a defendant. By means of this release I also authorize any previous employer and any law enforcement agencies or judicial authorities to release any and all requested relevant information to the _____ (Name of Employing Entity).

I have read this release and understand fully that the information obtained may be used to deny me employment or any other type of position from the employing entity. I also agree that I will hold harmless the employing entity or judicial authority from any and all claims, liabilities, and cause of action for the legitimate release or use of any information.

Signature _____

Witness _____

Witness _____

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Sample Exhibit B

This is a sample form that may be used to keep a record of all face-to-face or telephone reference checks. Additions that have to do with sexual misconduct or child abuse may be needed by the entity to justify to a court of law that they have done reasonable and prudent screening before hiring a person for a position within that entity.

Confidential Employment Reference

1. Name of applicant: _____

2. Reference or church contacted (if a church, identify both the church and person contacted):

3. Date and time of contact: _____

4. Person contacting the reference or church: _____

5. Method of contact (phone, letter, personal conversation): _____

6. Summary of conversation (summarize the reference’s remarks concerning the applicant’s fitness and suitability for the position, any convictions for or actions pending related to sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or child abuse):

Name _____ Title _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Sample Exhibit C

This is a sample designed to implement the sexual misconduct policy. It is necessary that all employees acknowledge being in receipt of the sexual misconduct policy. The policy provides protection and empowerment for the employee.

Form for Implementing Policy of Sexual Misconduct Acknowledgement of Receipt

I hereby acknowledge that I received on _____ (date), a copy of the “Policy and Its Procedures on Sexual Misconduct of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” dated that I have read the policy, understand its meaning, and agree to conduct myself in accordance with the policy.

Signature _____

A similar acknowledgement should be signed at the time amendments to the policy are made and distributed.

Sample Exhibit D

This exhibit provides entities with a sample Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct. It provides space for the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of victims, the accused, possible witnesses, and others involved. It also provides space for a description of the offending behavior as well as other pertinent information. This form or a revision of it should be filed with the appropriate supervisor, office, or administrator of an entity who is required to file this with the constituting authority or its response coordination team. (See section on Subsequent Reporting in this policy and its procedures.)

Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct

Reported by: _____

Name _____

Title _____

Address _____

City, State, and Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Date of Report: _____

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Person suspected of misconduct:

Name _____

Title _____

Address _____

City, State, and Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Other person(s) involved (witness or victims):

Name _____ Title _____

Age _____ Sex _____

Address _____

City, State, and Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct

Describe incident(s) of suspected sexual misconduct, including date(s), time(s), and location(s):

Identify eyewitnesses to the incident, including names, addresses, and telephone numbers, where available:

Sample Exhibit E

Employment Questions to Ask of Potential Employees

Governing bodies and entities should ask persons seeking ministerial calls or employment in non-ordained positions questions such as:

1. Has a civil, criminal, or ecclesiastical complaint ever been sustained against you involving sexual misconduct by you?
2. Have you ever resigned or been terminated from a position for reasons relating to allegations of sexual misconduct by you?
3. If so, indicate the date, nature, and place of these allegations, and the name, address, and telephone number of your employer at that time.
4. Have you been required to receive professional treatment, physical or psychological, for reasons related to sexual misconduct to you?
5. If so, please give a short description of the treatment including the date, nature of treatment, place, and name, address, and telephone number of the treating physician or other professional.

A sample employment questionnaire is attached as Exhibit A for adaptation by governing bodies and entities. The questions included in this sample may be integrated into a standard employment questionnaire along with other necessary questions.

Appendix C

Meeting the Needs of All Involved

In cases of sexual misconduct there are needs that have to be met for the good of all persons, groups, and entities. To ensure that the governing body is ready to meet the variety of needs present, an independent response coordination team may be named. This team will not investigate the allegation or in any way function as an investigating committee for disciplining members or officers, but should confine itself to coordinating a process that will meet the specific needs of victims and their families (if any), the accused and family (if any), employing entities, congregations, and governing bodies:

A. *The Needs of the Victim*

The governing body, employing entity, and response coordination team should assure that adequate treatment and care are available for alleged victims of sexual misconduct and their families. Sometimes, the victim or family is so angry and alienated from the church, that

offers of help may be perceived as insincere or as attempts of a cover-up. If the victim or family at first refuses, the church should continue to offer help. Above all the church should not act in a self-protective manner by ignoring the victim and their families.

The extent of the damage to the victims of sexual misconduct will vary from person to person, and is influenced by such factors as the degree or severity of abuse, the age and emotional condition of the victim, human dynamics, and the importance of one's religious faith. The governing body, entity, and response coordination team is to assume in all cases that the victim has been wounded by the experience.

Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, mistrust, lowered self-esteem, unworthiness, and feelings of alienation from God, self, the religious community, and family are frequent injuries suffered by victims. It is important for the response coordination team to be sensitive to the victim's pain and need for healing, and to act by making appropriate pastoral care available.

The following are some of the needs of the victim:

1. To be heard and taken seriously. From the time that the victim is first able to indicate that sexual misconduct has occurred, that person should receive immediate attention and serious consideration from all church representatives.
2. To receive pastoral and therapeutic support. The victim may require spiritual and professional assistance as a result of sexual misconduct. The response coordination team should offer to help arrange for such support from a pastor and therapist, if the victim desires. Discussions with such people would be confidential, privileged conversations.
3. To be informed about church process and progress with regard to the accusation. One member of the response coordination team should be the church contact person for the victim. Frequently, this contact person will give the victim information as to what is happening in the church as a result of the accusation.
4. To receive legal advice. The response coordination team should suggest that the victim might benefit from independent legal advice. (Legitimate claims might be more effectively pursued and flimsy or false claims discouraged.) If requested, the response coordination team should suggest ways in which independent legal advice can be obtained.
5. To be assured of an advocate of one's own choosing. A victim may need continuing moral support from one individual who is present while the church process deals with the accusation. This advocate may be a relative, friend, or someone suggested by the response coordination team. This advocate could speak for the victim, if necessary.
 - To be assured that justice will be pursued. The victim needs to be told by the response coordination team, and shown by the processes of the church, that justice is being pursued through fact-finding, truth-telling, confrontation, and agreement that may include removal or temporary exclusion of the accused from office or adjudication of the complaint.
 - To receive healing and reconciliation. In addition to specific forms of restitution mentioned above, the victim needs to receive a sense of healing and reconciliation with all concerned—the self, the family, the church and, ideally, the accused. The response coordination team can help bring this about using the church's processes and resources. While the above are needs of the victim, one recognizes that all of these needs may also not be met through a reasonable handling of a specific case, but may only occur over a lengthier period of time. All of these needs, however, should be taken seriously and compassionately, and the rights of the victim respected.

B. *The Needs of the Accused*

The governing body or entity shall offer treatment and care for the accused as well as alleged victims and families. If the accused is a minister, this is the primary responsibility of the committee on ministry (*Book of Order*, G-11.0501).

Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, mistrust, lowered self-esteem, depression, unworthiness, and feelings of alienation from God, self, the religious community, and family are often experienced by the accused. In addition, there may be fear of job loss, incarceration, and indignation if an allegation is false.

When a person is found not guilty of charges of sexual misconduct, it is important for the governing body or entity to see that the decision is disseminated as widely as possible within their power, unless doing so would further injure the person accused.

1. *Personal Care*

Whether the allegations about the accused are eventually found to be true or not, the accused deserves to be treated with Christian kindness and respect.

The response coordination team may suggest that the accused seek spiritual support or professional counseling. People in staff positions, such as presbytery executives or stated clerks, should not engage in personal counseling of the accused because of their potential involvement in disciplinary process.

2. *Economic Security and Care for Family of Accused*

When an allegation of sexual misconduct has been made against a minister, the economic security of the accused is directly threatened, along with reputation, career, and family relationships. Again, the committee on ministry can be of assistance.

The response coordination team may alert the committee on ministry to the possible spiritual, emotional, and financial needs of the family of the accused and recommend expert resources.

C. *The Needs of a Congregation in a Context of Sexual Misconduct*

The governing body, employing entity, and response coordination team should be aware of the problems a congregation or employing entity may experience following allegations of sexual misconduct by a minister, employee, or volunteer. The allegations may polarize the congregation or organization, damage morale, create serious internal problems, and even limit the trust a congregation may place in succeeding pastors. Efforts should be taken to recognize and identify the problems and heal any damage that may be done to the congregation or organization.

When there is sexual misconduct on the part of a minister, non-ordained staff, or volunteer in a particular congregation, a number of needs unique to that congregation will emerge since sexual misconduct impacts congregations in different ways. Therefore, these needs will not necessarily emerge in the same sequence in each situation. Depending on the parties involved in the sexual misconduct, some of the needs may not emerge. In any event, those managing the church's response to the sexual misconduct will want to know that the following needs may emerge:

1. *Pastoral Care*

Members and staff of the congregation will need pastoral care. If it is the pastor who is involved in the sexual misconduct, care will need to be provided by another member of the ordained staff (if the church is a multiple-staff church) or by a trained interim pastor. If the pastor leaves as a result of sexual misconduct, in extreme cases a trained interim pastor or consultant in sexual misconduct may need to work with the congregation for an extended period of time.

If it is not a pastor who is involved in the sexual misconduct, then the pastor will provide the needed care for the congregation. The pastor, if not previously trained in this specialty area, will need to consult with denominational specialists who will advise him or her how to proceed and any anticipated problems.

2. *Information About the Case*

Members of the congregation will need opportunities both to receive and give information. If a case of sexual misconduct becomes a matter of public knowledge within a congregation and if a pastor has been found guilty of sexual misconduct, the interim pastor or consultant may hold appropriate meetings with individuals, small groups, or with the whole congregation. Such meetings should provide information about sexual misconduct in general, Presbyterian polity and our judicial process, and how others who may have been victimized may be heard and ministered to. If the offender is not the pastor, then the pastor may perform these functions. At such meetings, one may expect members to vent their feelings. An opportunity for this to happen should be provided. If this venting does not take place, then it may create serious problems for the future of the congregation, for future pastors, and for the governing body.⁷ Dynamics may differ somewhat in racial ethnic churches, but no empirical studies have yet demonstrated different dynamics.

3. *Resource Persons*

In light of the above needs, the following are several resource persons whose services would be valuable to a congregation in the context of sexual misconduct: a trained interim pastor, a committee on ministry representative knowledgeable in polity and the effects of sexual misconduct in the church, a consultant or therapist with knowledge and experience in dealing with sexual misconduct, an attorney who can discuss legal aspects of a case, an insurance agent who can advise the congregation about their exposure to liability or coverage.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to establish policy and its procedures governing cases of sexual misconduct in that jurisdiction. The PC(USA) policy and its procedures are intended to guide the development of governing body policy and procedures.

Item 03-27

[The assembly approved Item 03-27. See pp. 56, 79.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) accept the invitation of the Presbytery of the Cascades for the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to meet in Portland, Oregon, June 18–24, 2016.

Rationale

Standing Rule I.1.d gives instructions for rotating the place of the meetings of the General Assembly between four areas of the United States. This rotation places the 222nd General Assembly in Area A, which includes the synods of Alaska/Northwest; Pacific; Southern California and Hawaii; Rocky Mountains; and the Southwest. Possible convention cities were identified in this area and the presbyteries represented by those cities were contacted about invitations.

The Department of General Assembly Meeting Services (GAMS) then sent requests for proposals to the convention bureaus of those cities. After review, two cities provided opportunities worth further investigation: Portland and Phoenix. Both cities offered very attractive possibilities

After site visits were made, ten criteria for evaluation were developed, including financial commitments, ease of facility use, hotel convenience, and the spiritual and emotional impact of a particular site on commissioners and advisory delegates.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly heard a recommendation from GAMS and is excited to recommend Portland for much that it offers. Mid-June is reputed to be one of the best times to visit the city as it explodes with roses and celebrations. The Oregon Convention Center was recently remodeled and is a leader in green technology. The convention center will meet all of the needs of the assembly for meeting space as well as exhibit hall, communal meals, and daily worship.

About half of the hotel rooms necessary for the assembly are within two short blocks of the convention center. The remaining rooms are accessible for free by a short (fifteen minute) light rail transit ride and are located in the heart of the vibrant city's center.

The Presbytery of the Cascades has been seeking this opportunity for several years as a way of celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Confession of 1967 which was adopted in Portland. That was also the last time Portland hosted a meeting of the General Assembly.

Overall, we believe that Portland and the Presbytery of the Cascades offer the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) an outstanding location for holding a General Assembly and that commissioners, advisory delegates, staff, and visitors will be excited to be in Portland.

Item 03-28

[The assembly approved Item 03-28. See pp. 56, 79.]

Regarding Per Capita—From Manager of Budgets, Office of the General Assembly.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following authoritative interpretation of G-9.0404d:

A presbytery is required to remit to the General Assembly and the synod per capita funds remitted by the session of member churches for per capita, even if the presbytery lacks sufficient funds to pay its own expenses.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the budget manager, Office of the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its findings and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. *Question Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution*

Is a presbytery permitted to withhold per capita funds, remitted by the session of member churches for per capita obligations, to pay presbytery expenses when the presbytery lacks sufficient funds, instead of forwarding to GA?

2. *Findings*

The General Assembly has previously interpreted G-9.0404d to place a responsibility on presbyteries “to remit per capita allocations to synod and General Assembly, even though a congregation does not pay the per capita allocated to it by the presbytery” (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 107). Further, even if one or more sessions in the presbytery refuse to pay their portion of the per capita apportionment, the presbytery has the responsibility to pay the full amount irrespective to the specific collection from churches, as long as funds are available within the presbytery (*Ibid.*). Given this responsibility to pay even uncollected per capita, a presbytery can have no right not to pay the appropriate portion of the funds remitted by a session to pay for its per capita obligations to the higher governing bodies of the church to the General Assembly and synod.

This conclusion is confirmed by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission's decision in *Von Norman v. Synod of California*:

Whether or not a court would call [an] arrangement a trust is quite unimportant to our conclusion. It is in any case an unmistakable direction which it would be morally unconscionable not to follow. After all, this is an ecclesiastical court. Therefore, quite apart from any question of civil law, we are not free to disregard the clearly expressed wishes of a donor (*Minutes*, PCUSA 1954, Part I, p. 170).

On the other hand, if a session remits per capita to a presbytery but withholds the per capita apportionment directed by the General Assembly or synod, the presbytery is not obligated to remit the General Assembly and/or synod per capita apportionment unless funds are available to the presbytery to do so. If a session makes a partial payment of per capita to a presbytery, the presbytery may remit on a pro rata basis the portions of that payment to General Assembly and synod if funds are not available to the presbytery to remit the full amount to the General Assembly and synod.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution therefore recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the authoritative interpretation of G-9.0404d set forth above to clarify that a presbytery may not withhold from the General Assembly or synod per capita funds remitted by the session of member churches for per capita obligations, even for the purposes of satisfying its other budgetary needs.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 03-28 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 03-29

[The assembly approved Item 03-29. See pp. 56, 79.]

The Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) authorize the Office of the General Assembly to make the necessary changes to the Session Annual Statistics Report (SASR) form as may be needed to conform with the revised Form of Government, should the revised Form of Government be approved by the assembly and adopted by a majority of the presbyteries, and that the OGA report such changes to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

Rationale

The Session Annual Statistics Report (SASR) has fields based on *Book of Order* requirements. The membership section of the report deals with the rolls churches are required to maintain and the reporting of those rolls to their presbytery. The revised Form of Government would necessitate changes to the SASR. The revised form would be used to collect the 2011 information, which would be collected in the spring of 2012.

Item 03-30

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-30. See pp. 57, 80.]

Commissioners Resolution. On Theological Diversity in General Assembly Nominations.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) instructs:

1. The General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) to add to its nomination form, beginning in 2010, questions (both multiple choice and narrative) specifically designed to indicate the theological position of its nominees, questions that
 - a. provide the opportunity for potential nominees to self-identify their theological positions;
 - b. allow the GANC to evaluate those theological positions for consistency within the Reformed Tradition;
 - c. provide a means for the GANC to gather the necessary information to balance every slate of nominees to permanent entities of the General Assembly in order to comply with the requirements of G-4.0403 regarding theological diversity; and
 - d. distinguish the theological positions of nominees to the end that PC(USA) entities may more closely reflect the demographics of the denomination as a whole, as indicated in the most recent Presbyterian Panel polling statistics.
2. The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) to
 - a. survey current and newly elected members of advisory and advocacy committees of the General Assembly regarding their theological positions in order to determine that they are consistent with the Reformed Tradition, and in order to determine whether the existing committees are theologically balanced according to G-4.0403;
 - b. make recommendations to the GANC regarding needed balance for the next cycle of nominations relative to theological diversity;
 - c. report their findings to the 220th General Assembly (2012); and
 - d. continue to review future nominations of the GANC for compliance with the intentions of G-4.0403 regarding theological diversity.
3. The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) to amend its Manual of Operations to include all the diversity provisions represented in G-4.0403, including a diversity of "theological positions consistent with the Reformed Tradition."

Rationale

1. Our present system of nominations lacks a ready means to populate permanent committees and elected positions in our denomination with persons whose theological positions accurately reflect the spectrum of beliefs within the denomination as a whole. As a result, true theological diversity is sorely lacking in many places, especially the diversity of “theological positions consistent with the Reformed Tradition,” that is mandated in the Form of Government (G-4.0403).

2. The 217th General Assembly (2006) approved the Report on the Review of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC), which included the following recommendation:

Recognizing that G-4.0403 encourages full participation of persons of diverse theological perspectives, and that the ACWC committee membership requirements, according to the ACWC Manual of Operations, do not specifically require theological diversity, we recommend that the desirability of theological diversity in the membership composition of the ACWC be referred to the GANC for report back to the 218th General Assembly (2007). (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 1164). [Note: at the time the report was written, biennial assemblies had not been ratified.]

In reporting its response to that referral to the 218th General Assembly (2008), the GANC affirmed its commitment to the diversity represented in G-4.0403, but stated that

of the constitutional categories of inclusiveness, “different theological positions consistent with the Reformed traditions” is the most difficult to determine. The GANC relies upon a careful reading of applications and appraisal forms to assess theological convictions and commitments. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 119).

In effect, the GANC report expresses the committee’s struggle to perform the task of theological evaluation that was asked of it, which helps explain the present theological imbalance in various entities. This commissioners’ resolution asks the 219th General Assembly (2010) to provide a means by which to rectify this deficiency.

It should also be noted that the General Assembly Committee on Representation has an affirmative obligation to monitor diversity in support of the GANC. The function of GACOR is “to advise the governing bodies . . . in implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness to ensure fair and effective representation in the decision making of the church” (*Book of Order*, G-9.0105b).

3. An indication of one committee’s current lack of theological balance is the Advice and Counsel of the ACWC to the Assembly Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues relative to Item 12-07. In their statement they say:

The practice of excluding people who are gay and lesbian from marriage has its roots in the persistence of patriarchal standards for the lives of women and men. The notion that men and maleness is superior dictates that men and women behave in particular ways that abide by the rules their sex dictates. For this reason, same-gender loving women and men are perceived as a direct threat to the norms that patriarchy lays out, as they, in their loving, challenge the models of prescribed masculinity and femininity that patriarchy determines. Gay men are a threat as they are perceived as “too feminine,” and lesbian women are perceived as “too masculine.”

In withholding the right to marry from same-gender loving people, the church is upholding this patriarchal standard for humanity. As a group committed to standing against patriarchy and its effects within the world and the church, ACWC advocates that same-gender loving women and men be allowed to participate in the commitment of marriage. The ACWC draws particular attention to the vulnerability of lesbian women in this exclusion, as these particular members of the body of Christ find themselves excluded and marginalized both for their gender identity and sexual orientation.

Such a statement, which departs radically from the historical theology and practice of the PC(USA), could not come from a committee that is theologically balanced. The ideology of radical feminism expressed by these comments is a reflection more of secular culture than a theology consistent with the historic Reformed Tradition.

4. The GANC failed to answer the basic question raised by the review report on whether theological diversity is desirable. Instead, it said that it would monitor whether or not that diversity is happening, yet it seems to find itself ill-equipped to do even that task adequately. The provisions of this commissioners’ resolution would equip the GANC to finally accomplish the balancing task recommended by the review report and mandated by the Constitution of our church.

Julia Leeth, Presbytery of Santa Barbara
Jeffrey Ogden, Presbytery of Stockton

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-30

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-30—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that Item 03-30 be disapproved for the following reasons:

1. The measures suggested for labeling theological positions are both flawed and represent an approach to theological testing that has been repeatedly declined by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Five times in the twentieth century, the idea of fixing a specific set of “essentials” has been declined. The other measure, self-definition on Presbyterian Panel surveys, suggests much inconsistency and generality in positions taken.

2. The use of theological litmus tests also makes rigid divisions in the church weakening the unity-in-diversity and diminishes valuable space for personal difference that all bodies and councils of the church should have in their membership. Litmus tests tend to lock people into theological positions and do not allow for personal growth and change.

3. The General Assembly Nominating Committee is not a theological examination committee.

4. The criteria for nominations for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the advocacy committees focus on areas of ministry concern and have included “evangelicals,” “mainliners,” and many who do not self-describe other than as followers of Jesus Christ. Membership in these committees overlaps other committees and councils also, so that to accept the categories of this commissioners’ resolution would be to invite a spreading process of labeling.

5. The surveys of the Presbyterian Panel are blunt instruments asking people to self-identify with generalized and undefined terms, that is terms that do not have specific meaning for all people.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-30

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-30—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that Item 03-30 be disapproved.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) is a diverse committee whose membership consists of

- two clergy women,
 - one woman church lay employee,
 - the Presbyterian Women’s/Churchwide Coordinating Team’s (CCT) vice moderator for Peace and Justice, elected by the CCT,
 - seven at-large members, chosen to balance the committee geographically, racially, and ethnically, and with consideration to age and expertise, and
 - one General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) member who is elected by the GAMC and serves as a liaison between GAMC and ACWC.
- At least four of the twelve members must be racial ethnic women, and at least two, but not more than three of the twelve must be men.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) is ultimately responsible for accepting nominations for women and men to serve on ACWC and presenting names to the General Assembly for election.

The ACWC has historically and consistently been composed of people with a variety of theological positions, but works together to come to consensus in accomplishing its call to be a voice of justice and advocacy for women in the PC(USA) and around the world.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-30

Comment on Item 03-30—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

Item 03-30 raises several issues of concern.

Historically the ordaining body determines the theological fitness for office, or adherence to the Reformed tradition. Item 03-30 asks the GACOR to provide an additional assessment for over 250 persons serving on entities nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC).

Item 03-30 seeks theological balance (assessed and reported, then included in advice to GANC) and that nominees “reflect the demographics of the denomination as a whole, as indicated in the most recent Presbyterian Panel polling statistics.” These requests seem to be in conflict. The Panel does not necessarily ask questions that could evaluate adherence to the Reformed tradition. An additional Panel report would have financial implications and need significant development efforts to achieve the measurement desired.

There are bodies, for which the nominating committee recommends nominees, that may include non-Presbyterians. This item does not allow for exceptions. Does this item restrict the nominating committee to only persons with theological perspectives consistent with the Reformed family? This would conflict with those entities’ make-up.

The GA Committee on Representation consults regularly with the GA Nominating Committee regarding the diversity of the pools of candidates and on selected slates. The report of the representational statistics appears in the nominating committee's report of the slate of nominees and not currently in a report from the GA Committee on Representation. GACOR advises the GANC, but does not alter their work.

According to the GA Nominating Committee's website, there are 290 positions they provide nominations for, with an average of seventy-nine positions filled each year. The pool of candidates is between three and four hundred persons at any one time.

Diversity of theological perspectives is already sought in the pools of candidates. It is achieved by the GA Nominating Committee evaluating the narrative responses on the applications and in conversations with candidates.

Surveying the persons currently serving may be accomplished electronically, but the analysis will have financial implications. The means to survey all persons in the pool of candidates may also have privacy implications and would need to be evaluated. Evaluation of the slate *after* selection would not provide an opportunity to alter the slate.

Item 03-31

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-31. See pp. 56, 79.]

Commissioners' Resolution. On Ministries Honored at General Assemblies.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) recommends the following guidance for future local arrangements committees:

That a broad range of ministers and others serving in harm's way be considered for particular recognition during opening worship services of the General Assembly, such as those working with victims of domestic violence, prison and hospital chaplains, and those who serve in nonviolent accompaniment programs in dangerous circumstances.

Rationale

Many chaplains serve the church in harm's way and difficult contexts, yet only military chaplains have received special recognition at opening worship at General Assembly. If military chaplains continue to receive special recognition for their service at the opening worship of the General Assembly, then a broader representative group of pastors and chaplains who serve the church in harm's way and in very challenging contexts would appear to deserve equal recognition from our denomination in opening worship. In addition to those ministries suggested as examples, local arrangements committees may know of particular ministries in their areas that include significant risks and sacrifices for the Gospel, possibly including those in partner relationships.

Robin Hogle, Presbytery of Hudson River
Margaret Elliott, Presbytery of Salem

Item 03-Info

A. *Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) Report*

Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." Genesis 18:13–14 (TNIV, © 2001, 2005 by Biblica)

It is hard to believe how quickly the past two years have flown by. As I reflect back on the past twenty-four months, I am both humbled and inspired by the faithfulness, passion, and vigor with which our denomination is seeking to be faithful to God's call on our collective lives. As this journey began, both Byron and I understood that we would have a unique vantage point from which we would experience the church, but until one travels this journey it is hard to imagine.

With over 150 events attended between Byron and myself over these past two years, there are too many amazing communities to mention them all. Still, here is a sampling of the breadth and depth of the communities that inspired me as I attended events and gatherings as the Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2010):

- Presbyteries that are looking at creative ways to move into the future: the South Carolina presbyteries, New Castle, Los Ranchos, Carlisle and others.
- Groups of Presbyterians who gather around common passions: Covenant Network of Presbyterians, Presbyterians For Renewal, More Light Presbyterians, Presbyterian Global Fellowship, That All My Freely Serve, and The Presbyterian Coalition.

- All those engaged in the ministry with and for college-aged and young adults. Specifically, Montreat Collegiate Conference, Atlanta Area Campus ministries, Warren Wilson College, Young Adult Ministries Jam, National Network of Presbyterian College Women, and numerous campus pastors and chaplains.
- For congregations striving to be church faithfully in their communities: The Phoenix Project, Cleveland, Ohio; Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina; First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa; Pullman Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois; Calvary Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, California; and First Presbyterian Church, Fenton, Michigan.
- For mission co-workers, young adult volunteers, military chaplains, church educators, seminary students, commissioned lay pastors, General Assembly Mission Council staff, and those working with immigrant communities.
- For our brothers and sisters around the world, especially those who showed some hospitality to the office: the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, the Ecumenical Council in Hong Kong, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and the Episcopal Church of Haiti.
- For those who have engaged with the Office of Moderator through such social media platforms at Twitter, Facebook, Skype, and more. It is a new day indeed.

From this brief sampling, it is not difficult to see that God is poking and prodding us to trust that there is something new being birthed in the world. It is my hope that we will embrace that calling no matter how frightening and unbelievable it may be. After all, this is where we may best discover who God intends us to be.

I also need to thank the many people who have supported the Moderator's office these past two years in more ways that can be measured and acknowledged especially the Office of the General Assembly, the Moderator's assistants, and all who have held Byron and I in prayer. And finally, thanks to my family and communities of support, especially my wife, Robin, and three daughters: Evelyn, Abby, and Analise; and the Mission Bay Community Church in San Francisco, California.

B. Vice-Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) Report

"I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Josh. 1:9

I am very thankful and humbled for the privilege of serving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as the Vice-Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008). Undoubtedly it has been an excellent experience witnessing the vast breadth and depth of ministry and mission that God's people are engaged in their local communities. Below is a small sampling of my experiences the past two years:

- Interpreting General Assembly actions for various congregations in numerous states.
- Preaching Young Adult Sunday services at New Life Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia and being the keynote speaker at the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta's Symposium on Youth and Young Adults.
- Leading Bible study and spending time with young adults during the orientation for the PC(USA) National Young Adult Volunteers at Ghost Ranch Conference Center in Abiquiu, New Mexico.
- Living with coffee farmers and picking coffee beans in the rain in the hills of Buaco, Nicaragua as a member of the Presbyterian Hunger Program/Equal Exchange delegation trip.
- Meeting with students of the Presbyterian Campus Ministries at East Carolina University (Greenville, North Carolina) and Maryville College (Maryville, Tennessee).
- Discussing what it means to be Reformed as a member of the Jewish-Presbyterian Consultation at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.
- Attending the very first gatherings of the Presbyterian Youth Workers Association (PYWA) conference in New Orleans, Louisiana and the Big Tent event in Atlanta, Georgia.
- Co-leading a workshop entitled "The Pastor as Public Figure" at the Lilly Endowment/Fund for Theological Education (FTE) Transition into Ministry Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Having the opportunity to see and hear about the Riverside Church, a new church development in the Presbytery of Detroit (Michigan).
- Witnessing the ministry and mission of our Presbyterian brothers and sisters in Colombia, Venezuela, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

- Visiting and speaking at the Women's Empowerment Initiative of the Presbytery of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania).

In addition, I have had the opportunity to communicate to the church-at-large through writing monthly church-wide letters, submissions for the *Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*; the worship resource for the 2009 Peacemaking Offering, and many others.

Along the way I have met wonderful people who were very gracious and hospitable. They have a love of the church and want to see it grow and prosper in faith as well as mission and church growth. There are also many people who are in continual discernment, listening to God's direction whether or not to stay in this denomination.

Most of all I have been connected to a community of people that you do not see—these are people who for one reason or another are not a part of a worshipping community but keep a connection to the church through virtual means (Facebook, Twitter, blogging, etc.). I have been richly blessed being in conversation with a variety of people as we seek to understand where we are and whose we are as the Body of Christ in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

As I come to the end of my term, I want to thank my wife, Regina Wade, my son Andrew, and the congregation I serve, Davie Street Presbyterian Church, for their prayers, patience, and support over my seventy-two trips, 213 travel days over the last two years. I am indebted to the many people who have open their doors and hearts, providing excellent hospitality and great conversation and allowing me to be a part of their lives. I am thankful to the leaders, staff, and members of the Office of the General Assembly and General Assembly Mission Council. Last, but not least, I want to thank two people in particular: the Rev. Abigail King Kaiser, the assistant to the Moderator/Vice-Moderator for her tireless work arranging flights and itineraries; and my friend for the last twenty years, Moderator Bruce Reyes Chow for asking me to share in this incredible journey.

Lastly, many of you may be aware that our society and world are in a state of continual change from many angles (socially, technologically, economically, and theologically) that are also affecting the church. We have many challenges before us as we try to live out being disciples of Jesus Christ in today's world. However, I do believe that God is preparing us to cross over into a new land as in the example of Joshua. Whatever happens in the future, I hope that we will take God's word to heart to be strong and courageous and not be afraid. God will be with us wherever we go as members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

C. General Assembly Per Capita Payments by Presbytery

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is grateful to the presbyteries for their continued level of faithfulness in the payment of per capita apportionments. During the year 2007 the percentage of total per capita paid to the General Assembly was about 95.5 percent, and during 2008, 95.0 percent. Improvement of the level of giving is encouraged in the current and future years.

“Per capita is an opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian church through the governing bodies to participate equally, responsibly, and interdependently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission” (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, p. 301).

Full participation in per capita giving preserves the connectional nature of our Presbyterian system and provides a strong witness to the faithfulness of our covenantal community as believers of the Reformed Theology, based on the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The following pages contain a statement of all per capita payments to the General Assembly, for the last five years (2004–2008) by presbytery, indicating the total annual per capita apportionment, the amount paid, and the unpaid balance. The total unpaid per capita for 2009 (as of April 30, 2010) stands at about \$952,000. The Office of the General Assembly (OGA) will continue to receive further payments for 2009 from presbyteries during the year 2010, which will hopefully reduce the level of unpaid per capita to be closer to last year's level.

We are grateful that the vast majority of our congregations continue to be faithful and support our denomination by participating in per-capita giving, even when they may have disagreements with our governing bodies. Each member's share of these costs for the year (2010) is \$6.15.

For charts showing per capita payments by synods and presbyteries for the past five years, see pp. 252–56.

Attachment A

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Per Capita
COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2009 and 2008

Assets	Per Capita	Dept of History	Total 12/31/2009	Total 12/31/2008
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 29,793	\$ 7,151	\$ 36,944	\$ 712,380
Short term investments	2290312	375828	2,666,140	1,615,932
Long term investments	3212963	2805381	6,018,344	6,156,712
Endowment investments	344196	607898	952,094	940,902
Investments PILP	345490	0	345,490	323,212
Apportionment receivable--current ye.	2826577	0	2,826,577	3,151,499
Apportionment receivable--prior year	190	0	190	565,651
Allowance for Uncollectible Apportion	(484289)	0	(484,289)	(1,050,000)
Other receivables	(270592)	160646	(109,946)	536,762
Receivable- GAC	960802	124850	1,085,652	217,971
Prepaid-Other	1794	3500	5,294	9,384
Land and building-PHS	0	3124555	3,124,555	3,080,645
Accumulated depreciation	0	(1430568)	(1,430,568)	(1,105,747)
Total Assets	\$ 9,257,236	\$ 5,779,241	\$ 15,036,477	\$ 15,155,303
Liabilities and Net Assets				
<u>Liabilities:</u>				
Accounts Payable- GAC	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Accounts Payable	56,255	-	56,255	51,182
Receipts in Process/ Other	2,941	-	2,941	2,864
Total liabilities	\$ 59,196	\$ -	\$ 59,196	\$ 54,046
			0	0
Net assets:				
Unrestricted:				0
Undesignated	\$ 6,481,998	\$ -	\$ 6,481,998	\$ 7,139,576
Designated	2,365,103	2,337,597	4,702,700	3,849,749
Plant Fund	-	1,847,033	1,847,033	2,149,898
Temporarily Restricted	261,370	901,546	1,162,916	1,179,400
Permanently Restricted	89,569	693,065	782,634	782,634
Total net assets	\$ 9,198,040	\$ 5,779,241	\$ 14,977,281	\$ 15,101,257
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 9,257,236	\$ 5,779,241	\$ 15,036,477	\$ 15,155,303

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PER CAPITA BUDGET - STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES 2008-2012 (Attachment B)

	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Budget	2010 Adjustments	2010 Revised Bgt.	PROPOSED 2011	PROPOSED 2012
SOURCES OF FUNDING							
(Preliminary)							
APPORTIONMENTS	13,084,624	13,570,529	13,162,015	(12,811)	13,149,204	13,259,321	13,349,437
INCOME FORMULA AND OTHER INCOME		182,715	215,000		215,000	215,000	215,000
UNREALIZED GAIN/(LOSS)	(824,257)	463,500					
TOTAL INCOME	12,260,367	14,216,744	13,377,015	(12,811)	13,364,204	13,474,321	13,564,437
EXPENDITURES							
I. GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION							
COMMISSIONER EXPENSES	1,882,086	-	1,795,647	(39,439)	1,756,208	-	2,056,179
FACILITY EXPENSES	1,005,003	48,297	694,076	(24,044)	670,032	70,192	723,803
WORSHIP		-	109,500	(1,000)	108,500	-	66,500
GA PROGRAM	8,912	24,497	13,500	(2,000)	11,500	-	10,000
GA MINUTES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	2,896,001	72,794	2,612,723	(66,483)	2,546,240	70,192	2,856,482
II. PERMANENT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES							
PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION	79,604	74,429	97,825	(6,420)	91,405	91,405	91,405
GA NOMINATING COMMITTEE	64,861	48,825	66,350	(2,325)	64,025	57,745	64,025
COMM ECUMENICAL RELATIONS	18,223	58,007	40,630	(2,160)	38,470	38,470	40,630
COMM PRESBYTN HISTORICAL SOCIETY	20,043	20,571	26,775	(1,000)	25,775	25,775	25,775
COMM ON REPRESENTATION	56,376	71,804	75,605		75,605	92,565	75,605
ADV COMM CONSTITUTION	37,790	7,942	30,494		30,494	11,205	30,494
ADV COMM ON LITIGATION	12,097	326	12,085		12,085	10,560	12,085
COMMITTEE ON OGA	75,505	40,315	82,370	(2,890)	79,480	79,480	79,480
STATED CLERK REV/NOMINATION	36,317					14,575	46,425
COMMITTEE ON REVIEW	27,178	41,881	35,970		35,970	35,970	35,970
PRESBYTERIES COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE	56,076	47,535	48,700	(1,700)	47,000	42,000	42,000
THEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY T/FORCE		427			-		
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE ON RACIAL ETHNIC	59,389	53,246	54,900	7,100	62,000	50,000	54,900
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S CON	56,734	45,315	54,900	7,100	62,000	50,000	54,900
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WITNES	50,433	41,512	52,200	9,800	62,000	50,000	54,900
GA TASK FORCES (GA 216-217)	117,127	12,768			-		
COM ON MARRIAGE & CIVIL UNION		36,733	17,675		17,675		
FORM OF GOVERNANCE TASKFORCE		26,852	25,350	35,000	60,350		
COM ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUE		55,407	5,380		5,380		
COM TRANSLATION OF HEIDELBERG CATECHISM		9,894	3,050		3,050		
COM ON BELHAR CONFESSION		22,898	3,050		3,050		
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PREVENT - RESOURCES				5,000	5,000		
TASKFORCE-GUN VIOLENCE, ITEM 09-05		8,170	5,240		5,240		
ACREC-ACSWP TF-PUBLIC EDUCATION 09-06		21,260	11,655		11,655		
ACSWP-T&W-VOC TF-PAY EQUITY 09-08		8,818	3,220		3,220		
ACSWP TF-HIV/AIDS 10-02		20,642	5,240		5,240		
ACWC TF-STATUS OF WOMEN 09-12			16,000		16,000		
ACWC-ACREC JT WORK GROUP 09-13		3,374	3,060		3,060		
ACREC TF-CLIMATE FOR CHANGE 09-16		7,249	12,960		12,960		
TF-SPECIAL OFFERING 08-03		11,217	6,715		6,715		
REVIEW COM ON ADVISORY COMMITTEES		22,026	13,544		13,544		
TOTAL	767,753	819,443	810,943	47,505	858,448	649,750	708,594
III. GRANTS TO ECUMENICAL GROUPS							
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES	300,000	204,000	300,000	(96,000)	204,000	204,000	204,000
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES	458,402	458,402	458,402		458,402	458,402	458,402
CHURCHES UNITING IN CHRIST	10,000		30,000		30,000	30,000	30,000
WORLD ALLIANCE REFORMED CHURCHES	232,731	232,731	232,731		232,731	232,732	232,732
ECUMENICAL ASSEMBLY ALLOCATION	75,000	75,000	75,000		75,000	75,000	75,000
TOTAL	1,076,133	970,133	1,096,133	(96,000)	1,000,133	1,000,134	1,000,134
IV. DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES							
STATED CLERK	852,629	838,460	946,759	(127,046)	819,713	857,781	886,037
ECUMENICAL & AGENCY RELATIONS	706,744	716,550	804,641	(69,750)	734,891	753,057	778,757
CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES	666,851	684,460	736,747	(34,028)	702,719	723,312	746,164
ASSEMBLY SERVICES	445,632	495,331	501,918	(11,464)	490,454	505,582	522,718
COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY	662,489	720,702	661,947	(63,412)	598,535	626,193	627,294
COMMON EXPENSES	187,460	155,632	227,500	1,000	228,500	209,000	211,500
VOCATION	1,036,358	1,113,029	1,216,761	(104,077)	1,112,684	1,071,005	1,103,152
PRESBYTN HISTORICAL SOCIETY	1,769,859	1,822,293	1,957,629	(118,000)	1,839,629	1,893,468	1,943,093
TOTAL	6,328,022	6,546,457	7,053,902	(526,777)	6,527,125	6,639,398	6,818,715
I-IV TOTAL OGA	11,067,909	8,408,827	11,573,701	(641,755)	10,931,946	8,359,474	11,383,925

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PER CAPITA BUDGET - STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES 2008-2012 (Attachment B)

	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Budget	2010 Adjustments	2010 Revised Bgt.	PROPOSED 2011	PROPOSED 2012
V. GOVERNING BODY RELATIONS (OGA/GAC)	238,045	209,243	240,564	(882)	239,682	226,538	247,283
					11,171,628	8,586,012	11,631,208
VI. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION COUNCIL							
GAMC MEETINGS	317,616	169,307	216,195	(22,305)	193,890	163,610	191,890
OTHER MEETINGS	82,923	1,117	164,859	(83,230)	81,629	153,859	164,859
TOTAL	400,539	170,424	381,054	(105,535)	275,519	317,469	356,749
VII. GAMC							
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	1,193,417	1,212,693	1,245,429	(20,384)	1,225,045	1,248,994	1,292,101
OTHER GAMC COORDINATION	723,410	746,582	803,281	(30,167)	773,114	804,039	836,200
TOTAL	1,916,827	1,959,275	2,048,710	(50,551)	1,998,159	2,053,033	2,128,301
VI-VII TOTAL GAC	2,317,366	2,129,699	2,429,764	(156,086)	2,273,678	2,370,502	2,485,050
VIII. SHARED SUPPORT SERVICES	668,384	651,140	735,186	(23,546)	711,640	735,185	759,673
IX. UNCOLLECTIBLE PER CAPITA	912,116	667,458	450,000	150,000	600,000	600,000	600,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	15,203,820	12,066,367	15,429,215	(672,269)	14,756,946	12,291,699	15,475,931
X. COMMITTED FOR SUBSEQUENT ASSEMBLY	(1,213,977)	1,273,120	(1,306,362)		(1,273,120)	1,428,241	(1,428,241)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AND COMMITMENT	13,989,843	13,339,487	14,122,853		13,483,826	13,719,940	14,047,690
XI. NET TO OR (FROM) RESERVE	(1,729,476)	877,257	(745,838)		(119,622)	(245,619)	(483,253)

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Attachment B-1

STATEMENT OF PER CAPITA BUDGET
Actual and Projected Sources of Funding and Expenditures 2007-2012

USING THE FOLLOWING ASSUMPTIONS:

- Projected Rev and Exp for 2009, and beyond
- number of members for 2005-2010 is as follows: (please note that apportionment revenue is based on the membership reported two years prior to the current year; that is 2009 apportionment revenue is based on membership reported at end of 2007)
Actual: (2005):2,405,311 (2006): 2,362,136 (2007): 2,313,588 (2008): 2,259,866; (2009): 2,206,004 - Actual, (2010): 2,138,082 - Actual
2011 & 2012 assumes a membership reduction of 50,000 each year.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Expenditures less than budgeted
- Decline in membership is less than expected

RISKS

- Actual membership declines more than projected
- Actual expenditures exceed budgeted expenses
- Church and economic related issues impacting Revenue & Investment values
- General Assembly financial implications
- The level of available funds from reserves (after the 30% provision)

	2008 Actual	2009 Rev. Bgt	2009 Actual	2010 Rev Bgt	2011 Prop Bgt	2012 Prop Bgt
Unrestricted net assets, January 1	\$7,145,907	5,416,431	5,416,431	6,293,688	6,174,066	5,928,447
Less: Reserve (30% annual budget)	4,561,146	3,803,917	3,803,917	4,427,084	3,687,510	4,642,779
Income from prior years available	2,584,761	1,612,515	1,612,515	1,866,604	2,486,556	1,285,667
Sources of funding						
<u>Apportionments</u>						
\$5.79 for 2007						
\$5.79 for 2008	13,084,624					
\$6.15 for 2009		13,566,925	13,570,529			
\$6.15 for 2010				13,149,204		
\$6.35 for 2011					13,259,321	
\$6.55 for 2012						13,349,437
Income formula and other income		140,000	182,715	215,000	215,000	215,000
Realized and unrealized gain on investments	(824,257)	420,000	463,500			
Total	12,260,367	14,126,925	14,216,744	13,364,204	13,474,321	13,564,437
Total Expenditures	15,203,820	12,679,722	12,066,367	14,756,946	12,291,699	15,475,931
Designated for Subsequent General Assembly	(1,213,977)	1,273,120	1,273,120	(1,273,120)	1,428,241	(1,428,241)
Total Expenditures & Commitments	13,989,843	13,952,842	13,339,487	13,483,826	13,719,940	14,047,690
Net To, or (From) Reserves	(1,729,476)	174,083	877,257	(119,622)	(245,619)	(483,253)
Unrestricted net assets, December 31	5,416,431	5,590,514	6,293,688	6,174,066	5,928,447	5,445,194

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

OGA/GAMC DESIGNATED BUDGET 2010-2012

Attachment C

	Beg Bal 1/1/10	Revenue Bgt 2010	Expense Bgt 2010	Proj End Bal 12/31/10	Revenue Bgt 2011	Expense Bgt 2011	Proj End Bal 2011	Revenue Bgt 2012	Expense Bgt 2012	Proj End Bal 12/31/12
OGA Sales of Publications	(4,435)	530,000	510,000	15,565	540,000	520,000	35,565	530,000	520,000	45,565
Replacement Reserve-OGA	60,000	10,000	30,000	40,000	10,000	20,000	30,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
Ecumenical Reserve	278,713	75,000	50,000	303,713	75,000	125,000	253,713	75,000	125,000	203,713
Replacement Reserve-DOH	140,190	75,000	60,000	155,190	75,000	60,000	170,190	75,000	60,000	185,190
Presbyterian Historical Society	3,474,816	407,700	369,560	3,512,956	441,300	371,330	3,582,926	453,370	379,335	3,656,961
General Assembly Mtg - Registration	20,000	150,000	150,000	20,000			20,000	150,000	140,000	30,000
Stated Clerk Training	500	110,000	105,000	5,500	115,000	110,000	10,500	115,000	110,000	15,500
Cooperative Reading Grp-Ord Exams	60,000	165,000	160,000	65,000	165,000	160,000	70,000	170,000	160,000	80,000
Moderator's Travel	54,911	5,000	5,000	54,911	5,000	5,000	54,911	5,000	5,000	54,911
Moderator's Annual Gathering	21,425	30,000	35,000	16,425	35,000	35,000	16,425	35,000	35,000	16,425
Vocation	20,260	12,000	12,000	20,260	12,000	12,000	20,260	13,000	14,000	19,260
Fred Jenkins Memorial Library Fund	1,464		500	964		500	464		464	-
National Pastors Conference	294			294	120,000	110,000	10,294			10,294
Ecumenical Consultation	16,983			16,983		16,000	983			983
Church Property and Legal	18,000	50,000	50,000	18,000	50,000	40,000	28,000	50,000	40,000	38,000
Contributions	137,000		5,000	132,000	5,000	10,000	127,000	5,000	10,000	122,000
MGB Financial Network	16,452	22,000	20,000	18,452	22,000	20,000	20,452	22,000	20,000	22,452
National Elders Conference	5,000			5,000	200,000	190,000	15,000			15,000
GA Taskforces	196,182		55,000	141,182		60,000	81,182		60,000	21,182
Total	4,519,538	1,641,700	1,618,843	4,542,395	1,870,300	1,864,830	4,547,865	1,708,370	1,688,799	4,567,436

SYND/PRES-	APPORNTN-04	AMT. PAID 04	BALANCE 04	APPORNTN-05	AMT. PAID 05	BALANCE 05	APPORNTN-06	AMT. PAID 06	BALANCE 06	APPORNTN-07	AMT. PAID 07	BALANCE 07	APPORNTN-08	AMT. PAID 08	BALANCE 08
SYND OF ALASKA/NORTHWEST															
PRESBYTERY															
ALASKA	7,278.71	7,278.71	-	7,335.69	7,335.69	-	7,430.38	7,430.38	-	7,469.10	7,469.10	-	6,177.93	6,177.93	-
CENTRAL WASHII	41,617.03	41,617.03	-	41,780.57	41,780.57	-	42,198.32	42,198.32	-	42,515.97	42,515.97	18,052.80	42,394.38	24,984.43	17,409.95
INLAND NORTHW	51,171.37	51,171.37	-	50,714.85	50,714.85	-	50,202.41	49,240.83	961.58	51,502.05	51,351.51	150.54	50,604.60	50,604.60	-
NORTH PUGET SK	42,812.70	42,812.70	-	43,936.16	43,936.16	-	43,540.69	43,540.69	-	43,425.00	43,425.00	-	44,403.51	44,403.51	-
OLYMPIA	60,411.64	60,411.64	-	61,810.29	61,810.29	-	61,827.00	61,503.00	324.00	62,523.44	62,523.44	108.56	61,229.28	61,229.28	(0.03)
SEATTLE	115,781.63	115,781.64	(0.01)	116,223.62	116,223.62	-	114,853.40	114,853.40	-	117,838.08	114,303.38	3,534.70	123,124.35	123,124.35	-
YUKON	17,753.22	17,753.22	-	17,434.10	17,434.10	-	16,982.93	16,293.99	688.94	17,497.38	16,393.48	1,103.90	16,374.12	15,930.02	444.10
SYND OF COVENANT															
PRESBYTERY															
CINCINNATI	106,381.57	106,381.57	-	103,941.77	103,941.77	-	102,220.64	102,220.64	-	101,689.77	101,689.77	-	98,424.21	98,424.21	-
DETROIT	208,250.45	208,250.45	-	204,831.18	204,831.18	-	201,154.98	198,285.20	2,869.78	205,400.25	205,400.25	-	199,471.29	199,471.29	-
EASTMINSTER	76,335.54	76,335.54	-	72,772.05	72,772.05	-	69,435.62	60,094.84	9,340.78	67,036.62	57,901.65	9,134.97	65,953.89	55,702.00	10,251.89
LAKE HURON	71,244.30	71,244.30	-	69,129.27	69,129.27	-	67,596.38	67,596.38	-	68,223.57	68,223.57	-	67,152.42	67,152.42	-
LAKE MICHIGAN	114,988.19	114,988.19	-	111,962.57	111,962.57	-	110,113.33	110,113.33	-	110,762.70	110,762.70	-	104,665.83	104,665.83	-
MACKINAC	41,198.27	41,198.27	-	40,510.61	40,510.61	-	40,059.44	40,059.44	-	40,883.19	40,883.19	-	39,927.84	39,927.84	-
MALINEE VALLEY	76,886.54	76,886.54	-	75,490.21	75,490.21	-	71,173.46	71,173.46	-	70,986.98	70,986.98	-	68,055.66	68,055.66	-
MIAMI	89,620.15	89,620.20	(0.05)	88,284.50	88,284.50	-	83,711.53	83,711.53	-	82,524.87	82,524.87	-	81,893.76	81,893.76	-
MUSKINGUM VAL	78,164.86	78,164.86	-	76,158.61	76,158.61	-	72,354.30	69,886.13	2,468.17	72,722.40	58,992.32	13,730.08	68,843.10	51,168.31	17,674.79
SCIOTO VALLEY	137,551.64	131,366.58	6,185.06	137,038.71	129,560.77	7,477.94	136,648.81	126,267.80	10,381.01	138,612.60	125,720.38	12,892.22	133,812.69	122,293.28	11,519.41
WESTERN RESEF	83,630.78	83,630.78	-	83,382.90	83,382.90	-	81,338.71	81,338.71	-	82,229.58	82,229.58	0.02	80,903.67	80,903.67	-
SYND OF LAKES AND PRAIRIES															
PRESBYTERY															
CENTRAL NEBRA	37,258.62	37,259.00	(0.38)	36,149.30	36,149.30	-	36,266.27	36,266.27	-	37,108.11	37,108.11	0.03	35,683.77	35,683.77	-
DAKOTA	5,036.14	5,036.14	-	5,090.98	5,090.98	-	5,090.98	2,737.13	2,353.85	5,292.06	5,292.06	0.00	5,292.06	5,292.06	-
DES MOINES	62,086.68	62,086.68	-	61,041.63	61,041.63	-	59,599.00	59,599.00	-	60,764.47	60,764.47	-	56,875.17	56,875.17	-
EAST IOWA	94,061.21	94,061.21	-	92,506.56	92,506.56	-	91,214.32	86,560.30	4,654.02	93,427.44	86,815.43	6,612.01	91,001.43	88,430.47	2,570.96
HOMESTEAD	62,687.27	62,687.27	-	62,378.43	62,378.43	-	60,059.74	60,056.00	(0.26)	61,379.79	61,380.00	(0.21)	58,878.51	58,878.51	-
JOHN KNOX (THE	60,962.64	60,962.64	-	60,935.80	60,935.80	-	60,779.84	60,779.84	-	62,086.17	62,086.17	-	60,632.88	60,632.88	-
MILWAUKEE	64,152.93	64,152.93	-	63,743.08	63,743.08	-	63,603.83	63,603.83	(0.04)	65,311.20	65,311.20	-	63,967.92	63,967.92	-
MINNESOTA VALI	62,736.86	62,736.86	-	61,231.01	61,231.01	-	60,072.45	60,072.45	-	59,684.90	59,676.90	18.00	57,373.11	57,373.11	-
MISSOURI RIVER	69,971.49	69,971.49	-	69,463.47	69,463.47	-	68,566.70	68,566.70	-	69,737.92	69,737.92	-	62,508.84	62,508.84	-
N CENTRAL IOWA/	55,160.61	55,160.61	-	54,630.56	54,630.56	-	52,307.87	52,307.87	-	53,545.92	53,546.52	(0.60)	52,011.57	52,011.57	-
NORTHERN PLAIN	44,201.22	43,920.11	281.11	44,030.85	44,030.85	-	41,179.01	41,179.00	0.01	41,120.58	30,840.45	10,280.13	39,632.55	39,673.08	(40.53)
NORTHERN WATE	44,410.60	44,410.60	-	43,981.00	43,981.00	(0.28)	42,939.13	42,939.13	-	43,795.56	43,796.00	(0.44)	41,433.24	41,433.24	-
PROSPECT HILL	52,284.39	52,284.39	-	51,845.56	51,845.56	-	50,285.96	50,285.96	-	50,760.93	50,760.96	-	49,492.92	49,492.92	-
SOUTH DAKOTA	51,843.59	51,843.59	-	50,542.18	50,542.18	-	48,821.05	48,821.05	-	50,564.07	50,564.07	-	49,249.80	49,249.80	(0.06)
TWIN CITIES	143,067.15	143,067.16	(0.01)	142,291.22	142,291.22	-	143,962.22	143,962.22	-	148,727.73	149,962.35	(1,134.62)	147,118.11	147,118.08	0.03
WINNEBAGO	48,636.77	48,636.77	-	46,977.38	46,977.38	-	45,651.72	45,651.72	-	46,696.35	46,696.35	-	45,989.97	45,989.97	-

PC 2004 through 2008

5/22/2010 8:11 AM

SYND/PRES-	APPORNTN-04	AMT. PAID 04	BALANCE 04	APPORNTN-05	AMT. PAID 05	BALANCE 05	APPORNTN-06	AMT. PAID 06	BALANCE 06	APPORNTN-07	AMT. PAID 07	BALANCE 07	APPORNTN-08	AMT. PAID 08	BALANCE 08
SYND OF THE SOUTHWEST															
PRESBYTERY															
DE CRISTO	50,003.25	50,003.25	-	49,957.33	49,957.33	-	49,901.63	49,901.63	-	51,270.45	51,270.45	-	48,114.90	48,114.90	-
GRAND CANYON	94,755.47	94,755.47	-	93,247.37	93,247.37	-	92,205.78	92,205.78	-	94,243.83	94,243.83	-	92,570.52	92,570.52	-
SANTA FE	40,294.63	40,294.63	-	40,415.92	40,415.92	-	39,702.96	39,702.96	-	41,213.22	41,213.22	-	40,778.97	40,778.97	-
SIERRA BLANCA	13,962.34	13,962.34	-	13,039.37	13,039.37	-	12,521.36	12,521.36	-	12,512.19	12,512.19	-	12,193.74	12,193.74	-
SYND OF THE SUN															
PRESBYTERY															
ARKANSAS	91,499.06	91,500.00	(0.94)	89,415.21	89,415.21	-	88,652.12	88,652.12	-	91,534.11	91,534.11	-	89,472.87	89,472.87	-
CIMARRON	15,246.17	15,246.17	-	14,832.91	14,832.91	-	14,704.80	14,704.80	-	14,891.88	14,891.88	-	14,677.65	14,677.65	-
EASTERN OKLAH	73,260.96	73,761.62	(500.66)	73,551.85	73,552.00	(0.15)	73,524.00	73,524.00	-	75,983.74	75,983.74	-	74,544.36	74,544.36	-
GRACE	264,964.88	264,964.92	(0.04)	265,260.11	265,260.12	(0.01)	253,941.87	253,941.87	-	260,781.60	260,781.60	-	257,157.06	257,157.06	-
INDIAN NATIONS	61,574.25	61,575.00	(0.75)	61,114.04	61,114.04	-	60,724.14	60,724.14	(5.94)	62,120.91	62,120.91	-	60,273.90	60,273.24	0.66
MISSION	174,606.39	174,606.39	-	175,622.10	175,622.10	-	179,604.65	179,604.65	-	185,193.94	185,193.94	-	184,695.21	184,695.21	-
NEW COVENANT	222,510.33	222,510.33	-	222,738.73	222,000.00	738.73	223,496.25	223,496.25	-	228,218.64	228,457.32	(238.68)	227,014.32	227,014.32	-
PALO DURO	56,284.65	56,275.65	9.00	55,716.71	55,716.71	-	54,218.38	54,218.38	-	54,952.89	55,633.47	(680.58)	53,870.16	53,870.16	-
PINES(THE)	38,112.67	38,112.67	-	36,684.02	36,684.02	-	35,274.81	35,274.81	-	35,983.34	35,643.00	(340.34)	34,983.18	34,983.18	-
SOUTH LOUISIAN	59,959.82	60,046.77	(86.95)	60,267.40	60,267.40	-	59,197.96	49,125.93	10,072.03	59,822.28	43,039.21	16,783.07	56,180.37	41,990.10	14,190.27
TRES RIOS	44,983.64	44,983.64	-	44,799.51	44,799.51	-	43,562.97	43,562.97	-	42,788.10	43,952.00	(1,163.90)	41,780.64	41,646.00	134.64
SYND OF THE TRINITY															
PRESBYTERY															
BEAVER-BUTLER	91,499.06	88,268.82	3,230.24	89,147.85	89,147.85	44,573.92	87,816.62	87,816.62	17,088.66	88,754.91	40,390.45	48,364.46	85,946.76	85,773.00	173.76
CARLSLE	89,832.22	78,776.81	10,055.61	89,236.97	89,533.16	(296.19)	87,259.62	80,258.69	7,000.93	88,146.96	86,717.75	1,429.21	86,757.36	86,757.36	-
DONEGAL	130,113.14	118,690.51	11,222.63	130,956.27	116,057.27	14,899.00	130,126.34	128,806.94	1,319.40	132,139.38	121,849.29	10,290.09	131,705.13	121,070.01	10,635.12
HUNINGDON	44,708.14	44,708.14	-	44,058.70	44,058.70	-	41,724.87	41,724.87	-	41,323.23	41,323.23	-	39,557.28	39,557.28	-
KISKIMINETAS	72,269.16	72,269.16	-	71,981.11	71,981.11	-	69,613.86	69,613.86	-	69,920.04	69,920.04	-	67,910.91	67,910.91	-
LACKAWANNA	51,088.72	40,323.95	10,764.77	48,342.03	36,076.89	12,265.14	46,832.56	35,805.86	11,026.70	48,323.34	37,338.87	10,984.47	47,472.21	36,338.26	11,133.95
LAKE ERIE	67,062.21	67,062.21	-	65,542.19	65,543.00	(0.81)	64,528.45	64,528.45	-	65,340.15	65,340.00	0.15	63,684.21	63,684.00	0.21
LEHIGH	65,954.70	65,954.70	-	65,764.99	65,764.99	-	63,486.86	63,486.86	-	65,427.00	65,427.00	-	64,784.31	64,784.31	-
NORTHUMBERLA	31,654.95	31,694.95	(40.00)	31,370.24	31,370.24	-	31,308.97	31,308.97	-	31,607.61	31,115.46	492.15	31,115.46	31,115.46	-
PHILADELPHIA	237,062.24	237,062.24	-	233,717.20	234,813.77	(1,096.57)	229,077.39	209,680.11	19,397.28	233,557.02	212,984.11	20,572.91	227,205.39	205,773.75	21,431.64
PITTSBURGH	264,931.82	264,931.82	-	262,023.94	262,023.96	(0.02)	253,234.48	253,234.48	-	253,920.45	253,920.45	-	241,460.37	241,460.37	-
REDSTONE	93,763.67	93,763.67	-	93,899.06	93,899.06	-	91,955.13	91,955.13	-	94,307.52	94,307.52	-	92,159.43	92,159.43	-
SHENANGO	91,675.38	62,692.20	28,983.18	89,560.03	70,415.77	19,144.26	88,412.61	52,469.03	35,943.58	86,601.03	55,526.32	31,074.71	84,470.31	53,100.71	31,369.60
UPPER OHIO VAL	59,519.02	59,519.02	-	57,916.86	57,916.86	-	56,429.67	56,480.30	(50.63)	55,225.02	35,225.02	20,000.00	52,619.52	47,718.92	4,900.60
WASHINGTON	68,301.96	60,736.78	7,565.18	66,533.65	49,966.97	16,566.68	65,246.98	51,183.09	14,063.89	66,289.71	50,239.83	16,049.88	64,714.83	48,803.91	15,910.92
WEST VIRGINIA	84,391.16	83,027.83	1,363.33	82,190.92	82,315.22	(124.30)	76,593.07	76,340.07	253.00	76,775.40	75,678.63	1,096.77	75,322.11	75,322.11	-
TOTALS	13,503,125.58	13,237,873.15	265,252.43	13,395,772.02	12,989,866.31	405,905.71	13,147,311.03	12,698,814.66	448,666.37	13,380,058.89	12,777,867.99	602,190.90	13,084,624.14	12,419,280.80	665,343.34

Item 04-01

On Amending G-12.0100 and D-5.0101 Regarding Synod Function—From the Synod of the Rocky Mountains.

The Synod of the Rocky Mountains overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

[The assembly approved Item 04-01, Recommendations 1.–2. with amendment. See pp. 28–29.]

1. Shall a new section, G-12.0103, be added to the Form of Government to read as follows:

“A synod may decide, with the approval of a two-thirds majority of its presbyteries, to reduce its function. In no case shall synod function be less than the provision of judicial process and administrative review of the work of the presbyteries. Such a synod shall meet at least every two years for the purposes of setting budget, electing members to its permanent judicial commission, and admitting to record the actions of its permanent judicial commission and administrative commissions. Presbyteries of such a synod shall assume for themselves, by mutual agreement, such other synod functions as may be deemed necessary by the presbyteries for the fulfillment of their missions.”

2. Shall a new section, G-12.0104, be added to the Form of Government to read as follows:

“Two or more synods sharing common boundaries, with the approval of a two-thirds majority of the presbyteries in each of the synods, may share administrative services [~~and form a shared permanent judicial commission, with the membership of the commission being proportional to the number of presbyteries within each participating synod. Each synod shall pay the costs for processing a judicial case arising within its bounds.~~”

[The assembly referred Item 04-01, Recommendations 3.–4. as amended, to the Office of the General Assembly. See pp. 28–29.]

[3. That the following phrase “and form a shared permanent judicial commission, with the membership of the commission being proportional to the number of presbyteries within each participating synod. Each synod shall pay the costs for processing a judicial case arising within its bounds” be referred to the Office of the General Assembly for revision and report back with recommendation to the 220th General Assembly (2012).]

[~~3.~~ **4.** Shall D-5.0101 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strikethrough; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The General Assembly, each synod *or cooperating synods* (G-12.0104), and each presbytery shall elect a permanent judicial commission from the ministers and elders subject to its jurisdiction. Each commission shall be composed of ministers and elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible. When the commission consists of an odd number of members, the additional member may be either a minister or an elder. The General Assembly commission shall be composed of one member from each of its constituent synods. The synod commission shall be composed of no fewer than eleven members distributed equally, insofar as possible, among the constituent presbyteries. In those synods with fewer than eleven presbyteries, each presbytery shall have at least one member. *When two or more synods form a shared permanent judicial commission, the commission shall be composed of no fewer than twelve members, with each synod electing members proportional to the number of the presbyteries in each synod. One of the stated clerks of the synods (ordinarily the stated clerk of the synod in which the case arises, but one not having a conflict of interest) shall process a case filed with the synod.* The presbytery commission shall be composed of no fewer than seven members, with no more than one of its elder members from any one of its constituent churches. Two of the members of the presbytery commission shall be designated to review any petition for review of the procedures of the investigating committee while the investigation in a disciplinary case is in process (D-10.0204) and to review any petition for review of the decision not to file charges (D-10.0303). These two members shall not take part in any subsequent trial. A session shall refer either form of petition to the presbytery commission.”

Rationale

In the various conversations that have occurred across the church during the consideration of various drafts proposing revision of the Form of Government, the function of synods has been a recurring topic. While one option under consideration was the elimination of synods as one of the governing bodies or councils of the church, the practical solution seems to be to allow each synod to meet the needs of its region.

It seems clear that emerging practice has led to sixteen very different operating styles in the current synods. With synods having presbyteries in number from three to twenty-two, the current extensive list of functions for synods is unlikely to fit more than a few of the synods well.

The wording in the first requested change (new section G-12.0103) is taken directly from the Draft for Study (October 2008) produced by the current Form of Government Task Force, with a small addition. Whether or not the FOG project is

approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010) and a majority of presbyteries, it will be helpful to have the language about reduced function in Chapter XII of the Form of Government.

The second requested change (new section G-12.0104) follows the logic proposed by the FOG Task Force. If it is reasonable for the presbyteries within a synod to decide cooperatively which functions to assume, two or more synods can also decide cooperatively (with the consent of their presbyteries) which administrative or judicial functions to share. The other changes are proposed so that the Rules of Discipline are consistent with the language proposed for Chapter XII of the Form of Government.

Action was taken by the Synod Assembly of the Synod of the Rocky Mountains in an annual assembly, meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, April 23–25, 2009.

Concurrence to Item 04-01 from the Presbytery of Eastminster and the Synod of Mid-America.

Concurrence to Item 04-01 from the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley (with Additional Rationale).

The overture from the Presbytery of Rocky Mountains recognizes the intrinsic worth of synods as a middle governing body. Whether we like it or not, our system was designed more for effectiveness than for efficiency. This overture offers a model that is flexible and that allows synods to work, either individually or cooperatively, to find models that serve best the congregations and the larger church in their particular areas. It is permissive rather than restrictive in a manner that is consistent with our Presbyterian tradition of finding the middle way between purely hierarchical and purely congregational models. And it allows for broad visioning in the role for synod while preserving the core functions of accountability and review.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-01

Advice on Item 04-01—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to refer Item 04-01 to a task force, special committee, or commission to study it, develop specific proposals for implementation and report back to the General Assembly.

The Advisory Committee advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that this item raises issues that it should consider (see Rationale).

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution considered the proposal of the Task Force on the Form of Government in G-3.0404 that “A synod may decide ... to reduce its function” (Proposed Form of Government, G-3.0404). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution found that:

The proposed Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and Form of Government are coherent from a constitutional perspective to function as a replacement for the existing Form of Government.

The proposal in this overture for synods with reduced function is virtually identical to the provision in the proposed Form of Government. As a distinct proposal for inserting a new section G-12.0303, this language is clear and coherent from a constitutional perspective, and maintains appropriate constitutional limitations on the reduction of function, if the General Assembly wishes to propose an amendment that would allow synods to reduce their functions.

The part of the overture that would allow contiguous synods to share administrative services also does not raise constitutional issues.

However, the proposal to insert a new section G-12.0304 goes further than the proposal of the Task Force on the Form of Government.

The provision for a shared permanent judicial commission would not mandate that any two synods must agree to share a permanent judicial commission. However the fact that two-thirds of the presbyteries of each synod must agree in order to form such a shared permanent judicial commission would mean that it is conceivable that parties in matters before the joint commission would be subject to the judgment of a commission composed in part of persons not under the jurisdiction of their own synod.

If two synods wished to share a permanent judicial commission, they would need to have negotiations about the total size of the commission, the corresponding proportionate representation on the commission, and the election process for the

commission. It is difficult to conceive of an election process that would be fair to any presbytery that opposed the synods' forming a shared permanent judicial commission.

Under our current system of permanent judicial commissions, appeals from a decision of a presbytery permanent judicial commission are heard by a synod permanent judicial commission composed of ministers and elders from the same synod. If two contiguous synods agree to share a permanent judicial commission, such an appeal could be heard at a significantly greater distance, by a commission composed of individuals who also travelled significantly greater distances.

One of the possible benefits of synods sharing a larger permanent judicial commission would be that the volunteers who serve on the commission would be more likely to gain experience and produce a better work-product.

One of the possible risks of sharing a joint permanent judicial commission would be that the case load of the commission might not originate proportionately from within the two synods.

There are other constitutional issues raised in the part of the overture that would allow synods to share a permanent judicial commission. A permanent judicial commission is a commission within the meaning of G-9.0502, which says:

A commission is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by a governing body. The appointing body shall state specifically the scope of power given to a commission. A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to its governing body to be incorporated in its minutes and to be regarded as the actions of the governing body itself. (*Book of Order*, G-9.0502).

This definition is written in language that assumes that any commission is appointed by and reports to a single governing body.

If the General Assembly determines that it would be appropriate to amend the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline to allow certain synods to share a permanent judicial commission, the proposed addition of G-12.0304 and the proposed amendment to D-5.0101 do not identify all of the amendments necessary to accomplish the desired goal. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that further amendments to G-9.0502 would be required as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“A commission is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by a governing body *or bodies*. The appointing body *or bodies* shall state specifically the scope of power given to a commission. A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to its governing body *or bodies* to be incorporated in its/*their* minutes and to be regarded as the actions of the governing body *or bodies* itself/*themselves*.”

Section G-9.0503b would also need to be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“The functions of a judicial commission are to consider and decide a case of process for the governing body *or bodies* according to the Rules of Discipline. (See D-5.0000 on Permanent Judicial Commissions.)”

Item 04-02

[The assembly disapproved Item 04-02 with comment. See p. 28.]

[Comment: The commissioners are referred to the action taken on Item 04-06.]

On Amending the Book of Order by Deleting Chapter 12 to Eliminate the Middle Governing Body of the Synod—From the Presbytery of New Hope.

The Presbytery of New Hope overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) to move the PC(USA) from a four-tiered to a three-tiered mission/governance system by eliminating the middle governing body of synod by December 31, 2012, in the following manner:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall Chapter XII, The Synod, of the Form of Government and all references to synod found in the *Book of Order* be deleted from the *Book of Order*.

[Note: Should the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the proposed *Form of Government* to be sent to the presbyteries, direct the Stated Clerk to also send an amendment deleting G-3.4 and all references to synod in the proposed *Form of Government* to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes.]

2. If the presbyteries concur in removing synods from the *Book of Order* or proposed Form of Government, that the Stated Clerk and Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) be authorized to appoint a Synod Transition Administrative Commission by July 2011 to ensure that all matters related to the elimination of synods be addressed. This includes review of presbytery minutes, permanent judicial commissions, or other constitutional functions assigned to synods. The com-

mission would be authorized to resolve all fiduciary functions related to synods and any regional groups that are currently functioning as part of synods.

3. Recognize with gratitude the historically valuable role that synods have played.

4. Encourage presbyteries to cooperate and work among themselves on programs or support activities to further the PC(USA)'s mission and ministry.

Rationale

We recognize and appreciate the diversity of ways in which presbyteries and synods have evolved and function, resulting from a combination of tradition, circumstances such as geography, *Book of Order* mandates, and other factors. Synods, however, are essentially upper middle management governing bodies no longer needed in the PC(USA).

The historical and demographic conditions under which synods were organized in 1983 have changed dramatically and no longer apply.

Regional permanent judicial commissions, if genuinely deemed necessary, could replace synod judicial commissions.

Funds development is critical to the future of the PC(USA). New funding streams are needed at all levels of the church, and synods are perceived to be hindrances in credibly promoting and telling the Presbyterian story for today's church.

The common wisdom of sessions, pastors, presbytery staff, and many retired or retiring synod executives is that synods have long since outlived their usefulness.

The cost of synod infrastructures is expensive and inefficient, especially when measured in relationship to actual mission funds disbursed or ministry delivered.

Synods of the PC(USA) receive a percentage of undesignated funds contributed to the General Assembly, a practice that has repeatedly been scheduled for closure yet reinstated for more than twenty years.

Some synods hold assets in money and property that can be as effectively and efficiently managed without synods.

Synods are not necessary players in partnerships between presbyteries, congregations, and other organizations.

Large synod per capita reserves, maintained by some synods through their standing rules, allow synods to remain solvent at the expense of presbyteries and congregations.

Concurrence to Item 04-02 from the Presbyteries of Eastern Virginia and The James.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-02

Advice on Item 04-02—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 04-02. This overture does not propose language for amending the constitution that is clear and consistent with its intent.

Rationale

This overture advocates a major change in our system of government. Since colonial times synods have been part of the expression of Presbyterianism on this continent. The Presbytery of Philadelphia was formed in 1706, the first presbytery of what would become the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In 1716 the Synod of Philadelphia was formed, the first synod of what would become our church. The General Assembly was formed in 1789. Synods, predating the General Assembly by seventy-three years, clearly played an important role in the formation and development of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The roles of synods have changed and developed as the missional needs of the church have changed.

Since at least 1969, General Assemblies have had before them questions about the necessity and role of synods. In its report that year, the Standing Committee on Regional Synods & Church Administration (UPCUSA) said,

Early within the Committee's deliberations it wrestled with the question, "Can synods be eliminated from our polity?" After exploring alternative possibilities, the Committee reached the conclusion that the synod is needed. For if the number of presbyteries (190) were reduced by one half or even two thirds, there would still be needed some kind of a unit to facilitate the joint effort of a cluster of presbyteries in a region and to provide an orderly channel between those presbyteries and General Assembly agencies. In the Committee's judgment such a unit should be a judicatory composed of rep-

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representatives elected by the presbyteries with its own moderator and stated clerk and should fulfill the role of coordinating the efforts of presbyteries. (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1969, Part I, p. 485)

That committee also said:

The synod has three basic roles to fulfill. The synod should be designed: (a) to assist and guide its presbyteries; (b) to be a basic unit of mission with responsibility for ministries which are appropriate to it; and (c) “generally, to take such order with respect to the presbyteries, sessions, and people under their care, as may be in conformity with the Word of God and the established rules, and may tend to promote the edification of the Church.” (G. XIII, 5), (43.05)

In order to serve as the facilitator of mission and in order that there might be an effective and orderly relationship among the presbyteries of a synod and between the presbyteries and the General Assembly, the synod should fulfill the following functions: (1) provide a channel of communication among its presbyteries and with the General Assembly and its agencies; (2) provide a channel through which resources of the General Assembly and its agencies may flow according to priority; (3) develop a comprehensive strategy to serve as the basis for the coordination of the work of the presbyteries; and (4) develop an adequate and equitable system of administrative services to meet the mission responsibilities of its area.

In the development of strategy and resources for mission, the General Assembly agencies should consult and negotiate with synods rather than with presbyteries, and synods should operate through presbyteries or through synod structure established for this purpose, according to policy determined by each synod. (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1969, Part I, pp. 485–486)

In 1993, the General Assembly disapproved an overture from the Presbytery of Southern New England asking the General Assembly to appoint a special committee to present a plan to eliminate synods as a level of governance. Instead the assembly asked the General Assembly Council to study the role of synods and report to the 208th General Assembly (1996).

In 1996, the General Assembly disapproved an overture from the Presbytery of the James asking the General Assembly:

... to conduct a study as to whether the governing layer of synod continues to be a necessary and effective part of our church structure (considering, as well, the monetary savings if this layer of governance is discontinued), and report to the General Assembly, at the earliest opportunity, recommendations, including the necessary changes in the *Book of Order*, to address this important issue within our church. (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 715)

In 1999 the report of the Special Committee on Middle Governing Body Relationships in the Joint Report of the Committee on the Office of the General and the General Assembly Council said:

The committee strongly recommends that the PC(USA) move to a three-governing-body system. The committee is convinced that a flexible and simplified three-governing-body system will offer more opportunities and incentives for direct linkage between and among General Assembly, presbyteries, and congregations. (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 526)

At the 211th General Assembly (1999), acting upon a joint recommendation from the General Assembly Council and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly voted to:

Instruct the General Assembly Council and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to proceed with the consultation process that examines and encourages relationships within and among the General Assembly, synods, and presbyteries, and bring a report and any necessary or desirable recommendations to the 213th General Assembly (2001). (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 521)

At the 211th General Assembly (1999), the General Assembly Council and the Committee on the General Assembly jointly said:

We recognize that very careful work will need to be done in developing any constitutional text, particularly with regard to ensuring accountability throughout the governing body system. (*Ibid.*, p. 521)

The overture before the 219th General Assembly (2010) is clear in its proposal to remove Chapter 12 from the Form of Government, and in its proposal to remove section G-3.04 from the proposal of the Form of Government Task Force. Prior to the creation of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the church did use systems of governance with two tiers and three tiers. A shift to a three-tiered system of governance would be a significant change, but one that could be described in constitutional language consistent with our polity. The overture does not offer the General Assembly such language.

This overture is not sufficiently clear when it speaks of removing “all references to the Synod found in the *Book of Order*.” The reader is left to guess how much of any provision that refers to the synod constitutes the language to be deleted. Additionally, some historical references to the synod should be retained, and some uses of the word “synod” in our constitution do not refer to the same entity.

More significantly, the mere removal of references to the synod would radically disconnect the General Assembly from the presbyteries, unless new constitutional language is inserted to establish and define new relationships between the remaining governing bodies.

In many current provisions of the *Book of Order*, “synod” stands for the church’s presence and activity in particular geographic regions; some requirements that refer to synods ensure geographic diversity in governing bodies or entities that make decisions. Even a quorum of the General Assembly is defined in terms of commissioners from a certain number of synods. If synods are removed, there will be a need for some other way to ensure geographic diversity at the General Assembly level.

In the recent history of proposals for the elimination of synods, there has not been a request that describes how the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) would function without synods and that offers specific constitutional amendments. These are questions that must be answered in order for the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to be able to advise the assembly on the proposed constitutional amendments, and, more importantly, for the commissioners of a General Assembly to be able to give full and reasoned consideration to a shift to a three-governing-body system.

This item proposes that all of the details of the elimination of synods could be handled by an administrative commission, but does not offer a charter for the administrative commission identifying with specificity each of the powers to be assigned to the administrative commission.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) agrees with the intent of this overture, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the General Assembly that it should form a task force, special committee, or commission broadly representative of the church to review the role and function of synods, to study the practice of other communions, to draft constitutional amendments, and to develop a plan for the transition to a three-governing-body system. Two other items before the 219th General Assembly (2010) (Item 04-05 from the Synod of Southwest, and Item 04-06 from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly) recommend the formation of an entity that could meet this need.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 04-02 would have similar impact on the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 04-03

[The assembly disapproved Item 04-03. See pp. 28, 29.]

On Amending G-12.0000 Regarding Creation of a “New Synod”—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.

The Presbytery of Santa Barbara respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

“Shall a new section, G-12.0400, be added to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“G-12.0400 *New Synod*

“G-12.0401

“New Synod is the unit of the church’s life and mission, which consists of not fewer than three presbyteries, which are admitted into New Synod as provided in this section. New Synod is the intermediate government unit responsible for the mission of the church throughout its presbyteries. New Synod has the same responsibilities and powers of all other synods with the additional responsibilities and powers set forth in this section.

“G-12.0402

“New Synod has the responsibility and power to maintain the standards for ordination and continuing ministry as set forth below. The standards for ordination, installation, and continuing ministry set forth in this section shall be binding upon all presbyteries, sessions, and officers of New Synod. All those called to office within New Synod are to lead a life and engage in ministry in conformity with these standards and the governing bodies of New Synod shall examine qualifications for ordination and installation of officers based on adherence to these standards. These standards shall be strictly interpreted, followed, and enforced in any judicial process involving New Synod or a governing body or ordained leader within New Synod.

“a. New Synod and its constituent presbyteries will structure themselves to facilitate the missional identity of their congregations. Although there are numerous ways to give expression to a missional intent, the congregations of New Synod will emphasize:

“• *the singular saving work of Jesus Christ,*

“• *the unique and authoritative witness of Scripture,*

“• *the calling to live not for themselves and institutional interests, but for others by engaging in loving service locally and beyond,*

“• *intentional efforts to learn from others within the global church, build relationships, and partner in various ministry endeavors.*

“b. The presbyteries and sessions of New Synod will conduct examinations of candidates for church office in a way that preserves the integrity of our common ordination vow:

“Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?” (W-4.4003)

“To that end New Synod will offer its presbyteries and congregations the use of a statement regarding ‘essential tenets’ to assist them in their examination. While the statement will not purport to identify the essential tenets, it will emphasize several areas of doctrine that must not be overlooked in any such examination. If the examining body is to assure that a particular candidate does indeed affirm the essential tenets of the Reformed faith, then she or he must be able to affirm these important doctrines. New Synod will compose its own statement for this purpose. It may be guided by previous efforts, such as the ‘Essential Tenets and Reformed Distinctives’ tool adopted by the Presbytery of San Diego in 2003. New Synod will also offer this statement to its congregations for the purpose of education and discipleship of members.

“c. The presbyteries and sessions of New Synod will also use the following statement to examine candidates for church office with regard to their manner of life:

“Along with the broader constitutional standards for manner of life (e.g., G-6.0106a), New Synod also holds to the standard that its officers will live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness.

“Those who cannot make this affirmation for their own manner of life will not be approved for ordination or installation in an office, or for membership in a presbytery

“While this standard is certainly not the most important manner of life for one who would serve as an officer in the church, it is an area that has been contested in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). For the sake of clarity in its standards, and consistency in its various governing bodies, this New Synod expects that all of its officers will be able to make this affirmation about their own manner of life.

“d. Congregations and ministers of the Word and Sacrament within New Synod will celebrate marriages only between a man and woman. They will not celebrate marriages between members of the same sex in those states whose laws allow such marriages, nor will they celebrate marriage-like unions between members of the same sex.

“e. Congregations of New Synod, in welcoming all God’s children with the unconditional love of Jesus Christ, will also endeavor to teach biblical sexual ethics according to the traditional understandings (i.e., fidelity in marriage between a man and woman, and chastity in singleness). In this, as in all areas of church teaching and discipleship, Christ’s forgiveness, redemption, and healing shall be emphasized.

“f. Presbyteries and congregations within New Synod will give deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament regular opportunities to renew their ordination vows and reaffirm these additional standards.

“G-12.0403

“After the first meeting of New Synod, any presbytery shall have the right to transfer into or out of New Synod. A presbytery may request to transfer its synod membership by a two-thirds vote of the presbytery at a regularly called meeting. The change in membership shall become effective upon the vote of the receiving synod to accept the presbytery into its membership.

“G-12.0404

“Any presbytery that becomes a part of New Synod will consist of its member churches and ministers of the Word and Sacrament on the date it becomes a member of New Synod. New Synod has the power to determine the geographical boundaries of its presbyteries without the need for approval from General Assembly. The presbyteries of New Synod will have boundaries that overlap with the presbyteries of other synods. A minister called by a church within a particular presbytery shall be a member of the calling presbytery and permission of any other presbytery with which it has overlapping boundaries shall not be needed to issue the call. The calling presbytery shall have the right to permit a minister to labor within the geographical boundaries of both without the consent of the other presbytery.

“G-12.0405

“A congregation shall have the right to vote on dismissal to a presbytery not in New Synod at a duly called congregational meeting. Such dismissal, with real property and all other property, shall be effective upon the vote of the receiving presbytery to accept the church into its membership.

“G-12.0406

“A congregation shall have the right to vote on dismissal to a presbytery within New Synod at a duly called congregational meeting. Such dismissal, with real property and all other property, shall be effective upon the vote by the receiving presbytery to accept the church into its membership.

“G-12.0407

“The provisions of this section, G-12.0400, supersede and control any other provisions of the Book of Order to the contrary.

“G-12.0408

“The provisions of this section, G-12.0400, may not be amended without the consent of New Synod. A majority vote of each of its presbyteries is required to give this consent.

“G-12.0409

“Within 180 days of the vote of the General Assembly to send this amendment to the presbyteries for consideration, any presbytery shall have the right to become one of the originating presbyteries of New Synod by a two-thirds vote of its members. The creation of New Synod authorized by this section shall become effective upon the convening of its first meeting, which may be called by any of the originating presbyteries after the effective date of this amendment. When New Synod meets it shall be composed of commissioners elected by its presbyteries. The ratio of commissioners to members at a New Synod meeting shall be the same as for General Assembly. At the first meeting, a majority vote of the commissioners is required to confirm each of the originating presbyteries as members. If an originating presbytery does not receive a majority vote, it shall remain a member of its current geographic synod.

“G-12.0410

“At the first meeting of New Synod, the commissioners will adopt a name for New Synod and advise the Office of the General Assembly. Upon receipt of written notice by the Office of General Assembly, all references within the Book of Order, as amended, to the “new synod” shall reflect this change.”

[The above amendment creates a new synod, which, for convenience, is referred to as “New Synod,” and sets forth the process by which it will begin operations. The new synod will be named at its first meeting. After the name is selected, the amended section of the *Book of Order* will be further amended to refer to “New Synod” by the name that is adopted. New Synod is not assigned a particular geographic region, nor will the presbyteries within New Synod necessarily have contiguous borders. Synod boundaries currently existing within the PC(USA) do not need to be re-drawn to include New Synod.]

Rationale

Our presbytery is concerned about the continuing tensions within our denomination over issues of sexuality and ordination, which have led to the departure of congregations from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We believe that we as a denomination find ourselves at an impasse over these matters at present, with people at the extremes on both sides of the issues advocating a conquer-or-depart strategy.

We believe that the most important issue is always Jesus Christ, yet the pressing issues over sexuality and ordination continue to consume the time and resources of many in our church. There is a need to offer a way to preserve the unity of the church without violating the conscience of its members.

Our denomination already has nongeographic presbyteries that exist for missional reasons. We ask that a New Synod be created, identified by particular theological and missional commitments rather than by a geographic region.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-03

Advice on Item 04-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 04-03.

Rationale

Item 04-03 seeks to add to Chapter XII of the Form of Government an extensive section establishing a non-geographical synod that would promote a particular theological and missional identity. The synod would be governed by special provisions regarding the theological and behavioral standards of ministers, the reception and dismissal of congregations and whole presbyteries, the use of quasi-confessional statements, and veto power over further amendment of this section of the Constitution. Its presbyteries would overlap the bounds of existing presbyteries. It would also grant all congregations in the church the

right and power to transfer into a presbytery of the synod. It would have the power even to name itself without the concurrence of the General Assembly. In short, it proposes to establish a second denomination within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The overture directly challenges foundational principles of our polity. Foremost among these is the unity of the church envisioned by our polity.

The unity of the church is the living expression of what it means to be the Body of Christ (as in 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 2:11–22, and Eph. 4:1–16). As the Confession of 1967 affirms, “... The Holy Spirit creates and renews the church as the community in which men are reconciled to God and to one another” (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.20), and “... The unity of the church is compatible with a wide variety of forms, but it is hidden and distorted when variant forms are allowed to harden into sectarian divisions, exclusive denominations, and rival factions” (*Ibid.*, 9.34).

To establish one synod or presbytery with unique rights and powers violates the essential unity of the church by which a greater part shall govern a lesser part, and that a majority thereof shall govern (G-1.0400; G-4.0301). It undermines the principle constitutional governance affirmed in G-4.0104: “Each particular church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be governed by this Constitution ...” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0104). And, it ruptures the visible oneness of the church, “... by which a diversity of persons, gifts, and understandings is brought together, [which] is an important sign of the unity of God’s people ...” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0203).

Analysis

Because of its size and scope, specific constitutional issues raised by the overture will be addressed section by section.

“G-12.0402

“*New Synod has the responsibility and power to maintain the standards for ordination and continuing ministry as set forth below ...*” (Item 04-03)

This section grants the “New Synod” the authority to interpret and enforce a unique set of standards for ordination. It would effectively create a separate judicial system that would not be subject to appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission since (a) the provision grants the New Synod the power to interpret and enforce its own standards and (b) as Item 04-03 states: “The provisions ... [shall] *supersede and control any other provisions of the Book of Order to the contrary*” (Item 04-03, proposed G-12.0407).

“G-12.0402

“*a. New Synod and its constituent presbyteries will structure themselves to facilitate the missional identity of their congregations ...*” (*Ibid.*)

This imposition of a missional identity on constituent congregations of a presbytery within the synod violates the rights of sessions “to lead the congregation in participation in the mission of the whole Church in the world, in accordance with G-3.0000” (*Book of Order*, G-10.0102c.); and “to lead the congregation continually to discover what God is doing in the world and to plan for change, renewal, and reformation under the Word of God” (*Book of Order*, G-10.0102j).

“G-12.0402

“*b. The presbyteries and sessions of New Synod will conduct examinations of candidates for church office in a way that preserves the integrity of our common ordination vow:*

“*‘Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?’ (W-4.4003)*

“*To that end New Synod will offer its presbyteries and congregations the use of a statement regarding ‘essential tenets’ to assist them in their examination...*” (Item 04-03).

Additional documents of a quasi-confessional nature are not required to ensure that governing bodies “... conduct examinations of candidates... in a way that preserves the integrity of our common ordination vow ...” (Item 04-03, proposed G-12.0402b). Candidates must affirm the constitutional questions for office. Governing bodies are not free to ordain or install candidates who do not affirm all of the constitutional questions for office, and therefore should not approve the examinations of such candidates. Moreover, a governing body is free to make its determination that a particular candidate fails to affirm essential tenets of the Reformed faith, and therefore, to deny ordination to that candidate. The examination of each candidate must be performed individually and may not be constrained by any prior action of the body or any statement of faith that does not have confessional status in the church. Creating such a rule for part of the church directly violates the right of the whole

church to establish confessional standards and standards for ordination. It also violates the rights of sessions and presbyteries to exercise their own judgment and to appeal contrary judgments of higher governing bodies "... till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church" (*Book of Order*, G-1.0400).

"G-12.0402

"c. *The presbyteries and sessions of New Synod will also use the following statement to examine candidates for church office with regard to their manner of life:*

"Along with the broader constitutional standards for manner of life (e.g., G-6.0106a), New Synod also holds to the standard that its officers will live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness.

"Those who cannot make this affirmation for their own manner of life will not be approved for ordination or installation in an office, or for membership in a presbytery ..." (Item 04-03, proposed changes to G-12.0402c)

The standard proposed by the overture for the New Synod is currently part of the Constitution of the church (G-6.0106b). No special statement of this standard is required. Should the constitutional standard change, it would be up to the examining and ordaining body to determine whether a particular candidate satisfied the constitutional standards of office then in effect. A governing body could not adopt a unique standard that would bind the right of another governing body, or a subsequent assembly of the same governing body, to exercise its judgment of a particular candidate by imposing an extra-constitutional restriction on that assembly.

"G-12.0402

"d. *Congregations and ministers of the Word and Sacrament within New Synod will celebrate marriages only between a man and woman...*" (Ibid., proposed changes to G-12.-0402d).

Actions of an officer or member of the church that violate the Constitution are subject to discipline through judicial process. Actions of governing bodies are subject to remedial action. An individual or governing body so accused has the right to appeal the judgment of a lower governing body to a higher governing body as to whether their actions are or are not constitutional, "... till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church" (*Book of Order*, G-1.4000). This provision would, potentially, give special exemption to one part of the church from the collective wisdom of the whole church in discerning the mind and will of Christ, and thereby violates the essential unity of the church expressed by a single Constitution.

"G-12.0402

"e. *Congregations of New Synod, in welcoming all God's children with the unconditional love of Jesus Christ, will also endeavor to teach biblical sexual ethics according to the traditional understandings ..."* (Ibid., proposed changes to G-12.0402e).

This provision violates the rights of a session "to develop and supervise the church school and the educational program of the church" (*Book of Order*, G-10.0102f) by requiring a particular curriculum and to imposing a particular interpretation of Scripture and the confessions.

"G-12.0402

"f. *Presbyteries and congregations within New Synod will give deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament regular opportunities to renew their ordination vows and reaffirm these additional standards.*" (Item 04-03, proposed changes to G-12/0402f).

The affirmations required of officers of the church are limited to those explicitly required by the Constitution. Any required affirmation of another standard, or of an additional standard is a violation of the essential right of conscience of the individual. Ministers are required to affirm the constitutional questions of office when they are ordained, and whenever they are installed to a new call. To require a reaffirmation at other times has the effect of turning affirmations of faith into a loyalty oath. The effect of such a provision would be to allow presbyteries and congregations to purge from office persons who were ordained on behalf of the whole church, but who do not conform to the unique standards for ordination of one part of the church.

"G-12.0403

"After the first meeting of New Synod, any presbytery shall have the right to transfer into or out of New Synod..." (Ibid, proposed changes to G-12.0403).

This provision violates the connectional nature of our polity by allowing presbyteries to transfer between synods without the consultation or approval of higher governing bodies (i.e., the synod of origin and the General Assembly). As the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission ruled in *Johnston, et al. v Heartland Presbytery*, "... Our unity in Christ and the relational nature of our governance require dialogue between and among governing bodies, thus giving life to the mutuality and reciprocity between [governing bodies] in furthering the great ends of the church" (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 462).

"G-12.0404

"Any presbytery that becomes a part of New Synod will consist of its member churches and ministers of the Word and Sacrament on the date it becomes a member of New Synod. New Synod has the power to determine the geographical boundaries of its presbyteries without the need for approval from General Assembly..." (Item 04-03, proposed changes to G-12.0404).

While it is rare, the constitution does allow for the transfer of whole presbyteries from one synod to another. However, the unique aspects of the New Synod create a constitutional issue by requiring all congregations (both sessions and members) to become part of a synod with a polity that is fundamentally different from that which they assented to in membership and/or ordination. This imposes a special burden on the conscience of members and officers.

In addition, this provision gives New Synod the right to determine the bounds of its constituent presbyteries without the consent of either the General Assembly, or, potentially, its own existing presbyteries in violation of G-13.0103n. This would potentially allow the synod, through maximizing the number of presbyteries in its jurisdiction, to have inordinate and non-proportional representation in the General Assembly.

"G-12.0405

"A congregation shall have the right to vote on dismissal to a presbytery not in New Synod at a duly called congregational meeting. Such dismissal, with real property and all other property, shall be effective upon the vote of the receiving presbytery to accept the church into its membership" (Item 04-03, proposed changes to G-12.0405).

First, this provision overrides the rights and powers of presbyteries. Per G-11.0103i, only the presbytery has the right to divide, dissolve, or dismiss a congregation. Similarly, per G-8.0601 only the presbytery has the right to determine which faction of a congregation in schism represents the true church for purposes of property control and ecclesiastical governance.

Second, by failing to restrict the dismissal of congregations to presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), this provision effectively nullifies the property trust clause found in G-8.0201 for congregations of the New Synod. This not only affects the property rights of the denomination relative to particular churches of the New Synod, but could have the consequence of affecting the validity of the property trust clause of the denomination in civil courts for the whole denomination.

"G-12.0406

"A congregation shall have the right to vote on dismissal to a presbytery within New Synod at a duly called congregational meeting..." (Ibid., proposed changes to G-12.0406).

This provision is subject to the same criticisms applied to proposed G-12.0403 and G-12.0405. Moreover, it stands in contradiction with proposed G-12.0404, in that it fails to distinguish between congregations already in the New Synod and those that are not. Thus, the New Synod itself would be unable to enforce its own geographic boundaries were a congregation in one presbytery of the New Synod to vote to be dismissed another presbytery of the New Synod.

"G-12.0407

"The provisions of this section, G-12.0400, supersede and control any other provisions of the Book of Order to the contrary" (Item 04-03, proposed changes to G-12.0407).

This provision effectively admits that the purpose of the overture is to create two churches with two constitutions. A provision that allows one part of the church to override the Constitution is *de facto* unconstitutional.

"G-12.0408

"The provisions of this section, G-12.0400, may not be amended without the consent of New Synod. A majority vote of each of its presbyteries is required to give this consent" (Item 04-03, proposed changes to G-12.0408).

This provision effectively admits that the purpose of the overture is to create two churches with two constitutions. It also inverts the principle of hierarchical governance found in G-1.4000 and G-4.0301. Moreover, it gives the power to individual presbyteries to veto amendments voted on by the whole church.

“G-12.0409

“*Within 180 days of the vote of the General Assembly to send this amendment to the presbyteries for consideration, any presbytery shall have the right to become one of the originating presbyteries of New Synod by a two-thirds vote of its members...*” *Ibid.*, proposed changes to G-12.0409).

It is unadvisable to allow presbyteries to make binding decisions regarding their affiliations before the amendment is approved and enacted by the church, as it shortcuts the opportunity for knowledgeable deliberation and wise judgment by the presbytery.

“G-12.0410

“*At the first meeting of New Synod, the commissioners will adopt a name for New Synod and advise the Office of the General Assembly...*” (Item 04-03, proposed changes to G-12.0410).

The naming of synods is regulated by the General Assembly and requires the approval of the General Assembly, not only for purposes of order but also to avoid unnecessary civil legal complications.

In sum, the effect of this overture will be to exacerbate the proclivity of the church to dissolve itself into associations based on affinity. This proclivity is antithetical to the call of God to engage Christ’s mission together, to honor the critiques of brothers and sisters of faith who disagree, and to plan and work together to live out our calling to be “... the sign in and for the world of the new reality which God has made available to people in Jesus Christ” (*Book of Order*, G-3.0200).

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 04-03 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Item 04-03 deals with amending G-12.0000 regarding creation of a “new synod.”

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove this overture.

Rationale

Overtures that affirm “new synod” structures and “flexibility in presbytery membership” make it too easy to exclude others on the basis of theological or experiential differences, are inconsistent with the Reformed tradition and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s representational form of governance, and threaten to dissolve the unity of the body of Christ to which we are all called as people of faith. The PC(USA) is a connectional church with representational governance.

Overtures that allow churches and presbyteries to choose their membership on the basis of “theological, missional, or other considerations of importance to those congregations” threaten to dissolve the unity of the church as a whole, to diminish financial resources that could be available for joint mission projects, and to create community of uniformity and like-mindedness as opposed to a community of faith representing the full body of Christ.

In Reformed tradition and the history of Reformed communities of faith, theological disagreements, faithful discussion, diversity of views, and honest debate have provided the occasion for creativity. Think about the reformers, abolitionists, and civil rights activists: What if difference had prevailed over the call to live and act as part of Christ’s body? Political issues may be temporarily side-stepped by creating a “new synod” or “flexibility in presbytery membership,” but it will come at the expense of our communal call to live as the body of Christ, each one of us an integral part of it.

Item 04-04

[The assembly disapproved Item 04-04. See p. 28.]

On Amending G-11.0000 to Provide Flexibility in Presbytery Membership—From the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler.

In order to accommodate the diverse belief systems, theological positions, and mission designs that currently exist within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and to encourage a kind of flexible equilibrium, the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall the first paragraph of G-11.0101 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“G-11.0101 Membership

~~“Presbytery is a corporate expression of the church consisting of all the churches and ministers of the Word and Sacrament within a certain district. Presbytery is a corporate expression of the church consisting of churches and ministers of the Word and Sacrament who have chosen to affiliate based on geographic, theological, missional, or other considerations of importance to those congregations. When a presbytery meets, each church shall be represented by an elder commissioned by the session with the following additional provisions:”~~

2. Shall G-11.0103 be amended by striking “j.” and re-lettering section headings for current “k.” through “aa.” As “j.” through “z.”

~~“j. to control the location of new churches and of churches desiring to move;”~~

3. Shall a new section, “G-11.0600,” be inserted after G-11.0504, which would read as follows:

“G-11.0600 Changes in Membership

“a. Congregations may choose membership in a particular presbytery based on geographic, theological, missional, or other considerations of importance to those congregations.

“b. A congregation may seek to change presbytery membership by a two-thirds vote at a properly called congregational meeting.

“c. The receiving presbytery will accept the congregation’s request for membership by a majority vote at a properly called presbytery meeting.

“d. The minister(s) of Word and Sacrament of the joining congregation become members of the receiving presbytery when it is determined by the committee on ministry of the receiving presbytery that their call is in order (G-14.0532–.0534).

“e. A church may only transfer its membership to another presbytery within one day’s reasonable travel.

“f. Upon transferring to another presbytery, a church may not change its presbytery membership for at least four years and shall covenant to not seek dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for at least five years.”

Rationale

It is by following Jesus Christ, as attested for us in Scripture, that the unity of our faith will be made visible today as it has in the past.

Jesus Christ alone is head of the church. Jesus alone is the source of the church’s unity.

Section G-1.0100c affirms that “Christ gives to his Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its officers and ordinances.” Our unity is rooted in Christ. The church’s purity does not spring from technical or legal means, but from Jesus Christ. Attempting to keep the church unified and pure without providing freedom for Christ’s Spirit to move is not helpful.

Section G-1.0301(1) (a) affirms that “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.” Flexibility in presbytery membership provides options for theological and missional partnerships not possible under the rigid geographical criteria that worked well in other times.

Section G-3.0401d affirms that God is calling us “to a new openness to God’s continuing reformation of the Church ecumenical, that it might be a more effective instrument of mission in the world.” There are many signs that, on a changing cultural landscape, old models are breaking down and new forms of denominationalism in the United States are developing at local, regional, and national levels. These new forms cannot emerge from strict adherence to existing structures; they must be permitted and nurtured by a denomination willing to seek flexibility and equilibrium.

The intended purpose of flexible equilibrium in presbytery membership is to provide safe opportunity for congregations and judicatories to express shared, deeply held convictions. To seek flexibility regarding essential belief, without providing a corresponding freedom of association based on those very convictions, is contradictory and ultimately self-defeating.

Under a more flexible system of presbytery membership, the power of the upper judicatories is diminished (for example, in discipline and enforcement) and that of lower judicatories (congregations and presbyteries) increases.

A flexible plan of presbytery membership provides an affirmation of the Missional Church's understanding of non-hierarchical structures and ministries. It affirms the congregation as the primary agent of mission and ministry and the presbytery as secondary agent for the support, encouragement, and accountability of congregations and pastors. Any other judicatories are tertiary agents for the support, encouragement, and accountability of the presbytery.

Allowing congregations flexibility in their presbytery membership provides the basis for mission and ministry under a generous and broad orthodox creedal Reformed Christianity. Membership flexibility acknowledges the current era of diverse styles and forms while maintaining the historic unity of the church.

Competing factions within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) appeal to Historic Presbyterianism. Flexible equilibrium is, by contrast, future-oriented while at the same time providing an affirmation of Presbyterianism in its connectional-accountable sense. It acknowledges the need for one another while rejecting both institutional coercion and radical ecclesiastical autonomy.

A flexible plan for presbytery membership allows congregations and judicatories to work for reformation and renewal in local congregations and in presbyteries only as they serve the local congregation. This flexibility allows the denomination to focus on positive change rather than defensive battles.

Finally, this overture grants a relief of conscience to those churches within a presbytery where the majority has chosen a theological path in which the minority cannot continue because of conscience. Rather than leaving the denomination, this overture offers a measure of grace through freedom of affiliation within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

For these reasons, the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler urges the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve this overture.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-04

Advice on Item 04-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 04-04.

The present overture is substantially similar in intent to Item 05-23 submitted to the 217th General Assembly (2006) by the Presbytery of Beaver Butler, and Item 03-05 submitted to the 218th General Assembly (2008) by the Presbytery of Beaver Butler. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised, and the General Assembly disapproved, both items (see *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 38, 40, 433–438; *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 34, 140–144).

Rationale

The overture seeks to change the nature of a presbytery from a geographical expression of the church to one based on theological or missional affinity, or “other considerations of importance.” In so doing, it radically alters not only the nature of the presbytery, but fundamental affirmations of Presbyterian polity.

One of the core affirmations of our ecclesiology is the first “mark of the church” found in the Nicene Creed: the church is one. The connectional unity among congregations and governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) contained in our theology and expressed in our polity is organic in nature. That is, the parts are connected to the whole not on a covenantal or voluntary basis, but as parts of a single body. As G-1.0400 states, “... the several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one Church of Christ ...” and “... that a larger part of the Church, or a representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein; that, in like manner, a representation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part, and to all the parts united ...” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0400).

The proposed amendment to G-11.0101 strikes at the heart of this organic connectionalism by affirming (1) that membership in a particular presbytery is primarily the choice of the individual congregation; and therefore (2) that participation of congregations in the connectional church is a function of “affiliation” from below rather than an inherent quality. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that not only is this contrary to our historic understanding of the unity of the church, but may subvert the ability of the whole church to govern the individual parts.

The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to Overture 05-23 submitted to the 217th General Assembly (2006) is still relevant to the present overture:

This overture represents a dramatic departure from basic assumptions of the *Constitution* about the way the church is organized in three ways. First, the overture assumes that lower governing bodies should be able to choose their affiliation with higher governing bodies. By contrast, our polity has understood that the creation of lower governing bodies (sessions, presbyteries, and synods) is the responsibility of higher governing bodies (presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly, respectively). By allowing lower governing bodies to select their places of membership, the overture fundamentally reverses the understanding of this relationship.

Second, this overture would permit congregations ... to select governing body affiliation on grounds of theological and missional concerns, as well as “other considerations of importance” ... Under the terms of this overture, it would become possible for congregations ... to affiliate with presbyteries ... with whom they find persons of similar mind on whatever is the controversial issue of the day. While the church has found value in the de-

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velopment of affinity groups and networks of like-minded individuals, they form an insufficient foundation on which to build a system of governance. Indeed, the foundations of our polity insist that the church “as it gathers for worship and orders its corporate life will display a rich variety of form, practice, language, program, nurture, and service ...” (G-4.0401). ...

... [T]he effect of this overture could be significantly to increase the number of congregations whose presbytery membership lies outside their geographical location. This will make it difficult for the presbytery to fulfill its mandate to “... be responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout its geographical district ...” (G-11.0103), to “develop strategy for the mission of the church in its area ...” (G-11.0103a), and to carry out such geographically defined tasks as “to control the location of new churches and ... churches desiring to move” (G-11.0103j).

At stake here is not merely a style of polity but a central ecclesiological question: is the church finally a voluntary association of the like-minded, or is it called into being by the sovereign God through the grace of Jesus Christ, who gathered to himself persons of vastly different persuasion, background, and lifestyle? (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 437)

The formation of non-geographic presbyteries is currently governed by G-12.0103k, which gives the synod responsibility, “... to create non-geographic presbyteries in order to meet the mission needs (G-11.0103a; G-12.0102a) of identified racial ethnic or immigrant congregations; subject to the approval of the General Assembly” (*Book of Order*, G-12-0102k). The present overture would violate that right and responsibility of the synod and General Assembly.

The overture is unclear as to whether it intends that a transfer could be accomplished without the consent of (or even consultation with) the presbytery of membership. As G-11.0103i would not be amended by this overture, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that under the proposed amendment, any transfer of a congregation between presbyteries would require appropriate consultation and action of the dismissing presbytery.

The overture cites obsolete references to chapter XIV of the Form of Government regarding the reception of ministers. The correct provision is found in G-11.0402:

The presbytery, through its appropriate committee, shall examine each minister or candidate who seeks membership in it on his or her Christian faith and views in theology, the Sacraments, and the government of this church, except as provided in G-14.0481. Every minister seeking membership in a presbytery shall have a call to a pastoral relation within the presbytery, or from a governing body or agency as defined in G-11.0410, or be entering a work defined in G-11.0411, for which the receiving presbytery shall give its permission, or shall be honorably retired as defined in G-11.0412. (*Book of Order*, G-11.0402)

Every minister entering the presbytery, whether by accepting a new call, or by the transfer of a congregation where a call currently exists, shall be subject to the examination of the receiving presbytery. For ministers previously ordained, this responsibility may be delegated by a presbytery to its committee on ministry.

The proposed G-11.0600e, limiting church transfers to another presbytery “within one day’s reasonable travel” is insufficiently defined, and potentially creates a double standard for congregations in populous areas and those in isolated areas.

The proposed G-11.0600f, which requires a four-year wait before a second transfer and a five-year wait before dismissal to another denomination, does not provide sufficient stability to presbyteries to carry out the mandated functions.

Finally, as stated in the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice to the similar overture submitted to the 218th General Assembly (2008):

The effect of this overture will be to exacerbate the proclivity of the church to dissolve itself into associations based on affinity. This proclivity is antithetical to the call of God to engage Christ’s mission together, to honor the critiques of brothers and sisters of faith who disagree, and to plan and work together to live out our calling to be “the sign in and for the world of the new reality God is making available to people in Jesus Christ” (G-3.0200). *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 144)

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: If both recommendations are approved, the proposed changes would have the effect of amending the proposed Form of Government at G-3.0301 and G-3.0303.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-04 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Item 04-04 deals with amending G-11.0000 to provide flexibility in presbytery membership.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 04-03.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-04

Comment on Item 04-04—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 04-04.

Rationale

When the PCUS and UPCUSA reunited in 1983, the Articles of Agreement established a process for determining presbytery boundaries. The decision to use geographic boundaries, rather than other criteria (i.e. racial/ethnic presbyteries), was stated as follows:

On the principle that a geographically related area makes possible greater fellowship and ease in the conduct of the business of a governing body, it shall be the further goal of the Special Committee that the resulting governing bodies shall be of sufficient strength and geographical proximity to enhance the total mission of the Church... (*Book of Order*, Articles of Agreement, 7.4)

Thus, the then-existing racial/ethnic presbyteries were to be dissolved and incorporated into their local geographical areas, with the understanding that committees on representation would be established to ensure that racial/ethnic leadership within the new presbyteries would be encouraged, retained, and monitored. The PC(USA) currently has five non-geographic presbyteries (Dakota, Hanmi, Midwest Hanmi, Eastern Korean, and Atlantic Korean American). At the 218th General Assembly (2010), the General Assembly reaffirmed, and the presbyteries concurred, that geographic presbyteries would be the norm by the adoption of amended language to G-12.0102k:

... When such mission needs arise inside a congregation that lies within a synod lacking such a nongeographic presbytery, that synod may permit, with the approval of the General Assembly and unless some legal or ecclesiastical issue would prohibit, that congregation to join a nongeographic presbytery inside the bounds of another synod with the consent of that other synod, the geographic presbytery, and the nongeographic presbytery; such presbyteries should be formed only on the basis of language, and there should be a sunset clause (end date) added at the formation of each nongeographic presbytery. (*Book of Order*, G-12.0102k)

To shift the establishment of presbyteries to a format based on “theological, missional, or other considerations of importance to those congregations” would ultimately reduce the PC(USA) to a ‘separate, but equal’ kind of denomination, which denies the call that Christians are to be one, as Christ prayed in John 17.

To exhibit the kingdom to the world, we need to find ways to work together and lift each other up in leadership and discipleship, not send each other to our separate corners. With our current model of presbytery, rooted in Christ’s prayer that we “may be one” and Paul’s vision that “[t]here is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female...” (Gal. 3:28), we are called to work together and not seek to establish presbyteries of only like-minded congregations. This is an important part of what is meant by the PC(USA)’s commitment to full participation of diversity and inclusiveness in G-4.0403: “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life...” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0403).

While GACOR believes that the above considerations are sufficient for disapproval of this overture, there is an additional aspect of representation that should be considered. From a strictly demographic perspective, the proposed amendment to the *Book of Order* discriminates against congregations in geographical areas where it would not be possible to transfer membership to a presbytery “within one day’s reasonable travel,” such as Utah or much of the western United States.

Item 04-05

[The assembly answered Item 04-05 by the action taken on Item 04-06. See p. 28.]

On Creating a Special Committee to Explore the Roles and Relationships of Synods and Presbyteries to Each Other, to the Agencies, and to Congregations—From the Synod of the Southwest.

The Synod of the Southwest overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct that a special committee be created to explore and examine the roles and relationships of synods and presbyteries within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [the “PC(USA)”]—to each other, to the agencies of the General Assembly (GA), and to congregations.

Such a process should include:

1. Current diversity in the role and function of middle governing bodies.
2. Demographics and financial realities that affect the role and function of synods and presbyteries.
3. The role of each governing body in its oversight role—presbyteries of congregations, synods of presbyteries, and General Assembly of synods—both historically and in present experience.
4. Relationships with General Assembly agencies in role and function.
5. Recommendations for future roles and responsibilities to be made to a subsequent General Assembly about changes in middle governing bodies that may best serve the PC(USA) in the 21st century.

Rationale

Jesus Christ has given the church preaching and teaching, praise and prayer, and Baptism and the Lord's Supper as means of fulfilling its service of God among men [and women]. These gifts remain, but the church is obliged to change the forms of its service in ways appropriate to different generations and cultures. (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.48)

The church thus orders its life as an institution with a constitution, government, officers, finances, and administrative rules. These are instruments of mission, not ends in themselves. Different orders have served the gospel, and none can claim exclusive validity. A presbyterian polity recognizes the responsibility of all members for ministry and maintains the organic relation of all congregations in the church. It seeks to protect the church from exploitation by ecclesiastical or secular power and ambition. Every church order must be open to such reformation as may be required to make it a more effective instrument of the mission of reconciliation. (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.40)

1. The question of the future of middle governing bodies is not a question about only one type of governing body but about the governance and mission system of the entire PC(USA). To make deliberate changes to any one part of the system will have implications for the other current partners. Such change urges serious conversation about historic practices as well as present and future needs.

2. Many presbyteries and synods are involved, and have been involved in major change due to demographics, financial realities, changing understandings of their capacities, roles, and responsibilities. However, the PC(USA) has not undertaken a study of roles and responsibilities of middle governing bodies (presbyteries and synods) since the early 1970s. That study and subsequent action resulted primarily in broad regional synods and the presbyteries with individual staff structure we have today. General Assembly structure has changed significantly in those years but the organizational understandings that facilitate relationships with middle governing bodies have remained essentially the same.

3. It is the responsibility of the General Assembly to oversee synods, but there has been no review process of synods in almost forty years. There has, however, been a review of each General Assembly agency and the relationship of the agencies to one another.

4. The roles and responsibilities of each one of the General Assembly agencies have evolved over the last forty years but there has been no study of the relationships between middle governing bodies and the agencies.

5. Following Reunion in 1983, the General Assembly appointed a special committee on boundaries. The work of that committee was solely to adjust boundaries with overlapping presbyteries of the two former churches. The committee was not given the task of addressing roles and responsibilities, and did not do so.

6. Synods and presbyteries have evolved significantly over the last forty years. No two synods or presbyteries operate in identical fashion, nor do they relate to each other in identical ways. The similarities are often most recognizable by ecclesiastical process, not by mission priorities or programs. Each has sought to find a way to be flexible and responsive to a particular context for ministry and the data is not either summarized or understood across governing body lines, and sometimes not in relationship to the General Assembly agencies.

7. The role of presbyteries and synods is both missional and ecclesiastical. A more comprehensive review of the existing roles and responsibilities of governing bodies and the implications of church organizational shifts would carefully consider the implications of such change and will assist the PC(USA) in planning for its future ministry both regionally and nationally.

Concurrences to Item 04-05 from the Presbyteries of Abingdon, Boise, Santa Fe, Sierra Blanca, and Wabash; and from the Synod of Mid-Atlantic.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-05*Advice on Item 04-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 04-05 with the following advice:

Because Item 04-05 and Item 04-06 (a COGA recommendation) share common concerns and similar recommendations, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) is structuring its advice so as to be applicable should either request—or a combination of both—be approved by committee and brought to the floor of the assembly.

Both Item 04-05 and the Item 04-06 would be constitutionally permissible and present no immediate constitutional changes requiring an ACC opinion. Both present actions the General Assembly already has the power to undertake.

The most definitive constitutional issue is the distinction between a “committee” and a “commission” (G-9.0500). A “special committee” would be charged with study, consultation, and reporting recommendations for changes in middle governing bodies that would best serve the denomination. A “commission on middle governing bodies” would be charged not only with study, consultation, and bringing recommendations that may include changes to the Constitution, but also with the authority to implement certain actions of the 219th General Assembly (2010), including, but not limited to, organizing, dividing or combining synods and presbyteries upon their request.

If a “special committee” is formed, there are no immediate constitutional issues involved.

If a “General Assembly Commission on Middle Governing Bodies” is formed, the tasks, responsibilities, and powers of the commission must be enumerated clearly and in detail—and the boundaries and limits of such a commission clearly identified.

Both recommendations could create bodies with the charge and authority to bring potential recommendations that could result in substantial changes to the Constitution—either the existing constitution or the proposed new Form of Government. For this reason, the ACC advises that any such committee or commission include at least one member with substantial training and experience in constitutional/polity matters.

[Item 10-05 has a similar objective to the above and the committee may want to review that recommendation as part of the discussion on the above.]

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 04-05 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) concurs with the issues raised by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) on Item 04-05 and advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 04-05 be approved and that it direct the ACC to create a special sub-committee (of the ACC) to study and bring to the 220th General Assembly (2012) a report on the roles and relationships of synods and presbyteries to each other, to General Assembly agencies, and to congregations.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recognizes that pressures on synods and presbyteries caused by demographic changes and financial limitations during the past twenty years have resulted in varying adjustments in governing body relationships across the PC(USA), and that there is need for review of these relationships and possible recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012). Having the special committee be a sub-committee of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) will insure that the expertise on constitutional and structural issues will be available to the process.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-05

Comment on Item 04-05—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) recommends that this overture be answered by approving COGA’s recommendation, Item 04-06, regarding the formation of an administrative commission on middle governing body mission and function.

Rationale

This overture calls for the formation of a special committee to review the role and function of middle governing bodies and to bring any recommendations to a subsequent General Assembly.

The process proposed in recommendations 1–5 would be included within the responsibilities of the administrative commission in the COGA recommendation (1–3). Further, having an administrative commission with some limited authority would be more effective in moving forward with General Assembly approved actions than a special committee, which studies and reports its recommendations to a future General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the OGA.

Item 04-06

[The assembly approved Item 04-06 with amendment. See p. 28.] [Floor amendments are shown with a gray screen background.]

The **[Assembly]** Committee on **[the Office of the General Assembly]** **[Middle Governing Body Issues]** recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Moderators of the 218th and 219th General Assemblies (2008 and 2010), in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, to appoint twenty-one persons to a General Assembly Commission on Middle Governing Bodies with the **[understanding that the Moderators, as they make their appointments, shall make an intentional effort for theological diversity. The commission shall have the]** following focus and powers:

1. The commission will consult with sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the wider church on the mission and function of middle governing bodies. **[Such a process should include:**

a. current diversity in the role and functions of middle governing bodies.

b. demographics and financial realities that affect the role and function of synods and presbyteries.

c. the role of each governing body in its oversight role--presbyteries of congregations, synods of presbyteries, and General Assembly of synods--both historically and in present experience.

d. relationships with General Assembly agencies in role and function.

2. The commission will develop models that reflect the roles of middle governing bodies in our polity and the changing context of our witness in the United States and their relationships with other governing bodies.

3. The commission will prepare a report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) of its findings and any recommended *Book of Order* changes. **Recommendation for future roles and responsibilities will also be made to the 220th General Assembly about changes in middle governing bodies that may best serve the PCUSA in the 21st century.**

4. The commission will implement, within the powers granted it, any decisions forwarded from the 219th General Assembly (2010) and approved by presbyteries regarding the form and function of middle governing bodies with a report to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

5. **[In response to actions] [By direction] of the 219th General Assembly (2010), or upon [request of the presbytery and synod] [upon a majority affirmative vote of the affected presbytery or presbyteries or a majority affirmative vote of the presbyteries in the affected synod or synods], the commission is authorized to act as the General Assembly according to**

a. G-13.0103m: “to organize new synods and to divide, unite, or otherwise combine synods or portions of synods previously existing;”

b. G-13.0103n: “to approve the organization, division, uniting, or combining of presbyteries or portions of presbyteries by synods.”

6. The commission will supervise the Special Administrative Review Committee on Puerto Rico and act on any recommendations they may make within the powers given to the commission.

[7. The actions of the commission shall require a two-thirds majority for approval.]

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$47,667; (2011) \$89,555; (2012) \$36,570—OGA—GAMC Per Capita]

Rationale

Many perceive this age as one of great transition for the Body of Christ. Our congregations and governing bodies are changing worship styles, devotional practices, their forms and functions to meet new needs and to position themselves for the future. Although some modifications have been motivated by financial necessity, the majority of these shifts are the result of the prayerful deliberations of presbyteries and synods struggling to be more faithful, more missional, and more effective stewards of their resources.

The principles of our Presbyterian Polity trust in the fundamental work of the Spirit of Christ expressed when presbyters are gathered together in governing bodies. But how are those governing bodies best organized to be responsive both to the Spirit of Christ and the changing opportunities for discipleship? Are our historical structures the best platforms for carrying our mission into the future? Where can the General Assembly carefully discern the wider scope of middle governing body form, function, and mission?

The last major examinations of the structure and purpose of middle governing bodies occurred before Reunion. Studies by the former United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) resulted in the passage of Overture H (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1969, Part I, pp. 459 ff) and the creation of regional synods, new presbytery boundaries, and redefined relationships between governing bodies. In 1968, the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) convened the “Conference on Restructuring Synods and Presbyteries” whose recommendations on the meaning of middle governing bodies were adopted by the General Assembly later that year and resulted in similar restructuring (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1968, Appendix, pp. 251 ff). The Reunion of the streams that occurred in 1983 rearranged some boundaries but basically preserved the work of these two former studies. Thus it is fair to say that no significant study of middle governing bodies has taken place for the past four decades. The changing cultural context, the shifts that middle governing bodies are themselves already making, and a new domestic mission frontier all make this the right time, God’s time for us to examine the role, function and form of presbyteries and synods.

The General Assembly Moderator appointed this special committee of five members in July 2009, after various communications were received by OGA from members of the synod in Puerto Rico describing conflict and dissension within the synod and presbyteries. The committee met with ten leaders (stated clerks and moderators of the four governing bodies, plus the synod executive and council moderator) within the Synod of Boriquén in August 2009, and then attended the synod’s three-day November meeting in Puerto Rico. The committee has asked for feedback from all Boriquén ministers and elders through a short written survey administered by Research Services. The committee has also received numerous written communications from presbyteries and individuals about the situation in the church in Puerto Rico.

The committee believes that it is important for them to continue to function as a committee in dialogue with the church in Puerto Rico. They foresee the distinct possibility that the General Assembly may be asked to implement recommendations that the committee may make in the months ahead. For this reason, the special committee will request the General Assembly to appoint an administrative commission that would have power to act between assemblies on the special committee's recommendation, which are likely to include the exploration of combining the three presbyteries into one and putting that presbytery into a different synod.

Therefore, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly believes it will be important to coordinate the General Assembly's commission work (implementing directives from the assembly), with its work as a deliberative committee (studying the future form and function of middle governing bodies), by naming this commission. The lessons learned implementing the recommendations of the Special Committee on Administrative Review and any other initiatives of the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding middle governing bodies will positively inform the larger examination of middle governing bodies that the commission is also conducting.

The General Assembly has received numerous overtures, reports, and other concerns about the life and health of the middle governing body system. The limited time of the General Assembly does not allow for a focused and thoughtful approach to the future of middle governing bodies. A commission with the limited authority of the General Assembly can empower solutions and create new opportunities for middle governing bodies to flourish while it considers models for middle governing bodies and makes proposals to the 220th General Assembly (2012). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly believes that the creation of this commission will provide the consultation, the leadership, and the time for these critical issues.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-06

Advice on Item 04-06—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

Please see ACC advice at Item 04-05.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 04-06 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-06

Comment on Item 04-06—from the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) offers the following comment for the General Assembly's consideration regarding Item 04-06. If the will of the body is to accept Item 04-06, the General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct that a member of the GACOR be one of the twenty-one persons appointed to the proposed administrative commission.

Rationale

The creation of a commission on Middle Governing Bodies directly affects the work of committees on representation at all levels of the church.

1. According to the *Book of Order*, the committee on representation's "... main function shall be to advise the governing bodies with respect to their membership and to that of their committees, boards, agencies, and other units in implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness to ensure fair and effective representation in the decision making of the church" (*Book of Order*, G-9.0105b). The General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) have complimentary and parallel, but different, roles and responsibilities. For a commission with such broad responsibilities, it is important that both the GANC and the GACOR be involved in the consultation process: the GANC with regard to recommendation of persons as candidates to serve and the GACOR to the representation and participation.

2. The commission, as it has been recommended, has broad powers, range, and scope of responsibilities that must be enumerated for faithful and informed actions. It is an unusual and unique response to a perceived need of the denomination. The GACOR had a variety of reactions to this recommendation, with some members recommending disapproval. It has struggled with its response. Having a member of the GACOR serve on the commission is a middle way to address concerns about participation and representation as well as the affect actions of the commission may have on the work of committees on representation.

Item 04-06 proposes one of the responsibilities assigned to the commission would be powers to review and recommend changes to the functions of the middle governing bodies. As a commission, the implied power would be to act on behalf of the General Assembly, if not constrained by the original action. Synods relate to the General Assembly Committee on Representation. Any changes to their make-up would affect the number of persons serving on GACOR as well as then number of

entities reporting to the committee. As a locus for justice concerns for under-represented persons, synods have often been the level of church structure that deals with diversity and inclusion issues and accountability. The commission's power to address the church's mission and mandate, adjusting synod responsibilities and/or eliminating synods, raises concern for the GACOR that the synod work of dealing with representational and participation issues may be shifted primarily to the presbyteries.

The GACOR currently engages with sixteen synods in a ministry of mutual accountability and review. Any change to the number or functions of synods would produce significant changes in the ability of the GACOR to function. Implications for retaining this function are also changed if it moves to presbyteries. There are 173 presbyteries today. Even if this is reduced by twenty, GACOR might be asked to receive, review, and respond to over 150 annual reports in addition to the tasks it has to resource, advise, and advocate with General Assembly and its agencies. If the GACOR continued to only have the number of members equal to the number of synods, the task of encouraging the denomination to more fully "exhibit the kingdom to the world" by becoming more fully representational in its decision-making and achieving more full participation in leadership would become daunting, if not impossible.

At reunion, the new denomination made a commitment to groups historically underrepresented in the leadership of the church that the structure would dedicate resources to being intentional about representation and inclusion, and advocate for ensuring fair representation. Historically excluded groups have a lot of history with the denomination. They have experienced and witnessed injustice, and finds difficulty trusting. It is imperative that the Presbyterian church continue to uphold its commitment to diversity in the leadership of decision-making bodies and to representing the full bounty of the gifts of our members within that leadership. Without intentionality it is far too easy to pass on the opportunity to hear voices different from the dominant group. The GACOR believes that it is essential that someone whose experiences, skills, and direct interest are to "ensure fair and effective representation in the decision making of the church" be a part of the proposed commission if created, and be at the table as a full voting member in the process of reviewing the structure and responsibilities of middle governing bodies.

Item 04-07

[The assembly approved Item 04-07 with amendment. See pp. 28, 29-30.]

Report of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén in Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries (SCARB).

[For a Spanish translation of this report, see <http://www.pc-biz.org/Resources/5414cd2b-c7f8-4dcc-8ff4-767e790cdc41/scarb%20Spanish-version%20with%20GA%20amendments.pdf>.]

The Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén in Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries (SCARB) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

A. *Creation of an Administrative Commission*

1. **Create an administrative commission to oversee the work and mission of the Synod of Boriquén and the Presbyteries of San Juan, the Northwest, and the Southwest (the Synod) and, if necessary, to intervene in that work. [Should the assembly approve Item 04-06, the commission recommended in Item 04-06 shall be designated as the Administrative Commission for this recommendation.]**

Rationale for Recommendation A.1.

As the Special Administrative Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén (SCARB) did its work of assessing the issues that exist in the Synod, it became evident that the Synod is rife with power struggles among individuals, groups, and the middle governing bodies of the Synod itself that undermine the ability of the church in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to focus on Christ's Great Commission to "[g]o ... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28: 19, 20 NRSV). This situation, though apparent to many in leadership within the Synod, continues to escalate rather than plateau or lessen.

Further, it has been the experience of the committee that suggestions it has made to the leadership of the Synod have gone unheeded (e.g. recommendation that the Synod's personnel committee begin functioning immediately and engage in a process of evaluating all paid staff before the end of 2009) and we believe that only when a body is created with the authority to mandate and implement needed changes and actions will such changes and actions be addressed.

~~2. [In creating an administrative commission, the 219th General Assembly (2010) authorizes the commission to designate a subcommittee composed largely of the current members of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén (SCARB), with the further ability to supplement that subcommittee with no more than two additional persons, bringing the composition of SCARB to no more than seven members, to work with the~~

~~Synod in implementing the directions of the administrative commission and providing guidance to the administrative commission in its designated roles] [The charge for SCARB shall be extended for two years, and SCARB shall be re-constituted by the Administrative Commission as a subcommittee of the commission, and the commission shall be empowered to appoint current members of SCARB and sufficient additional members to meet the requirements of G-9.0501b. The subcommittee shall work with the Synod of Boriquen in implementing the directions of the Administrative Commission and shall provide guidance to the Administrative Commission in its designated roles.]~~

Rationale for Recommendation A.2.

The SCARB has, over the period of its existence, been able to create some sense of trust among the leadership of the Synod. Further, SCARB is composed of individuals who are impartial in their relationship to and understanding of the issues that plague the Synod and, for the most part, are conversant in the language (Spanish), which is the language in which business is conducted in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the “Commonwealth”). At a critical time in the life of the Synod, we believe that introducing a new set of individuals and personalities unfamiliar with the issues, the leaders of the Synod, the Synod’s dynamics, and the language of the Commonwealth will only serve to engender distrust and undermine the ability of the commission to carry out its mandate in the most compassionate and Christian spirit possible.

Further, SCARB is painfully aware that issues of distrust permeate the current power struggles that undermine the effectiveness of the work and mission of the church in the Commonwealth. The special committee’s members believe that mitigating further distrust, particularly relative to the oversight of the General Assembly through an administrative commission, will better facilitate the just and proper administration of the commission’s mandate.

3. In creating an administrative commission, the 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the commission to conduct a study for the purpose of determining whether and how the work and mission of Jesus Christ may best be carried out in the Commonwealth.

Rationale for Recommendation A.3.

We believe that the current middle governing body structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) (the PC(USA)) in the Commonwealth does not enable the Synod to coalesce around strategies that will move it forward into the future, carrying out Christ’s Great Commission.

We are aware that part of this impasse may be a result of the rural vs. metropolitan populations, aggregation of current membership within a specific geographical part of the Commonwealth, and economic differences concentrated within specific geographical areas; all of which we believe may be contributing factors in the inability of the church in the Commonwealth to coalesce around common strategies and emphases.

Therefore, we believe that further study is necessary, including a review of the previous incarnation of the church in Puerto Rico as a presbytery tied to a synod in the continental United States (the “mainland”), to learn how past successes and mistakes under such a structure impacted and influenced the current impasse in the Synod’s apparent inability to move forward. Likewise, such a study would necessarily review whether and how the current impasse might best be addressed.

Such a period of additional study will, perhaps, also provide an opportunity for the Presbyterian church in the Commonwealth to find common ground and engage in meaningful self-examination, taking into account strengths and weaknesses that could lead to creation, in whatever form, of a stronger, healthier, and more united church, able to more effectively witness to the Good News in Jesus Christ. Already we see evidence of such self-examination, and efforts at reconciliation have occurred and apparently are being pursued as a result, at least in part, of SCARB’s engagement with the Boriquén Synod and presbyteries. Of note, the Presbytery of San Juan on January 30, 2010, adopted a resolution calling for reconciliation and the Presbytery of the Northwest followed with a resolution of its own calling on the Presbytery of San Juan to join them in efforts of reconciliation. See Appendices E and F (for Appendix E, see scarb-appendixes.pdf; Appendix F can be found at the end of this document).

B. Middle Governing Body Restructure—Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the Commonwealth)

~~[1. The 219th General Assembly (2010) authorizes the administrative commission to dissolve the Synod of Boriquén and the Presbyteries of San Juan, the Northwest, and the Southwest (the Synod), if after further study, and before the next General Assembly, it determines such action to be appropriate.] [If, after further study, and before the next General Assembly, the Administrative Commission determines such action to be appropriate, the 219th General Assembly (2010) authorizes the Administrative Commission be granted the authority to assume original jurisdiction of the Synod of Boriquen for the limited purpose of taking actions necessary to merge the Synod of Boriquen with a synod of the PC(USA) on the mainland, including the authority to divide, unite, or otherwise combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries previously existing. G-12.0103k.]~~

Rationale for Recommendation B.1.

As previously noted, we believe that the current middle governing body structure of the PC(USA) in the Commonwealth does not enable the Synod to coalesce around strategies that will move it forward into the future, carrying out Christ's Great Commission.

Likewise, the Synod seems to be limited in its ability to effectively support the work it could be doing to spread the Gospel, due to a shortage of financial resources that will be exacerbated by the probable dismantling, recommended date of December 31, 2013, of the current National Mission Partnership funding stream upon which the Synod relies, in large part, to maintain its current middle governing structure. This change in its funding stream, we believe, will significantly impact the ability of the Synod to operate in both its missional and ecclesiastical roles.

It may be that upon further study, and given the limited financial resources that currently exist and that are anticipated in the near future, an alternative middle governing body structure would better be able to effectively use the talents of its membership, spread the power and responsibility among many individuals, instead of spreading such talent and energy among four middle governing bodies, which has the effect of diluting the talent pool and aggregating power and authority within a few people in each body and enable the church to find common ground to enable it to move forward.

~~[2. The 219th General Assembly (2010) authorizes the administrative commission to create a new governing body structure in the Commonwealth under the jurisdiction of a synod on the mainland of the United States of America, should the commission determine that the dissolution of the current governing body structure is no longer tenable or unable to effectively move into the future.]~~

[Note: Recommendation B.2. is answered by the action taken on Recommendation B.)

Rationale for Recommendation B.2.

Though we are not clear or certain whether the power struggles that currently exist within and among the current governing body structures will be dissolved, we do believe that such struggles may be mitigated with the creation of a new middle governing body structure that is related to a synod on the mainland that is not engaged in the power struggles that currently exist. Likewise, it is conceivable that a restructured system might provide the Commonwealth's Presbyterian leadership and members alike the ability to better work together in common cause rather than finding themselves at odds with one another for what are certainly limited human and financial resources.

In addition, we believe that a review of the previous incarnation of the church in Puerto Rico as a presbytery might enable us all to learn from past mistakes and successes, to minimize the former and maximize the latter, should the dissolution of the current middle governing body structures be warranted and a new middle governing body structure be created that would relate to a synod on the mainland.

C. Leadership

~~[The 219th General Assembly (2010) grants the administrative commission the authority to facilitate, direct, and oversee the process of identifying and nominating new, or renewed, leadership in the Synod, particularly the positions of stated clerks and synod executive, should it be determined to retain the current structure. Likewise, should the decision be to create a new middle governing structure, we recommend that the administrative commission be granted the authority to facilitate, direct, and oversee the process of identifying and nominating persons to fill the leadership positions of stated clerk(s) and executive(s), as appropriate; and, in either instance, further grant the commission the authority and latitude to designate a subcommittee to act on its behalf in these matters.]~~ [The 219th General Assembly (2010) grants the Administrative Commission the authority to facilitate, direct, and oversee the process of identifying and nominating new or renewed temporary leadership in the Synod of Boriquen and/or its constituent presbyteries. In replacing current leadership, the Administrative Commission shall afford fundamental fairness and due process in the spirit of G-9.0705.]

Rationale for Recommendation C.

The members of the special committee believe that given the power struggles that currently exist within and among the various levels of the Synod, an independent commission with the authority to direct, facilitate, and oversee the process of identifying and nominating the missional and ecclesial leaders of the existing, or newly formed, governing body(ies) will better serve that process and ensure its timely administration and completion.

We also believe this will provide an opportunity for a new and/or renewed class of leaders to emerge that reflects the worth and value of the various and diverse segments of the Presbyterian church in the Commonwealth (for example, age, gender, geography, theology) in helping to move the church into the future.

D. Determination of Desire to Remain Part of PC(USA)

~~[We recommend that the commission facilitate and oversee a canvass, poll, or survey to determine whether there exists a sufficient movement seeking disaffiliation from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [the PC(USA)]]. [Recommend that the Administrative Commission assess the degree of interest within the Synod of Boriquen and its constituent presbyteries and congregations in their continuing relationships with the PC(USA).]~~

Rationale for Recommendation D.

One of the undercurrents that exists within the Synod is the sense that there is a movement within the Synod seeking independence from the PC(USA). Though time and again in our discussions with church leaders within the Synod it has been stated that independence is not at the root of the discord within the Synod, the fact is that the issue of whether there is a viable and significant movement within the congregations and members of the Synod who would prefer independence from the PC(USA) is a matter that remains unsettled and unquantified.

As in most societies, issues that affect the secular community often are reflected within the church community. Since 1948, when the government of the United States of America granted the people of Puerto Rico the right to elect their own government, the issue of independence has been a wedge driven between the people of Puerto Rico. There are those who would seek statehood, those who would prefer that the current political status remain in place, and those that would seek independence. In 1967, 1993, and 1998, plebiscites were held in which the question of independence was put before the people. In each instance, the voters chose not to alter the existing political status. Nonetheless, the issue remains unresolved for many. In this regard, pro-independence persons and organizations continue to seek independence and have targeted institutions and organizations within Puerto Rican society as means of legitimizing the pro-independence cause. As such, it is not unexpected that the church in general, and the Synod in particular, might be the target of such a strategy.

Likewise, there are within the Synod voices that would seek a denomination independent of the PC(USA) as have their sisters and brothers in other Protestant Christian traditions (e.g. Methodists and Lutherans) even though they are not in fact among those also seeking political independence from the United States.

Nonetheless, the combination of these voices, both those Presbyterians seeking only a denomination independent of the PC(USA) and those Presbyterians seeking independence from the PC(USA) and from the United States government, though perhaps a minority, should be taken into account in any considerations related to the PC(USA) presence in the Commonwealth.

Therefore, we believe that addressing this issue directly might ease some of the discord within the Synod community. Should a significant segment of the Synod indicate a desire to declare its independence from the PC(USA), we are of the opinion that efforts should be made to facilitate such an action. There would, of course, be a variety of scenarios that might revolve around independence, including creation of an independent, island-wide Presbyterian/Reformed denomination or some transnational Presbyterian/Reformed denomination. Such a process would be a next step should independence be desired and we have chosen not to make recommendations on the type and character of such a process, believing that in the first instance it must be determined whether such a process would be necessary. If independence from the PC(USA) is not significantly desired by the congregations and members of the Synod, we feel that the issue then becomes much less of an issue around which discord can be fomented, allowing the newly formed presbytery or presbyteries to move forward.

E. Relationship Between the PC(USA), as a Structure, and the Synod

The 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the PC(USA), as a structure, and primarily the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) [to] explore and develop ways for the denomination to [more effectively] relate with the Synod [of Boriquen and its presbyteries] and its congregations [in a more effective manner].

Rationale for Recommendation E.

Unfortunately, the perception and, indeed, sometimes the actions, of the power structure of the PC(USA), as manifested in the OGA and the GAMC, cause the people and structures of the PC(USA) in the Commonwealth to have a sense of being second-class citizens removed from true full participation in the life of the PC(USA). On an island physically separated from the mainland and in which the principal and “official” language is Spanish, alienation and marginalization are easily manifested, oftentimes without recognition on the part of the Commonwealth’s sisters and brothers on the mainland. This requires the exploration and development of intentional steps to foster meaningful relationships in which we are all seen as equal partners in the life and governance of the PC(USA) and that facilitate and encourage full participation in that life and governance by our sisters and brothers in the Commonwealth. Further, it is not and should not be the goal of such steps to “assimilate” our sisters and brothers in the Commonwealth in the ways and processes of the dominant culture of the PC(USA), but to recognize and celebrate the culture and people in the Commonwealth and to appreciate their value and the differences that add to the rich flavor and diversity of the PC(USA).

No matter what course we embark upon in assisting our PC(USA) brothers and sisters in the Commonwealth in dealing with the irregularities and delinquencies we have identified within the Synod, it must be done in such a way that respects and is considerate of our differences. We firmly believe that this will help us all move together into the future in serving our Lord and Savior and in carrying out His Great Commission, in the Commonwealth, the mainland, and throughout God's Kingdom.

F. Report

The administrative commission is directed to report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) any actions it may have taken on behalf of the General Assembly and the progress it has made in working with the Synod of Boriquén. The report would include any further recommendations for action that the General Assembly itself may need to approve.

Overall Rationale

Report of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review
of the Synod of Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries. (SCARB)

I. Executive Summary

The Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Puerto Rico and its constituent presbyteries (SCARB) sought in earnest to carry out its charge, as outlined below. However, given the scope of the charge and the limited time available between the formation of SCARB and the time necessary to prepare its final report to the 219th General Assembly (2010), we were not able to complete the research and studies necessary to make definitive recommendations. However, we were able to arrive at a consensus that the effectiveness of the leadership and relationship among and between the Synod and its constituent presbyteries are seriously compromised and that actions must be taken to remedy those irregularities and delinquencies if the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and, more importantly, the work and witness of Jesus Christ in that special part of God's world is to move forward into the future.

Of principal note is our belief that an administrative commission with the power and authority to act on behalf of the General Assembly to study how best to address those irregularities and delinquencies and then to act to remedy them is imperative.

Further we concluded that some instrument, be it a canvass, poll, or survey, be formulated to address the question of whether the Presbyterians in the Commonwealth desire to disaffiliate with the PC(USA). We are also of the belief that based on the answer to that question further action may be necessary to honor the will of the Presbyterians in the Commonwealth relative to such disaffiliation, though we have made no recommendations how such disaffiliation would be facilitated and what type of response would trigger such actions. We leave such decisions for future consideration by the assembly based on recommendations from the administrative commission we have asked be put in place to address the irregularities and delinquencies we believe exist in the Commonwealth.

II. Creation of Committee—Powers, Responsibilities, and Charge

A. Creation of, and Rationale for, a Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries (SCARB)

1. The Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), having been informed by multiple parties, including an action of one of the presbyteries in Puerto Rico (see Appendix D [for Appendix D, see *scarb-appendixes.pdf*]), that certain irregularities and delinquencies had occurred and were occurring in the Synod of Puerto Rico including, but not limited to:

- The effectiveness of the stated clerk of the Synod and effectiveness of the Synod Council;
- The effectiveness of the leadership of the three presbyteries;
- The relationship among the presbyteries within the Synod;
- The Synod's financial practices and those financial practices of presbyteries;
- Whether there is significant desire in Puerto Rico for a national Puerto Rico Presbyterian Church.

2. The Stated Clerk was further informed that the Synod had been unable to provide a forum for open and safe discussions among the constituent presbyteries.

3. With the request from the Presbytery of San Juan through its Mission Council, the Stated Clerk deemed that it was necessary to invoke Standing Rule K.2.b. The moderators of the General Assembly Mission Council and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly concurred with the Stated Clerk's determination and authorized the Moderator of the

General Assembly to appoint a five-person special committee to undertake Special Administrative Review of the Synod of Puerto Rico and its constituent presbyteries.

As a result, the Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) appointed the following persons to undertake Special Administrative Review of the Synod of Puerto Rico and its constituent presbyteries:

- The Reverend Mauricio Chacón, Presbytery of New Covenant;
- The Reverend Lemuel García, Presbytery of Salem;
- Elder Conrad Rocha, Presbytery of Santa Fe;
- The Reverend Carmen Rosales, Presbytery of San Francisco;
- The Reverend Gustavo Vásquez, Presbytery of Palisades.

B. Powers and Responsibilities of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén in Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries (SCARB)

Pursuant to the powers vested in the Moderator under Standing Rule K.2.b, the Moderator gave the special committee the following powers and responsibilities to

1. call meetings with the officers of each of the governing bodies;
2. call meetings of each governing body and its council;
3. review the effectiveness of the stated clerk of the Synod;
4. require all records (minutes, financial, personnel) of each of the constituent bodies;
5. give directives and advice to each of the governing bodies related to the correction of any irregularities or delinquencies discovered in the course of review; and,
6. correspond directly with congregations and pastors should the special committee learn that there is significant interest in a National Puerto Rico Presbyterian Church.

C. Charge to the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries (SCARB)

1. The special committee shall exercise its powers and responsibilities in order to
 - a. determine the causes of discord among Presbyterians in Puerto Rico;
 - b. evaluate the effectiveness of the current synod and presbytery leadership; and
 - c. evaluate whether there is any significant interest on the part of a significant majority of Presbyterians in Puerto Rico to create a Partner Puerto Rico Presbyterian denomination.

2. As a result of the exercise of its powers and responsibilities in addressing the issues of discord, effectiveness of leadership, and interest in creating a new Puerto Rican Presbyterian denomination, SCARB shall report all actions and proposals to the 219th General Assembly (2010) by the 120-day deadline, March 5, 2010, including:

- a. Proposed changes made to the Synod and to the presbyteries that might facilitate better working relationships among all the leadership of the governing bodies.
- b. Proposed changes to the Synod in leadership, structure, and personnel for its consideration.
- c. Proposed changes to the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding the reorganization of the Synod and its constituent presbyteries.
- d. Proposed changes to the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding the creation of a national Puerto Rico Presbyterian Church if it finds significant interest on the part of a significant majority. If such a proposal is made, the special committee shall propose to the 220th General Assembly (2012) a process for creating such a new denomination, along with steps necessary to maintain relationship with those congregations/pastors who wish to remain in the PC(USA).

III. Meetings and Mailings

July 1, 2009 Letter sent from Gradye Parsons to moderators and stated clerks of the Synod and three presbyteries, plus the synod executive and synod council moderator

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE GOVERNING BODY ISSUES

July 15	Organizing conference call of special committee
July 17	Invitation letter from special committee to leaders in Puerto Rico
August 19–21	Meeting of special committee in Louisville with ten leaders from Boriquén
September 8	Special committee conference call
September 8	Letter sent to leaders in Puerto Rico from special committee
September 14	Special committee conference call
September 18	Special committee conference call
September 18	Memo sent to Synod council from special committee
October 6	Special committee conference call
October 7	Letter sent to Rubén and Ortiz Geraldo López from special committee
October 29	Special committee conference call
November 1	Special committee conference call
November 6	Letter from special committee to all Synod ministers and sessions
November 9	First mailing of survey mailed to all Synod ministers and sessions
November 11-14	Special committee attends Synod council and assembly meetings in Puerto Rico
December 3	Special committee conference call
December 10	Postcard sent to ministers and sessions reminding of survey
January 5, 2010	Special committee conference call
January 19	Special committee conference call
January 22	Second mailing of survey sent to Synod ministers and sessions
February 2	Special committee conference call
February 10	Letter sent from Mauricio Chacón to leaders in Puerto Rico
February 11	Email sent from Doska Ross to leaders in Puerto Rico clarifying survey information
February 16	Special committee conference call
February 19	Special committee conference call
March 3	Special committee conference call

IV. Proposals Made by SCARB to the Synod (with Commentary)

A. That the Synod and its constituent presbyteries engage in a review of their staff, particularly those occupying stated clerk positions and the position of interim synod executive.

We have learned that the work of the synod stated clerk was reviewed on February 28, 2010. We have also been informed that he had resigned from this office, effective February 28, 2010.

B. That the Synod call a specially called meeting for the purpose of submitting to the synod commissioners a proposal to build a parking garage in Mayagüez.

This recommendation resulted in a specially called meeting of the synod to address the issue and, ultimately, the Synod at its regular November meeting taking steps to address and vote on this proposal.

C. That the interim synod executive avail himself of a mentor in the person of the Reverend José Luís Casal for the purpose of becoming more familiar with the role, responsibilities, and pitfalls of being an interim middle governing body presbyter.

The special committee has been informed that this suggestion has not been acted on by the interim executive presbyter of the Synod.

Appendix A

Synod and Presbytery Leadership by Position at Time of August 20, 2009,
Meeting with the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the
Synod of Boriquén in Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries

Sínodo de Boriquén

The Reverend Cruz A. Negrón Torres, stated clerk
Elder Edwin Quiles Rodríguez, interim executive
Elder Antonio Roldán-Rodríguez, moderator
The Reverend Arelis Cardona-Morales, synod council moderator

Presbiterio del Noroeste

The Reverend Zoraida Ramos-Román, moderator
The Reverend Gerardo López-Vigo, stated clerk

Presbiterio de San Juan

The Reverend Nelson Gutiérrez-Pagán, moderator
The Reverend Aurelio García Archilla, stated clerk

Presbiterio del Suroeste

The Reverend Hernán Rodríguez-Morales, moderator
The Reverend Rubén Ortiz-Rodríguez, stated clerk

Appendix B

History of Puerto Rican Church Based on Information in the Anuario de Misión 2002

When the English arrived on the island of Puerto Rico in the 1500s, the first Protestant religious service was celebrated in San Juan Bay. The Dutch also celebrated services on the island, following the Reformed tradition, but the predominant religion was Roman Catholic.

About 1860, Antonio Badillo learned from a Dane named Heyliger about Christian principles and received a Bible from him. Don Antonio began to read and study the Bible and began preaching the Good News; his followers were called los Bíblicos. By 1868, Badillo and Heyliger had extended their preaching and teaching to the mountains in the west of the island.

In 1898, the Treaty of Paris transferred the sovereignty of Puerto Rico from Spain to the United States. Within the year, North American Presbyterian missionaries started arriving in Puerto Rico, sent by the Board of National Missions. Los Bíblicos worked alongside these Presbyterians and formed the roots of the Presbyterian church in Puerto Rico. The Reverends J.M. Greene and Milton E. Caldwell began working as missionaries in Santurce and Mayagüez on April 1, 1899. The First Presbyterian Church in Mayagüez was officially formed with eleven members. In Santurce, the second Presbyterian church was formed, along with a clinic that is today the Presbyterian Hospital. Clara Hazen directed Marina Neighborhood House in Aguadilla, which included a medical dispensary and a school.

In 1902, missionaries were sent by the Board of National Missions into certain other districts, including Mayagüez, Aguadilla, and San Juan; other denominations went elsewhere. The Presbytery of Puerto Rico was formed on October 28, 1902, as part of the Synod of Iowa, where the missionaries held their membership. In 1904, the Presbytery of Puerto Rico became part of the Synod of New York.

During this time the presbytery made three important agreements:

1. The official language of the body would be Spanish.
2. Theological education would be put into the reach of the nationals.
3. The preparation of Puerto Rican ministers would be promoted.

The first seminary in Puerto Rico was organized in Mayagüez by Dr. Underwood and José López was the first candidate for the Holy Ministry. In 1919, this seminary joined with other denominations' theological schools to become the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. José Vélez Ortiz was the first Puerto Rican minister to be called to a church, the Presbyterian Church in Isabela.

By 1912, Dr. John Harris had organized eight churches and founded the Polytechnic Institute in San German, now known as the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico. In 1945, land was purchased to create El Guacío de San Sebastián, now used as a conference and retreat center of the Synod. In 1968, the Reverend Jorge Acevedo Cruz was elected general presbyter of the Presbytery of Puerto Rico.

In 1971, the General Assembly in Denver created the Synod of Puerto Rico and its three presbyteries. On January 7, 1973, el Sínodo de Boriquén was officially organized, moderated by the Reverend Pablo Casasús. In 1983, Elder Ana Inés Braulio Flores became the first

woman executive of the synod, now a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which was formed from the former two denominations. The Synod of Puerto Rico now (2009) includes 73 congregations and 106 ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

Appendix C
Survey Results

For Appendix C, see p. 290.

Appendix D
Original Communication from Presbytery of San Juan to Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons

For Appendix D, see p. 294.

Appendix E
Communication from Presbytery of San Juan

For Appendix E, see p. 303.

Appendix F
Communication from Presbytery of the Northwest
Iglesia Presbiteriana (EUA)
PRESBITERIO DEL NOROESTE DE PUERTO RICO
Apartado 5090. Aguadilla, Puerto Rico 00605
Tel. 787-891-7734, 788-891-3476 (fax)
[For an English translation of this appendix, see p. 305.]

27 de febrero 2010
Rev. Nelson Gutiérrez Pagán
Moderador Presbiterio de San Juan
Estimado Rev. Gutiérrez
Saludos en Cristo Jesús.

A nombre del Presbiterio del Noroeste agradezco su presencia en nuestra reunión ordinaria del sábado, 27 de febrero de 2010. De igual manera reconocemos vuestras palabras de perdón, reconciliación para iniciar los pasos necesarios restableciendo la fraternal visión y misión a la que estamos llamados/as. No podemos pasar por alto vuestra participación en la conversación que fue fundamental para el acuerdo que se somete a continuación.

Informo lo que el Presbiterio del Noroeste acordó

1. *Solicitar que los Concilios del PSJ y el PNO se reúnan. Esta gestión será responsabilidad de los dos moderadores de los respectivos concilios; Rev. Nelson Gutiérrez Pagán y el Anc. José A. Rodríguez Robles.*
2. *La reunión acordada será en la más completa intención reconciliadora.*
3. *Que los acuerdos afirmativos a los fines antes expuestos sean informados a todos los cuerpos constituyentes de la IP en Puerto Rico así como el Comité de Revisión de la AG y la Oficina del Secretario Permanente de la AG.*
4. *Que ambos cuerpos programen, sin limitarse a ellos;*
 - a. *Reuniones de oración*
 - b. *Diseñar, participar en eventos de aprendizaje y capacitación en las áreas relacionadas al interés reconciliatorio.*
 - c. *Reuniones y eventos de adoración de los dos presbiterios cuerpos*
 - (1) *Se propone la celebración del Día de Pentecostés.*
5. *Que los Moderadores del PNO y del PSJ consideren invitar al Concilio del PSJ cuando lo crean oportuno.*

Es nuestra seguridad usted como el Anc. José A. Rodríguez Robles entienden la importancia de esta intención e igualmente se han comprometido a colaborar para tales fines.

Atentamente:
Rev. Gerardo López Vigo
Secretario Permanente Presbiterio del Noroeste

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-07

ACC Advice on the Report of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén in Puerto Rico and Its Constituent Presbyteries (SCARB).

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 04-07 presents the following matters that the assembly should consider (recommendations of the special committee are shown in *italics*, followed by ACC advice):

A. Relative to the Creation of an Administrative Commission

1. *That the 219th General Assembly (2010) create an administrative commission to oversee the work and mission of the Synod of Boriquén and the Presbyteries of San Juan, the Northwest (del Noroeste), and the Southwest (del Suroeste) (the Synod) and, if necessary, to intervene in that work.*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that it may create a commission such as is envisioned in Recommendation A.1. under the provisions of G-9.0500 and G-13.0103k, l, m, and n of the *Book of Order*.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution further advises the General Assembly that it is permissible to combine the commission envisioned in this recommendation with that envisioned in the COGA recommendation, Item 04-06, dealing with matters related to middle governing bodies. The committee refers the assembly to its advice on that item. It draws special attention to the differences between committees and commissions and to the requirements for specifying the powers and duties of a commission (see G-9.0500).

2. *That the 219th General Assembly (2010), in creating an administrative commission, authorize the commission to designate a subcommittee composed largely of the current members of the Special Committee on the Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquén (SCARB), with the further ability to supplement that subcommittee with no more than two additional persons, bringing the composition of SCARB to no more than seven members, to work with the Synod in implementing the directions of the administrative commission and providing guidance to the administrative commission in its designated roles.*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that it may authorize its commission to create a subcommittee as envisioned in Recommendation A.2. under the provisions of G-9.0500.

The language authorizing the creation of the subcommittee is, however, unclear. The SCARB is currently composed of four ministers and one layperson, which fails to meet the requirement that committees of governing bodies consist of at least one-half laypersons (G-9.0501b). If a new subcommittee of seven were to be created, it would be necessary to add at least three new lay members and carry over not more than three of the four ministers currently on SCARB (and the one lay member). If this does not reflect the wisdom of the assembly, more specific language should be used to describe the subcommittee's composition.

3. *That the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the administrative commission to conduct a study for the purpose of determining whether and how the work and mission of Jesus Christ may best be carried out in Puerto Rico.*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that it may direct the administrative commission to take the action envisioned in Recommendation A.3. under the provisions of G-13.0103a and k.

B. Relative to Middle Governing Body Restructure in Puerto Rico

1. *That the 219th General Assembly (2010) authorize the administrative commission to dissolve the Synod of Boriquén and the Presbyteries of San Juan, the Northwest (del Noroeste), and the Southwest (del Suroeste) (the Synod), if after further study, and before the next General Assembly, it determines such action to be appropriate.*

2. *That the 219th General Assembly (2010) authorize the administrative commission to create a new governing body structure in Puerto Rico under the jurisdiction of a synod on the mainland of the United States of America, if the commission determines that the dissolution of the current governing body structure is no longer tenable or unable to effectively move into the future.*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that the actions envisioned in Recommendation B.1. and 2. raise constitutional issues. The provisions of G-13.0103m and G-13.0103n empower the General Assembly to “divide, unite, or otherwise combine synods or portions of synods” and to “approve the organization, division, uniting, or combining of presbyteries ... by synods.” They do not explicitly provide that the assembly may “dissolve” a synod. Similarly, G-12.0102k lodges the responsibility to “organize, ... divide, unite, or otherwise combine” presbyteries in the synod. There is no mention of a power to dissolve a presbytery without provision of a successor entity.

More significant, perhaps, is the question of whether, in authorizing a commission of the General Assembly to dissolve presbyteries, the assembly is transgressing on powers constitutionally allocated to the synods. The ACC believes that a dangerous precedent might be set by such an authorization, and that a wiser course of action would be to limit the language of the commission's authorization to those powers already given to the General Assembly. The ACC advises that the charge to the commission would be improved by authorizing the commission to create a new synod, successor to the current Synod of Boriquén, or to combine the current Synod of Boriquén with another existing synod, and then to approve the creation, division, union, or combination of the presbyteries of San Juan, del Noroeste, and del Suroeste according to the decision of the new or combined synod.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the action in Recommendation B.2. does not specify the particular governing body structure to be created by action of the commission, or which synod on the "mainland of the United States of America" would have jurisdiction. If the action is left in its present form, the effect would be to empower this commission to create this unspecified structure and assign jurisdiction over it to an unspecified synod. If the General Assembly wishes to be more specific in its instructions, the language of Recommendation B.2. should be more precise.

C. *Relative to Leadership*

That the 219th General Assembly (2010) grant the administrative commission the authority to facilitate, direct, and oversee the process of identifying and nominating new, or renewed, leadership in the Synod, particularly the positions of stated clerks and synod executive, should it be determined to retain the current structure. Likewise, should the decision be to create a new middle governing structure, we recommend that the administrative commission be granted the authority to facilitate, direct, and oversee the process of identifying and nominating persons to fill the leadership positions of stated clerk(s) and executive(s), as appropriate; and, in either instance, further grant the commission the authority and latitude to designate a subcommittee to act on its behalf in these matters.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that the language of Recommendation C. is vague and unclear regarding the role of the commission in the employment of middle governing body staff. Specifically, the meaning and scope of the commission's power to "direct" the process for employing the staff of lower governing bodies is open to question. Does the term imply that the commission may decide the matter of the employment of synod and presbytery executive staff and stated clerks? If so, the ACC advises that such a power may be in violation of G-1.0306, which guarantees that "the election of ... persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society." The ACC further advises that if the action of the commission pursuant to recommendations B.1. and B.2. is to combine the current Synod of Boriquén with another existing synod, and its presbyteries with existing presbyteries, that the approval of Recommendation C. would authorize the commission to "facilitate, direct, and oversee" the employment of executive staff and clerks in those extant bodies.

While the recommendation does not so specify, the identification and nomination of new staff for both synods and presbyteries may also involve the termination of the employment of existing staff. The ACC advises the General Assembly that there are separate processes for terminating executive staff and stated clerks. The former is specified in G-9.0705 and involves notification of the staff person whose employment is to be terminated and a hearing prior to the adoption of the recommendation to terminate. Provisions for the termination of a stated clerk are not explicit in the *Book of Order*; the ACC refers the General Assembly to its recommendations in Item 05-14.

D. *Relative to Determination of Desire to Remain Part of PC(USA)*

We recommend that the administrative commission facilitate and oversee a canvass, poll, or survey to determine whether there exists a sufficient movement seeking disaffiliation from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [the PC(USA)].

The purpose of this recommendation is to suggest a process by which the administrative commission might determine the degree of support in the Synod of Boriquén to seek "disaffiliation" from the PC(USA). The ACC finds that the process envisioned raises constitutional issues. A "canvass, poll, or survey" suggests a process that lacks constitutional support. Section G-4.0301e states as a principle of Presbyterian government that "Decisions shall be reached in governing bodies by vote, following opportunity for discussion, and a majority shall govern." While this does not directly apply to an assessment of support for or against a particular action, it does suggest that any process used to discern the will of Christ for the church should be through a deliberative assembly where different points of view may be evaluated in a spirit of prayer. Moreover, the term "disaffiliation" lacks constitutional definition, and lacks sufficient context to interpret what specific action might be envisioned by "disaffiliation," were it constitutionally permitted. "Disaffiliate" suggests a prior act of "affiliation." Congregations do not "affiliate" with the church as if the relationship of a particular church with the denomination were at the will of the particular church. Presbyteries have the sole right to organize, receive, or unite churches (G-11.0103h) and, similarly, to "divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in consultation with their members" (G-11.0103i).

Nevertheless, this recommendation assumes that such an administrative commission could be granted the authority to "disaffiliate" congregations, presbyteries, or the whole synod. Neither the General Assembly (or a commission thereof) nor a

synod (or a commission exercising original jurisdiction over a synod) has the authority to “disaffiliate” (or even to dismiss) a synod, presbytery, or a congregation of the PC(USA). Section G-13.0103m grants the General Assembly power “to organize new synods and to divide, unite, or otherwise combine synods or portions of synods previously existing” and G-13.0103n grants the General Assembly authority “to approve the organization, division, uniting, or combining of presbyteries or portions of presbyteries by synods.” Similarly, G-12.0102k gives synods the authority “to organize new presbyteries [and] to divide, unite, or otherwise combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries previously existing,” and to create racial ethnic non-geographic presbyteries. However, there is no constitutional authority for a General Assembly or synod to dismiss a congregation or presbytery to another denomination or to independence. The Constitution envisions dismissal of congregations singly, rather than the dismissal of whole governing bodies with their constituent congregations.

Accordingly, the request to seek disaffiliation or dismissal properly comes before a presbytery by the session of a church, in consultation with its members and the presbytery. Processes already exist to dismiss a congregation to another Reformed body. No provision exists to “disaffiliate” a congregation to independent status. Should there be sufficient interest to warrant the creation of “an independent, island-wide Presbyterian/Reformed denomination or some transnational Presbyterian/Reformed denomination” that denomination must be established first, and congregations dismissed to it individually by the presbytery in consultation with the members of each particular congregation. Should a presbytery fall beneath the requisite number of churches, the synod should unite the presbytery with another presbytery in the synod.

The purpose of this process is to preserve the organic unity of the church under G-1.4000 and G-4.3000, and to recognize the right of presbyteries to exercise authority for mission and governance of churches within their bounds (G-11.0103).

E. *Relative to the Relationship Between the PC(USA), as a Structure, and the Synod*

The 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the PC(U.S.A.), as a structure, and primarily the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to explore and develop ways for the denomination to more effectively relate with the Synod and its congregations.

This recommendation requires no constitutional interpretation.

F. *Report*

The administrative commission is directed to report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) any actions it may have taken on behalf of the General Assembly and the progress it has made in working with the Synod of Boriquén. The report would include any further recommendations for action that the General Assembly itself may need to approve.

This recommendation requires no constitutional interpretation.

Item 04-08

[The assembly disapproved Item 04-08. See pp. 28, 30.]

On Organizing a Non-Geographic Korean Language Presbytery—From the Synod of the South Atlantic.

The Synod of South Atlantic overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve the organization of a new non-geographic Korean language presbytery pursuant to its powers under G-13.0103n.

Rationale

The Synod of South Atlantic met Thursday and Friday, March 4–5, 2010 at the First Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville, Florida where the synod office is located.

Synod Moderator, Elder Jane Miller put the question to the synod assembly of commissioners to vote on the request to form a new Korean-American Presbytery in the Synod of South Atlantic. The vote was unanimous in favor of forming the new presbytery and sending this request to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for action at the 219th General Assembly (2010) meeting July 3–10.

The following churches and pastors have been released from their respective presbyteries following the concurrence of the Synod of South Atlantic:

Cherokee Presbytery

Stated Clerk: The Reverend Rebecca Blackwell

Bethany Presbyterian Church
4644 Sandy Plains Road
Marietta, GA 30066
Pastor: The Reverend Byeongho Choi
Church: (770) 643-1459
FAX: (770) 643-2025
Cell: (678) 428-5650

Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

Stated Clerk: The Reverend Dr. Thomas E. Evans

Good News Garden Presbyterian Church
5575 Buford Highway
Norcross, GA 30071-3901
Pastor: The Reverend Young Kab Kweon

Jesus Hope of Georgia Church
686 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, #100
Suwanee, GA 30024
Pastor: The Reverend Dae Woong Park

Korean Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville
646 Exchange Place
Lilburn, GA 30047
Pastor: The Reverend Paul Chang Kim

Korean Presbyterian Church of Georgia
1878 Lake Jodeco Road
Jonesboro, GA 30236
Pastor: The Reverend Sam Young Kim

Flint River Presbytery

Stated Clerk: Jerry Watts

Rock Presbyterian Church
1728 Floyd Road
Columbus, GA 31907
Pastor: The Reverend Sungman Park

First Korean Presbyterian Church of Valdosta
4725 Bemiss Road
Valdosta, GA 31605-6055
Pastor: The Reverend Se Kim
Phone: (229) 333-0179

Korean United Presbyterian Church
1139 Watson Boulevard
Warner Robins, GA 31903
Pastor: The Reverend Won K. Lee
Phone: (478) 318-5580

Savannah Presbytery

Stated Clerk: Russell Gladding

Savannah Korean Presbyterian Church
6501 Waters Avenue
Savannah, GA 31406
Pastor: The Reverend Yoon Sang Nam
Church: (912) 356-3555
FAX: (912) 356-3555

Presbytery of Tampa Bay

Stated Clerk: The Reverend Dr. Gerry Tyer

Korean Presbyterian Church of Tampa
6510 Yosemite Drive
Tampa, FL 33634
Pastor: The Reverend Young Il Kim
Phone: (813) 882-0246
FAX: (813) 881-0069

Korean Presbyterian Church of St. Petersburg
7320 44th Street
Pinellas Park, FL 33781-4508
Pastor: The Reverend Won Tae Cho
Phone: (727) 547-5454
FAX: (727) 547-4375



Survey of PC(USA) Congregations and Ministers in Puerto Rico
Survey Questions and Responses

	Ministers	Elders & Others ‡	Total
Number of surveys mailed	106	463	569
Number of undeliverable surveys and ineligible respondents.....	10	—	10
Number of surveys completed	31	102	133
Response rate	34%	21%	23%

‡ Three surveys included here were returned by respondents who said they were neither minister nor elder, but rather deacons and committee members.

	Ministers		Elders & Others		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Q-1. Have you ever served on the council or a committee of your presbytery?						
No.....	3	10%	61	60%	64	49%
Yes	27	90%	40	40%	67	51%
Q-1a. [If “yes,”] For how many years have you served? Please answer in terms of the total number of years you’ve served on the council or a committee in your current presbytery.						
	n=27		n=40		n=67	
Years:						
1-5	8	31%	15	43%	23	38%
6-10	9	35%	11	31%	20	33%
11-20	4	15%	7	20%	11	18%
21-30	3	12%	0	—	3	5%
More than 30.....	3	8%	2	6%	5	7%
Mean	12.3		8.6		10.2	
Median	7.5		6.0		6.0	
Q-1b. [If “yes,”] How was your experience serving your presbytery? (Answer about your most recent service if you’ve served more than once.)						
	n=27		n=40		n=67	
Good.....	19	70%	20	56%	39	62%
Average.....	8	30%	14	39%	22	35%
Poor.....	0	—	2	6%	2	3%
Q-1c. Why?						
[Tabulated separately]						
Q-2. Have you ever served on the council or a committee of the synod?						
No.....	7	23%	70	71%	77	60%
Yes	23	77%	29	29%	52	40%

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

— = zero (0.0); no cases in this category

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more on this question (reported percentages for all questions omit nonresponses)

n = number of respondents eligible to answer this question

♦ = percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response

A-1

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE GOVERNING BODY ISSUES

	Ministers		Elders & Others		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Q-2a. [If “yes,”] For how many years have you served? Please answer in terms of the total number of years you’ve served on the council or a committee in your current synod.	n=23		n=29		n=52	
Years:		+		+		+
1-5	6	48%	8	65%	14	57%
6-10	8	38%	7	23%	15	30%
11-20	4	10%	5	8%	9	8%
21-30	2	5%	0	4%	2	4%
More than 30	3	—	2	—	5	—
Mean	7.1		5.9		6.4	
Median	6.0		4.0		4.0	
Q-2b. [If “yes,”] How was your experience serving your synod? (Answer about your most recent service if you’ve served more than once.)	n=23		n=29		n=52	
		+				+
Good.....	9	39%	9	33%	18	36%
Average.....	12	52%	9	33%	21	42%
Poor.....	2	9%	9	33%	11	22%
Q-2c. Why?	[Tabulated separately]					
Q-3. How well do you know the leadership of your presbytery?						
Very well.....	20	67%	31	31%	51	40%
Somewhat well.....	8	27%	36	36%	44	34%
Slightly well.....	2	7%	27	27%	29	22%
Not well at all.....	0	—	5	5%	5	4%
Q-4. Do you feel represented by the leadership of your presbytery?						
Yes, very well	12	40%	46	49%	58	47%
Yes, somewhat	13	43%	20	21%	33	27%
No.....	5	17%	28	30%	33	27%
Not sure.....	0	—	0	—	0	—
Q-4a. Why do you or do you not feel represented by presbytery leadership?	[Tabulated separately]					
Q-5. How well do you know the leadership of your synod?						
Very well.....	15	52%	27	29%	42	34%
Somewhat well.....	12	41%	32	34%	44	36%
Slightly well.....	2	7%	25	27%	27	22%
Not well at all.....	0	—	10	11%	10	8%

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

— = zero (0.0); no cases in this category

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more on this question (reported percentages for all questions omit nonresponses)

n = number of respondents eligible to answer this question

◆ = percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response

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A-2

	Ministers		Elders & Others		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Q-6. Do you feel represented by the leadership of your synod?						
Yes, very well	8	28%	25	28%	33	28%
Yes, somewhat	15	52%	30	34%	45	38%
No.....	6	21%	34	38%	40	34%
Not sure.....	0	—	0	—	0	—

Q-6a. Why do you or do you not feel represented by synod leadership?

[Tabulated separately]

Q-7. Using descriptive phrases, please complete this statement: “The Synod of Puerto Rico is”:

[Tabulated separately]

Q-8. The Synod of Puerto Rico is blessed with many strengths. What do you think are its greatest strengths?

[Tabulated separately]

Q-9. What do you think is the most pressing need or challenge facing this synod?

[Tabulated separately]

Q-10. In the past, what has caused conflict in the synod?

[Tabulated separately]

Q-10a. Was the conflict resolved?

Yes	6	22%	4	9%	10	14%
No.....	21	78%	42	91%	63	86%

Q-10b. If yes, how?

[Tabulated separately]

Q-10c. If not, why not?

[Tabulated separately]

Q-11. To the best of your knowledge, what areas of tension or conflict that need to be resolved currently face the synod? Please describe.

[Tabulated separately]

Q-12. Please share your vision for the Presbyterian Church in Puerto Rico in the foreseeable future.

[Tabulated separately]

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

— = zero (0.0); no cases in this category

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more on this question (reported percentages for all questions omit nonresponses)

n = number of respondents eligible to answer this question

◆ = percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response

A-3

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE GOVERNING BODY ISSUES

	Ministers		Elders & Others		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Q-13. Is there anything else you want the Special Committee to be aware of?	[Tabulated separately]					
Q-14. What is your age?	Years:					
20-29	1	3%	5	5%	6	5%
30-39	2	6%	8	8%	10	8%
40-49	7	23%	17	17%	24	19%
50-59	10	32%	27	28%	37	29%
60 or older.....	11	36%	41	42%	52	40%
Q-15. Are you a member of:	Presbytery of Northwest..... 10 33% 42 43% 52 41%					
	Presbytery of San Juan..... 9 30% 23 24% 32 25%					
	Presbytery of Southwest..... 11 37% 33 34% 44 34%					
	Don't know 30 — 98 — 128 —					
Q-16. How long have you been a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?	Years:					
1-10	1	3%	20	21%	21	16%
11-20	3	10%	23	24%	26	20%
21-30	7	23%	19	20%	26	20%
31-40	7	23%	19	20%	26	20%
41-50	9	29%	10	10%	19	15%
More than 50.....	4	13%	6	6%	10	8%
Mean	37.8		26.2		29.0	
Median	38.0		22.0		29.0	
Q-17. Which are you?	Ordained elder..... 0 — 93 97% 93 73%					
	Ordained minister..... 31 100% 0 — 31 24%					
	Other (please specify): _____ 0 — 3 3% 3 2%					

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

— = zero (0.0); no cases in this category

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more on this question (reported percentages for all questions omit nonresponses)

n = number of respondents eligible to answer this question

◆ = percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response

JUN-26-2009 11:17 FROM: PRESBITERIO DE SAN J 787-782-5587

TO: 1502569822

P. 1/5

Appendix D



IGLESIA PRESBITERIANA (U.S.A.) Oficina del Presbiterio de San Juan

PO Box 362978 - San Juan - Puerto Rico - 00936
Oficina de la Secretaria Permanente
presbiteriodesanjuan@yahoo.com
Tel. 787-783-5339
Fax 787-782-5587

Fax

aagarci@yahoo.com

To:

Mark

Rvd. Aurelio Garcia Archilla

From: Secretario Permanente
Presbiterio de San Juan

Fax:

502-882-8822

Pages:

4

Phone:

Date: 6/26/09

Re:

KIE

cc:

KIE

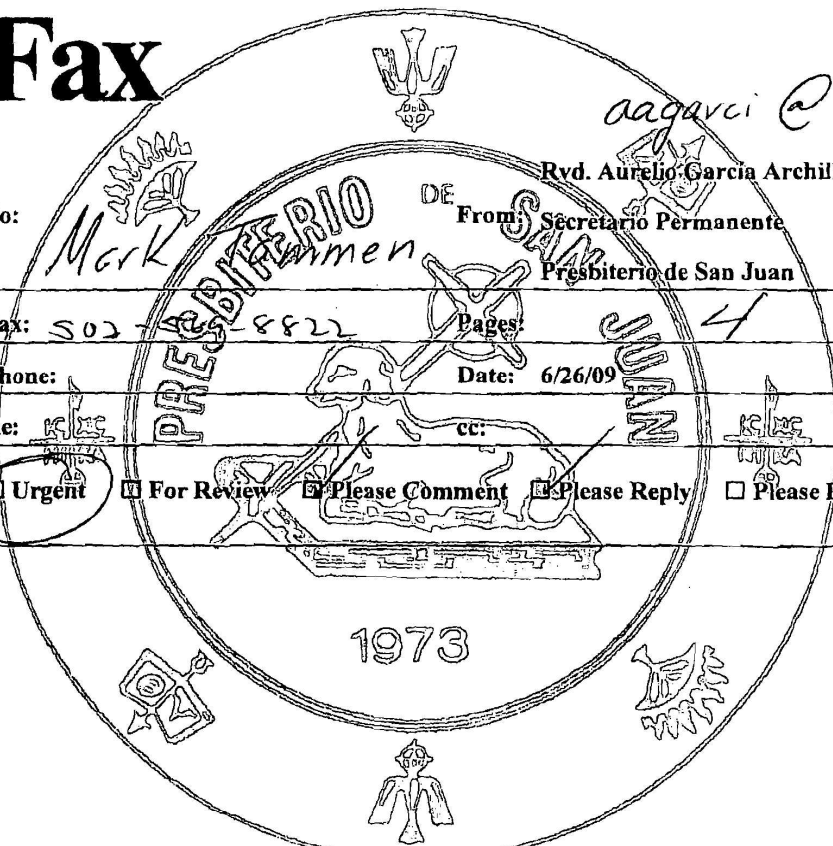
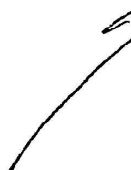
Urgent

For Review

Please Comment

Please Reply

Please Recycle



URGENT!

The Rev. Gradye Parson
Stated Clerk
The Presbyterian Church (USA)
100 Witherspoon St. Room 4408
Louisville, KY 40202-1396

Dear Sir:

Greetings in the name of our Lord, from the Presbytery of San Juan.

It is my understanding that you are in some degree aware of recent developments in the Synod of Puerto Rico, as some information must have transcended, perhaps through our friend and collaborator, Ms. Loyda Aja, whom, I am told, is very concerned about the situation. It is my understanding also, that several high officers of our denomination will be present at the next meeting of the Synod of Puerto Rico Council, early in July.

I myself, being very surprised and preoccupied at the speedy development of events, have called the matter to the attention of Presbytery Council. We are particularly preoccupied with the possibility that a relatively small group of proponents of a National Puerto Rican Presbyterian Church, may be attempting to assume absolute control of the Synod, and trying to speedily implement their project, before the majority of church members in Puerto Rico are fully aware of their intentions and the serious consequences resulting thereof.

We are concerned about the integrity of the Presbytery of San Juan, and about the possibility that there may be an intention to seize financial and property resources by the two presbyteries which appear to be in critical financial conditions.

As things are moving so fast, the Presbytery of San Juan has adopted a resolution which accompanies this document. In essence, it describes the actions of Southwest and Northwest Presbytery as damaging to the mutual trust necessary for joint work among presbyteries, and in fact a rebellion against our PC(USA) Constitution. It reaffirms the commitment of our Presbytery to the doctrine, principles and polity of our denomination. It furthermore requests of GAC that it name an administrative commission for the Synod, while its future course is determined. It requests that the Synod be dissolved, as the Presbytery of San Juan cannot remain in a relationship where we understand the two other presbyteries are underhandedly trying to exclude us from the decision-making processes, and to monopolize the authority. As the Synod requires at least three presbyteries, our further request to be reassigned to another Synod, implies the dissolution of the Synod of Puerto Rico, and the distribution of its property.

This is our position at this time. Our intention is to preserve our dignity, property and rights, and to collaborate with the national leadership of the denomination in the rapid solution of this severe problem. Therefore we request your advice, and desire to provide the Office of the Stated Clerk with the tools necessary to take adequate and prompt action

to defend the integrity of the PC (USA). We are aware that there are many committed members in the two fore mentioned presbyteries, and that the dissidents are probably in a minority. But the dangers involved in the unreasonable actions of the leadership of said presbyteries requires of us definitive actions that may be functional in the worse case scenario.

I request that you study our position, advise us in this matter, and take with the greatest seriousness this matter, as the main difficulty seems to be the inconsistency and apparent wantonness of their actions. It is this fact which has lead us to believe they are not to be trusted. As I said, this is the case with the present leadership of Southwest and Northwest Presbyteries, not the rest of the leadership or membership. But as they have not been effective in asserting their loyalty or in countering the actions of their leaders, we cannot rely on politics as usual as a way out of this mess.

Our hopes and prayers are that this matter may be solved to the greater benefit of God's Kingdom, the edification of the Church and the progress of the Gospel in Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,



Aurelio Garcia, Ph.D.
Stated Clerk
The Presbytery of San Juan.

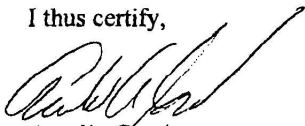
Presbytery of San Juan
of the
Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Presbytery of San Juan, through its Mission Council, decides and determines:

1. To declare that the recent actions of the Southwest and Northwest presbyteries, requesting the resignation of all members of the Mission Council of the Boriquen Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico, and promoting the restructuring of said body with the officers of the three presbyteries constitutes a breaking off of mutual trust among presbyteries, a dissolution of the relationship necessary for the common life of the presbyteries within the Synod, a rejection of the Reformed principle of doing everything decently and in order, and in fact a rebellion against the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
2. To affirm the intention of the Presbytery of San Juan to be loyal to the doctrine, principles, and polity of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
3. To request of the General Assembly that it appoint an Administrative Commission for the Boriquen Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico, until the future of the Synod is decided, and which governing bodies and structures may succeed it, as well as the destiny of the jurisdiction and properties of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Puerto Rico, whether they be under the direct governance of the Synod or of lower governing bodies.
4. To request of the General Assembly the dissolution of the Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico, and the equitable distribution of its property among its presbyteries.
5. To request that the Presbytery of San Juan be transferred in its integrity to another synod of the denomination.
6. To determine, meanwhile, not to participate in any manner in the structures, committees, agencies and activities of the Boriquen Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico, until the General Assembly assumes jurisdiction and reorganized it. Without the participation of our presbytery, the Synod is in fact rendered not functional, and has no legal quorum. Any attempt to assemble such body and to deliberate or to take decisions will be seen as an illegal usurpation of jurisdiction, and will be impugned by de Presbytery of San Juan both in ecclesiastical and civil courts.

Approved by the Presbytery of San Juan on June 24, 2009.

I thus certify,



Aurelio Garcia
Stated Clerk,
The Presbytery of San Juan

15 de junio de 2009

Rev. Cruz Alberto Negrón
Secretario Permanente del PBPR

Saludos fraternales.

Le refiero para consideración del Concilio del SPBPR el acuerdo tomado el pasado sábado 13 de junio de 2009 por el Concilio del PNO. El mismo es una respuesta a una solicitud del PSO.

1. Se escriba al Secretario Permanente, el Moderador, la Presidenta del Concilio y al Ejecutivo Interino una carta expresando nuestras inquietudes y preocupaciones por la forma y manera pobres en la que el Concilio de Sínodo y el Secretario Permanente del SPBPR han ejecutado sus acciones constitucionales impidiendo los trabajos apropiados.
2. Se solicite la próxima Asamblea del SPBPR que se declare vacante al Concilio del Sínodo y en su defecto se nombre un concilio especial compuesto por quince personas, a saber: Moderador/a, Presidente/a del Concilio, Secretario/a Permanente y Tesorero/a de cada presbiterio y el/la Moderador/a, Secretario/a Permanente y Tesorero/a del Sínodo. Este Concilio Especial estará en funciones hasta que se apruebe una nueva estructura.
3. Se solicite que se declare vacante la Secretaria Permanente de Sínodo y se proceda a nombrar un/a nuevo/a incumbente que pueda cumplir adecuadamente con estas responsabilidades de acuerdo a la misión y objetivos del SPBPR.

El Concilio del PNO acordó añadir al inciso #2 se incluya al Presidente del Concilio 2009 según Reglamento.

Se acordó que este asunto se llevará a la próxima reunión del PNO sea oficial o extraoficial. Se le informará de la misma al liderato de los cuerpos, Sínodo y presbiterios. La carta certificada con acuse de recibo le llegará al apartado postal del SPBPR.

Sometido:

Rev. Gerardo López Vigo
Secretario Permanente Presbiterio del Noroeste

Anexo D

IGLESIA PRESBITERIANA (U.S.A.)

Oficina del Presbiterio de San Juan

Fax

Para: Mark Tammen

De: Aurelio A. García Archilla,
Secretario Permanente
Presbiterio de San Juan

Fax: 502-569-8822

Páginas 4

Teléfono:

Fecha: Junio/26/09

Ref.:

cc:

Urgente Para revisión Favor comentar Favor responder Favor reciclar

¡URGENTE!

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE GOVERNING BODY ISSUES

Reverendo Gradye Parson
Secretario Permanente
La Iglesia Presbiteriana (USA)
100 Wiherspoon St.Room 4408
Louisville, KY 40202-1396

Estimado Rev. Parson:

Saludos en nombre de Nuestro Señor, desde el Presbiterio de San Juan.

Tengo entendido que usted conoce hasta cierto punto los acontecimientos que han ocurrido recientemente en el Sínodo de Puerto Rico, ya que alguna información debe haber trascendido, quizás a través de nuestra amiga y colaboradora, la Srta. Loyda Aja, a quien, según se me ha dicho, le preocupa mucho la situación. También tengo entendido de que varios altos funcionarios de nuestra denominación estarán presentes en la siguiente reunión del Concilio del Sínodo de Puerto Rico que se celebrará a principios de julio.

Por mi parte, estoy sintiéndome muy sorprendido y preocupado por la rapidez con que han transcurrido los eventos, por lo cual he referido el asunto al Concilio del Presbiterio. Nos preocupa particularmente la posibilidad de que un grupo relativamente pequeño de proponentes de una Iglesia Presbiteriana Nacional Puertorriqueña podría estar intentando asumir el control absoluto del Sínodo, y de tratar de implementar su proyecto aceleradamente antes de que la mayoría de los miembros de la iglesia en Puerto Rico se dé plena cuenta de sus intenciones y de las graves consecuencias de las mismas.

Nos preocupa la integridad del Presbiterio de San Juan, así como de la posibilidad de que exista la intención de apoderarse de recursos financieros y materiales por parte de los dos presbiterios que aparentan estar en una condición financiera crítica.

Debido a la celeridad de los hechos, el Presbiterio de San Juan ha adoptado una resolución que se adjunta a este documento. En esencia, describe las acciones del Presbiterio del Suroeste y el Presbiterio del Noroeste como nocivas para la confianza mutua necesaria para las labores conjuntas entre ambos presbiterios, así como una rebelión contra la Constitución de nuestra iglesia IP(EUA). Esta reafirma el compromiso de nuestro presbiterio de observar la doctrina, los principios y la política de nuestra denominación. También solicita ante el CAG el nombramiento de una comisión administrativa para el Sínodo, mientras se determina su futuro. Solicita la disolución del Sínodo, ya que en el Presbiterio de San Juan no podemos mantener una relación en la que percibimos que los otros dos presbiterios intentan clandestinamente excluirnos del proceso de toma de decisiones y monopolizar la autoridad. Como el Sínodo requiere de por lo menos tres presbiterios, nuestra solicitud adicional de ser reasignados a otro sínodo implica la disolución del Sínodo de Puerto Rico y la distribución de sus bienes.

Esta es nuestra posición actual. Nuestra intención es preservar nuestra dignidad, así como nuestros bienes y derechos, y colaborar con el liderato nacional de la denominación para que se solucione rápidamente este grave problema. Debido a esto, solicitamos su consejo y queremos ofrecer al Despacho del Secretario Permanente las herramientas que sean necesarias para tomar medidas apropiadas y oportunas con el fin de defender la integridad de la IP(EUA). Estamos conscientes de que ambos presbiterios mencionados anteriormente cuentan con miembros dedicados y de que los disidentes son probablemente una minoría. Pero los peligros que conllevan las acciones irrazonables del liderato de dichos presbiterios requieren que tomemos medidas definitivas, las cuales habría que implementar en el peor de los casos.

Le pido que estudie nuestra posición, nos aconseje sobre este asunto y lo considere con toda la seriedad que amerita el caso, ya que la mayor dificultad parece ser la inconsistencia y la aparente falta de sentido en sus acciones. Es este hecho lo que nos ha llevado a considerar que no se puede confiar en ellos. Tal como he expresado, esta es la situación del presente liderato de los presbiterios del Suroeste y el Noroeste, y no del resto del liderato o de sus miembros. Pero como no han demostrado efectivamente su lealtad ni han tomado medidas efectivas para contrarrestar las acciones de sus líderes, no podemos basarnos en las políticas acostumbradas para superar este conflicto.

Dirigimos nuestras esperanzas y oraciones para que este asunto se resuelva para el mayor beneficio del Reino del Señor, el avance espiritual de la Iglesia y el progreso del Evangelio en Puerto Rico.

Atentamente,

Aurelio García, Ph. D.
Secretario Permanente
Presbiterio de San Juan

El Presbiterio de San Juan
de
La Iglesia Presbiteriana (USA)

El Presbiterio de San Juan, a través de su Concilio de Misión, decide y determina:

1. Declarar que las recientes acciones de los presbiterios del Suroeste y el Noroeste, solicitando la renuncia de todos los miembros del Concilio de Misión del Sínodo del Presbiterio de Boriquén y promoviendo la reestructuración de dicho cuerpo junto con los oficiales de los tres presbiterios, constituye una ruptura de la confianza mutua entre los presbiterios, una disolución de la relación necesaria para la vida común de los presbiterios dentro del Sínodo, un rechazo a los principios Reformados de obrar con decencia y orden, y de hecho, una rebelión contra la Constitución de la Iglesia Presbiteriana (USA).
2. Afirmar la intención del Presbiterio de San Juan de mantenerse leal a la doctrina, los principios y la política de la Iglesia Presbiteriana (USA).
3. Solicitar a la Asamblea General que designe a una Comisión Administrativa para el Sínodo del Presbiterio de Boriquén de Puerto Rico, hasta que se decida el futuro del Sínodo y qué estructuras y cuerpos gobernantes podrán sucederle, así como el destino de la jurisdicción y las propiedades de la Iglesia Presbiteriana (USA) en Puerto Rico, ya sea bajo el gobierno directo del Sínodo o de cuerpos gobernantes inferiores.
4. Solicitar a la Asamblea General la disolución del Sínodo del Presbiterio de Puerto Rico y la distribución equitativa de sus bienes entre sus presbiterios.
5. Solicitar que el Presbiterio de San Juan sea transferido en su totalidad a otro sínodo de la denominación.
6. Determinar, mientras tanto, no participar de ninguna forma en las estructuras, los comités, las agencias y las actividades del Sínodo del Presbiterio de Boriquén de Puerto Rico, hasta que la Asamblea General asuma la jurisdicción y lo reorganice. Sin la participación de nuestro presbiterio, el Sínodo quedará inactivo y sin quórum legal. Cualquier intento de convocar a dicho cuerpo y de deliberar o tomar decisiones, se considerará una usurpación ilegal de la jurisdicción y será impugnada por el Presbiterio de San Juan tanto en tribunales eclesiásticos como civiles.

Aprobado por el Presbiterio de San Juan el 24 de junio de 2009.

Por lo tanto, lo certifico.

Aurelio García
Secretario Permanente
Presbiterio de San Juan

[This document was written in Spanish as shown above and is translated here.]

June 15, 2009

Rev. Cruz Alberto Negrón
Stated Clerk of the PBPR [Boriquén Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico]

Fraternal greetings,

I submit for the consideration of the SPBPR [Borinquén Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico] Council the decision taken by the PNO [Northwest Presbytery] Council last Saturday June 13, 2009. This is a response to a request made by the PSO [Southwest Presbytery].

1. To write a letter to the Stated Clerk, the Moderator, the President of the Council and the Interim Executive to express our concerns and worries about how poorly the Synod Council and the Stated Clerk of the SPBPR have executed their constitutional duties, thus obstructing the appropriate tasks.
2. To request that the next SPBPR Assembly declare vacant the Synod Council and, in its absence, name a special council constituted of the following fifteen people: the Moderator, Council President, Stated Clerk and Treasurer of each presbytery and the Moderator, Stated Clerk and Treasurer of the Synod. This Special Council would act until a new structure is approved.
3. To request that the Stated Clerk of the Synod be declared vacant and to proceed to name a new incumbent who can carry out these responsibilities in accordance with the mission and the objectives of the SPBPR.

The PNO Council agreed to add the President of the 2009 Council to item #2 in accordance with the Rule.

It was agreed to take this issue to the next PNO meeting, whether it be regular or specially called. The leaders of the bodies, the Synod and the presbyteries, will be notified of the meeting. A certified letter with acknowledgment of receipt will be sent to the P.O. Box of the SPBPR.

Submitted:

Rev. Gerardo López Vigo
Stated Clerk of the Northwest Presbytery



Iglesia Presbiteriana (U.S.A.)
Oficina del Presbiterio de San Juan

Appendix E

Secretario Permanente

MEMORANDUM

FECHA: 4 de febrero de 2010

DE: Aurelio A. García Archilla, Ph.D.
Secretario Permanente, Presbiterio de San Juan

A: Oficiales de los presbiterios del Noroeste y Suroeste; oficiales del Sínodo Presbiteriano Boriquén en Puerto Rico; Oficina del Secretario Permanente de la Asamblea General, PC (USA).

RE: Resolución aprobada por la Asamblea del Presbiterio de San Juan

El Presbiterio de San Juan en su pasada reunión ordinaria del 30 de enero de 2010, acordó aprobar la siguiente resolución con respecto a la situación interna del Sínodo y sus presbiterios:

El Presbiterio de San Juan, reconociendo que se han vivido tiempos difíciles en las relaciones entre las diferentes estructuras eclesiales [y que] estas circunstancias nos han llevado a herir y a ser heridos, y lastimar a aquellas personas por quien Cristo murió, entiende que no es apropiado que un cuerpo intervenga en las responsabilidades de otro, mucho menos que sugiera la destitución de oficiales y disolución de estructuras que no sean las propias. [Por tanto.] en un espíritu de reconciliación hacemos un llamado a todas nuestras judicaturas, su oficialidad y sus miembros, a perdonar y a ser perdonados, a caminar la milla extra, a buscar consensos, a esforzarnos por lograr la unidad en la diversidad, a dirimir nuestras discrepancias con amor y respeto, a arrepentirnos de nuestros pecados individuales y colectivos, a aprender de nuestros errores y enfocar nuestros esfuerzos en ser fieles al Señor Jesucristo renovando nuestro compromiso con los grandes fines de la Iglesia.

ACCIÓN: Se adopta la resolución como expresión del Presbiterio de San Juan y se acuerda notificarla al Presbiterio del Noroeste, Presbiterio del Suroeste, Sínodo Presbiteriano Boriquén y la Asamblea General de nuestra denominación. La resolución se adoptó sin oposición.

Para que así conste, certifico:

Aurelio A. García Archilla,
Secretario Permanente
Presbiterio de San Juan

Appendix E

Communication from Presbytery of San Juan
[This document was written in Spanish and is translated here.]

Presbyterian Church (USA)
Office of the Presbytery of San Juan
Stated Clerk

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 4, 2010

FROM: Aurelio A. García Archilla, Ph.D.
Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Juan

TO: The officers of the presbyteries of the Northwest and Southwest; the officers of the Boriquén Presbyterian Synod in Puerto Rico; the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA).

REF.: Resolution approved by the Presbytery of San Juan Assembly.

In its last regular meeting held on January 30, 2010, the Presbytery of San Juan agreed to approve the following resolution pertaining to the internal situation of the Synod and its presbyteries:

The Presbytery of San Juan, recognizing the difficult times in the relationships among the different ecclesiastical structures, [*and that*] these circumstances have led us to wound and to be wounded, to hurt those people for whom Christ died, understands that it is inappropriate for a body to get involved in the responsibilities of another, much less to suggest the dismissal of officers and the dissolution of structures that are not its own. [*Therefore,*] in a spirit of reconciliation we call all of our judicatories, their officers and their members, to forgive and be forgiven, to walk the extra mile, to seek consensus, to make an effort to achieve unity within diversity, to resolve our differences through love and respect, to repent of our individual and collective sins, to learn from our mistakes and to focus our efforts on being faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ by renewing our commitment to the great ends of the church.

ACTION: The resolution is adopted as the expression of the Presbytery of San Juan and it is agreed to notify about it to the Presbytery of the Northwest, the Presbytery of the Southwest, the Boriquén Presbyterian Synod and the General Assembly of our denomination. The resolution was passed without opposition.

I certify the above for the record:

Aurelio A. García Archilla,
Stated Clerk
Presbytery of San Juan

Appendix F

Communication from Presbytery of the Northwest

[This document was written in Spanish and is translated here.]

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

PRESBYTERY OF THE NORTHWEST OF PUERTO RICO

Apartado 5090. Aguadilla, Puerto Rico 00605

Tel. 787-891-7734, 788-891-3476 (fax)

February 27, 2010

Rev. Nelson Gutiérrez Pagán

Moderator of the Presbytery of San Juan

Dear Rev. Gutiérrez

Greetings in Jesus Christ.

Thank you on behalf of the Northwest Presbytery for attending our regular meeting on Saturday, February 27, 2010. We also acknowledge your words of forgiveness and reconciliation as the first necessary steps to reestablish the fraternal vision and mission of our calling. We cannot ignore your role in the conversation which was essential for the agreement that is set forth below.

The Northwest Presbytery agreed to the following:

1. *Request a meeting between the Councils of the San Juan Presbytery (SJP) and the Northwest Presbytery (NWP). The two moderators of the respective councils will be responsible for this task; the Rev. Nelson Gutiérrez Pagán and Elder José A. Rodríguez Robles.*
2. *The intention of the agreed meeting will be of total reconciliation.*
3. *To report to all the constituent bodies of the Presbyterian Church in Puerto Rico and to the General Assembly Review Committee and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly the approving agreements to the objectives mentioned above.*
4. *The two bodies will schedule, among other things;*
 - a. *Prayer meetings*
 - b. *Lay out and participate in learning and training events related to the areas that need reconciliation.*
 - c. *Worship meetings and events of both Presbyterian bodies*
 1. *The celebration of the Day of Pentecost is proposed.*
5. *That the moderators of the NWP and the SJP consider inviting the SJP Council when considered appropriate.*

We are certain that both you and Elder José A. Rodríguez Robles understand the importance of this intention and also have committed to this purpose.

Sincerely, Rev. Gerardo López Vigo

Stated Clerk of the Northwest Presbytery

Item 05-01

[The assembly disapproved Item 05-01. See p. 57.]

On Amending D-6.0101 and D-10.0101 Regarding Conciliation and Mediation—From the Presbytery of Northern Kansas.

The Presbytery of Northern Kansas overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall D-6.0101 be amended as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“A remedial case is initiated by the filing of a complaint with the stated clerk of the governing body having jurisdiction. *The complaint shall be accompanied by a statement indicating what efforts have been made to fulfill the biblical obligation to conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences.*”

2. Shall D-10.0101 be amended as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Procedure preliminary to a disciplinary case is initiated by submitting to the clerk of session or the stated clerk of the presbytery having jurisdiction over the member (D-3.0101) a written statement of an alleged offense, together with any supporting information, *and an account of efforts made to fulfill the biblical obligation to conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences.* The statement shall give a clear narrative and allege facts that, if proven true, would likely result in disciplinary action. Such allegations shall be referred to an investigating committee. (D-10.0201)”

Rationale

As noted in Chapter 1 of the Rules of Discipline, it is our responsibility to conciliate and mediate before escalating into the judicial process of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

There are significant human resources and finance costs involved with judicial process of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Therefore, the judicial process can be expensive in financial resources and in relationship capital. Utilized carelessly, the judicial process disrupts the tender balance between “rules” and “relationships” called for in *Book of Order*.

Relationships need to be valued over rules. The solid expectation of invoking a mediation process strengthens “the biblical duty of church people to ‘come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court ...’ (Matthew 5:25)” (*Book of Order*, D-1.0103). The idea of the moral responsible life is reflected in the judicial process of the church when we deal directly with one another through mediation to draw conclusions about what God is enabling and requiring us to be together as the body of Christ. Seeking clarity to questions of standing would be a necessity of such mediation. By requiring a mediation process, the church testifies to our common need to understanding our actions and the inevitability of deeper and wider consequences.

In requiring mediation in a Christian church context, the PC(USA) also acknowledges that the people of God are to see and understand the action of God in everything that happens and to make a fitting response. Our God is not only the commander who gives laws, but the shaper of sparrows and dresser of lilies, the giver of blindness and sight, the One whose rule is embedded in myriad activities and agencies, and is available to those who are willing to interpret the truth of the messiness of human relationships and these challenging times.

Concurrence to Item 05-01 from the Synod of Mid-America (with Additional Rationale)

The concern to advocate for mediation (and other alternative methods of dispute resolution) in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is rooted in a Christian vision of God’s mission. A sincere regard for mediation as a means of dispute resolution and reconciliation flows from the affirmation in 2 Cor. 5:19 that “... in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself,” and that through Christ, “... the message of reconciliation [has been entrusted] to us.”

In many ways and for many reasons, the Presbyterian community is encouraged to respond to this challenge. By advocating for mediation, we agree to be about the discipline and practice of faithfully remembering the vision of God’s new creation and invite others into this vision. Too often, the judicial process perpetuates a kind of litigiousness that does not grow the maturity of participants, but simply accentuates the breadth and depth of the church’s brokenness and society’s violence. While we acknowledge instances where deliberate speed is required in reference to a judicial process, there are far too many instances when mediation or other alternatives can be engaged as a more faithful response of genuine Christian community.

Typically, the church has mirrored society rather than offering a witness to it, especially in relation to the ways we treat one another. Justice and reconciliation, remembrance and forgiveness, conversation and social transformation, can find a place of intersection when we seriously consider and engage alternative forms of dispute resolution. By providing a variety of

positive forms of resolution for disputes, we seek to constantly engage Scripture and thought with practices through which the Christian ecclesiastical judicial process is shaped and disciplined.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-01

Advice on Item 05-01 (Ovt 028) (North Kansas-Amend D-6.0101 and D-10.0101)—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 05-01.

Rationale

The biblical obligation to “[c]ome to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court ...” (Mt. 5:25) is lifted up in the Preamble to the Rules of Discipline (D-1.0103) as a duty to be fulfilled prior to initiating formal judicial proceedings in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Such efforts for reconciliation are never out of order. In responding to this duty, Christians in disagreement make faithful efforts to provide for the settlement of issues by means of the establishment or restoration of personal relationships that strengthen the Body of Christ, prayerfully and “... according to the Word by reason and sound judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit...” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0100c). Even when formal judicial procedures are understood to be necessary in order to build up and redeem the church, within the constitutional steps for remedial and disciplinary cases there are stated points at which the reconciliation of parties might be negotiated before full trials are held: pretrial conferences in remedial cases (D-6.0310), and initiation, if appropriate, of alternative forms of resolution prior to the filing of charges in disciplinary cases (D-10.0202h). As stated in the Preamble to the Rules of Discipline, the Rules provide for judicial process that is not to serve as a substitute for the secular judicial system but is to do what the secular judicial system cannot do, including “... to bring members to repentance and restoration ...” (*Book of Order*, D-1.0101).

Item 05-01 would amend D-6.0101 and D-10.0101 to require that, at the time of initiating formal proceedings and in order for the church to go forward in those proceedings, there be filed along with the complaint or allegation a description of the efforts made “to fulfill the biblical obligation to conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences.” It is intended that through this requirement, the Rules of Discipline would further hold the church to the Matthew 5:25 standard as described in the overture rationale, and support the ability and willingness of those in disagreement or conflict to avoid the interpersonal and financial costs of formal judicial process.

While the intent of Item 05-01 is laudable, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes constitutional concerns about requiring some documentation of efforts to conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences in order to initiate judicial procedures. With respect to a remedial case, the requirement that a complaint be filed within ninety days of an alleged irregularity or within ninety days after failure or refusal to cure an alleged delinquency (D-6.0202a) may be too short for seeking and participating in meaningful efforts to conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences. With respect to a disciplinary case, the proposed requirement of an “... account of efforts made to fulfill the biblical obligation to conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences ...” (Item 05-01) could delay judicial process in instances, such as those of alleged sexual abuse, in which the church has determined that to protect the innocent there should be a swift response to allegations of misconduct. For both remedial and disciplinary cases, the addition of the proposed requirement could create a pleading standard¹ which would put a burden on a case or could damage a meritorious case.

A particular concern about the impact of Item 05-01 on a potential disciplinary case is that the requirement could possibly serve as an unbounded means to discover facts that would carry weight before the session or permanent judicial commission, without there having been in place those due process safeguards for an accused person that are incorporated into the responsibilities of an investigating committee (D-10.0202a; D-10.0203a, b, c). It is not clear whether an investigating committee may be appointed if jeopardy² has been attached.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-01 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Endnotes

1. A pleading standard is a rule governing what statements must be included in a document, such as a remedial complaint or an allegation of an offense, before a disciplinary investigation can be initiated.
2. Jeopardy, in a criminal context, has to do with being in jeopardy of receiving some criminal punishment. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) does not execute, incarcerate, or fine offenders; accordingly, within the church jeopardy refers to the jeopardy of receiving a disciplinary censure (which could include, in the most severe form, removal from office or membership).

While the U.S. Constitution includes protections against twice being put in jeopardy for the same offense, the Constitution of the PC(USA) does not include an explicit protection against double jeopardy. No authoritative interpretation has recognized a protection against double jeopardy. Nevertheless, the disapproval of double jeopardy can be found in our understandings of fairness.

In order to recognize when a person is placed in jeopardy twice, it is necessary to be able to determine when a person is placed in jeopardy for the first time, i.e. when jeopardy attaches.

Item 05-02

[The assembly approved Item 05-02. See p. 57.]

On Restoring Previous Provisions of D-13.0102 and D-13.0106 to Deny the Prosecuting Committee the Ability to Appeal a Verdict of “Not Guilty”—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.

The Presbytery of Arkansas respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall the current text of D-13.0102 be deleted and new text inserted to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“ Either party may initiate the first level of appeal by the filing of a written notice of appeal Only the person found guilty may initiate the first level of appeal by the filing of a written notice of appeal.”~~

2. Shall D-13.0106 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“a. The grounds for appeal by the person found guilty are~~

~~“(1) irregularity in the proceedings;~~

~~“(2) refusing a party reasonable opportunity to be heard or to obtain or present evidence;~~

~~“(3) receiving improper, or declining to receive proper, evidence or testimony;~~

~~“(4) hastening to a decision before the evidence or testimony is fully received;~~

~~“(5) manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case;~~

~~“(6) injustice in the process or decision;~~

~~“(7) error in constitutional interpretation; and~~

~~“(8) undue severity of censure.~~

~~“b. The grounds for appeal by the prosecuting committee are~~

~~“(1) irregularity in the proceedings;~~

~~“(2) refusing a party reasonable opportunity to be heard or to obtain or present evidence;~~

~~“(3) receiving improper, or declining to receive proper evidence or testimony;~~

~~“(4) hastening a decision before the evidence or testimony is fully received;~~

~~“(5) manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case; and~~

~~“(6) error in constitutional interpretation.”~~

Rationale

The Rules of Discipline were amended in 2004–05 to include numerous changes that were intended to clarify and advance our judicial process. Of the changes made, one has emerged as both problematic in practice and contradictory to our tradition and theology. This change must be reversed.

Among the changes made in 2004–05 was a provision to allow for appeal by the prosecuting committee when an accused person in a disciplinary case is found not guilty. The amendment proposed by this overture would restore the provisions of D-13.0102 and D-13.0106 to the wording of those sections prior to the amendment, an experiment that has not served the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) well.

The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission has commented on several problems with the practice of appeal by a prosecuting committee in *Davis v Presbytery of San Francisco* [Emphasis added in italic]:

“In 2004, the Rules of Discipline were amended to permit a governing body to appeal a judgment of “not guilty” (D-13.0102). D-11.0403b provides that “No judgment of guilt may be found on a charge unless at least two-thirds of the members of the session or permanent judicial commission eligible to vote agree on the judgment.” The amendment to the Rules of Discipline to allow appeals by either party created the potential for an appellate body to re-examine the issue of guilt. In making that reexamination, if it determines that a guilty judgment is the correct result, the appellate body would become the first court to make that judgment. Davis correctly observed that *D-13.0102 is a contradiction of all previous ecclesiastical and secular law*. Further, the revision stands alone, and *other related provisions of the Book of Order have not been revised*. Thus, prosecuting bodies have a right to appeal, but *there are no corresponding procedures to guide how such appeals should be handled and what this appellate right means in terms of the authority of a permanent judicial commission acting as an appellate court to reverse a judgment of not guilty to guilty*. This Commission finds no basis in the *Book of Order* to permit an appellate body to determine guilt by a simple majority vote. It would be grossly unfair to require a two-thirds majority vote by the trier of fact and then permit a simple majority to reverse that judgment based solely on an appellate record and oral argument. Therefore, this Commission finds that any judgment of guilt requires a two-thirds majority vote.

“The logical implication of permitting a prosecuting committee to appeal a judgment of not guilty is the prospect that the determination of not guilty will be reversed. *D-13.0102 grants a right of appeal, but says nothing about whether there shall be a second trial (which raises concerns about double jeopardy) or where and how such a trial would be held*. It is inconceivable that D-13.0102 was intended to permit an appellate body to determine guilt without hearing any evidence, judging the credibility of the witnesses, and deciding whether the burden of proof has been met beyond a reasonable doubt. None of these *due process safeguards* was provided to Davis...” (See Item 05-Info, p. 383, *Davis v Presbytery of San Francisco, Disciplinary Case 219-09*)

The ability of prosecuting committees to appeal a verdict of “not guilty” does not serve the purpose of church discipline, which is at all times to be used “... for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing...” (D-1.0102). Being accused and brought to trial is often enormously draining, spiritually and emotionally. Repeated prosecution of an individual after the prosecuting committee has failed to convince a permanent judicial commission of the guilt of the accused does not accomplish the purpose of repentance and restoration, but is more likely to contribute to anger and resentment, strife and distress.

Presbyterian process is supposed “... to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings...” (D-1.0101). And yet, it is not just, speedy, or economical when an accused person is subject not just to “double jeopardy,” but potentially to multiple jeopardy involving trials and hearings before several judicial commissions, possibly including more than once at the same level, and—unlike a person found guilty who might choose to appeal—involuntarily. Accused persons face the possibility of having to defend themselves for months and years. For ministers of Word and Sacrament this includes the prohibition on accepting a new call while the cloud hangs over one’s head—even after being found “not guilty” by a judicial commission. The expenses of a defense necessary to protect one’s integrity, reputation, and livelihood can impose a severe financial strain.

The accused is not the only party affected financially. A presbytery may incur large expenses for the prosecuting committee. Furthermore, the presbytery is also responsible for securing counsel for the accused if the accused cannot afford it, which may place a further severe strain on its budget. In addition, judicial process expends an enormous number of hours—time that is not spent in other ministry.

The Rules of Discipline are clear that “... [i]n all respects, all participants are to be accorded procedural safeguards and due process, and it is the intention of these rules so to provide” (D-1.0101). “The accused in a disciplinary case is presumed to be innocent until the contrary is proved, and unless guilt is established beyond a reasonable doubt, the accused is entitled to be found not guilty” (D-11.0401).

A presbytery prosecuting committee is an investigating committee that has decided to file charges—generally, an appointed group. The right of a prosecuting committee to appeal the decision of its own presbytery’s permanent judicial commission sets up the situation of an *unelected* group complaining against the decision of its own presbytery’s *elected* body. The presbytery, in effect, ends up suing itself, without the consent of the body as a whole. The whole body is affected, and the not guilty party—also a member of the body—carries the greatest burden.

Under the current language of D-13-0102 and D-13.0106, an appellate body may potentially become a trier of fact effectively eliminating the right of the accused to the appellate process. One mark of the true church is “... ecclesiastical discipline uprightly [ad]ministered...” (*Book of Confessions*, Scots Confession, 3.18). A fundamentally unfair process which interferes with the ability of the church to live out its calling as the true church of Jesus Christ is untenable.

The 218th General Assembly (2008), responding to a referral from the 217th General Assembly (2006), addressed the issue of “... inappropriate use of judicial process ...” with this statement: “The Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 218th General Assembly (2008) remind individuals that the Rules of Discipline cannot be used to mediate intrinsic differences of theology, policy, polity, power, or trust” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 282).

Whatever gains were anticipated from the current language of D-13.0102 and D-13.0106 are overwhelmed by the fundamental unfairness of subjecting an accused person to multiple trials of the same facts. The potential erosion of confidence

in the judicial system of the church far outweighs any perceived benefit of the current language. The pre-2005 language ensures both fair and just process while maintaining discipline within the church.

Concurrence to Item 05-02 from the Presbytery of San Francisco (with Additional Rationale)

The Rules of Discipline were amended in 2004–2005 to allow for appeal by the prosecuting committee when an accused person in a disciplinary case is found not guilty. This amendment would restore the provisions of D-13.0102 and D-13.0106 to the wording of those sections prior to the amendment, an experiment that has not served the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) well.

The ability of prosecuting committees to appeal a verdict of “not guilty” does not serve the purpose of church discipline, which is at all times to be used “... for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing” (D-1.0102). Being accused and brought to trial is often enormously draining, spiritually and emotionally. Repeated prosecution of an individual after the prosecuting committee has failed to convince a permanent judicial commission of the guilt of the accused does not accomplish the purpose of repentance and restoration, but is more likely to contribute to anger and resentment, strife and distress.

Presbyterian process is supposed “... to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings...” (D-1.0101). And yet, it is not just, speedy, or economical when an accused person is subject not just to “double jeopardy,” but potentially to multiple jeopardy involving trials and hearings before several judicial commissions, possibly including more than once at the same level, and—unlike a person found guilty who might choose to appeal—involuntarily. Accused persons face the possibility of having to defend themselves for months and years. For ministers of Word and Sacrament this includes the prohibition on accepting a new call while the cloud hangs over one’s head—even after a judicial commission has found one “not guilty.” The expenses of the defense necessary to protect one’s integrity, reputation, and livelihood can impose a severe financial strain.

The accused is not the only party affected financially. A presbytery may incur large expenses for the prosecuting committee. Furthermore, the presbytery is also responsible for securing counsel for the accused if the accused cannot afford it, which may place a further severe strain on its budget. In addition, judicial process expends an enormous number of hours—time that is not spent in other ministry.

The Rules of Discipline are clear that “... [i]n all respects, all participants are to be accorded procedural safeguards and due process, and it is the intention of these rules so to provide” (D-1.0101). “The accused in a disciplinary case is presumed to be innocent until the contrary is proved, and unless guilt is established beyond a reasonable doubt, the accused is entitled to be found not guilty” (D-11.0401).

The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission has commented on several problems with the practice of appeal by a prosecuting committee in *Davis v Presbytery of San Francisco* [Emphasis added in italic]:

“In 2004, the Rules of Discipline were amended to permit a governing body to appeal a judgment of “not guilty” (D-13.0102). D-11.0403b provides that “No judgment of guilt may be found on a charge unless at least two-thirds of the members of the session or permanent judicial commission eligible to vote agree on the judgment.” The amendment to the Rules of Discipline to allow appeals by either party created the potential for an appellate body to re-examine the issue of guilt. In making that reexamination, if it determines that a guilty judgment is the correct result, the appellate body would become the first court to make that judgment. Davis correctly observed that *D-13.0102 is a contradiction of all previous ecclesiastical and secular law*. Further, the revision stands alone, and *other related provisions of the Book of Order have not been revised*. Thus, prosecuting bodies have a right to appeal, but *there are no corresponding procedures to guide how such appeals should be handled and what this appellate right means in terms of the authority of a permanent judicial commission acting as an appellate court to reverse a judgment of not guilty to guilty*. This Commission finds no basis in the *Book of Order* to permit an appellate body to determine guilt by a simple majority vote. It would be grossly unfair to require a two-thirds majority vote by the trier of fact and then permit a simple majority to reverse that judgment based solely on an appellate record and oral argument. Therefore, this Commission finds that any judgment of guilt requires a two-thirds majority vote.

“The logical implication of permitting a prosecuting committee to appeal a judgment of not guilty is the prospect that the determination of not guilty will be reversed. *D-13.0102 grants a right of appeal, but says nothing about whether there shall be a second trial (which raises concerns about double jeopardy) or where and how such a trial would be held*. It is inconceivable that D-13.0102 was intended to permit an appellate body to determine guilt without hearing any evidence, judging the credibility of the witnesses, and deciding whether the burden of proof has been met beyond a reasonable doubt. None of these *due process safeguards* was provided to Davis...” (See Item 05-Info, p. 383, *Davis v Presbytery of San Francisco, Disciplinary Case 219-09*)

A presbytery prosecuting committee is an investigating committee that has decided to file charges—generally, an appointed group. The right of a prosecuting committee to appeal the decision of its own presbytery’s permanent judicial commission sets up the situation of an *unelected* group complaining against the decision of its own presbytery’s *elected* body. The presbytery, in effect, ends up suing itself, without the consent of the body as a whole. The whole body is affected, and the not-guilty party—also a member of the body—carries the greatest burden.

Under the current language of D-13-0102 and D-13.0106 an appellate body may potentially become a trier of fact effectively eliminating the right of the accused to the appellate process. One mark of the true church is “... ecclesiastical discipline uprightly [ad]ministered...” (*The Book of Confessions*, Scots Confession, 3.18). A fundamentally unfair process which interferes with the ability of the church to live out its calling as the true church of Jesus Christ is untenable.

The 218th General Assembly (2008), responding to a referral from the 217th General Assembly (2006), addressed the issue of "... inappropriate use of judicial process ..." with this statement: "The Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 218th General Assembly (2008) remind individuals that the Rules of Discipline cannot be used to mediate intrinsic differences of theology, policy, polity, power, or trust" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 282).

Whatever gains were anticipated from the current language of D-13.0102 and D-13.0106 are overwhelmed by the fundamental unfairness of subjecting an accused person to multiple trials of the same facts. The potential erosion of confidence in the judicial system of the church far outweighs any perceived benefit of the current language. The pre-2005 language ensures both fair and just process while maintaining discipline within the church.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-02

Advice on Item 05-02—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 05-02.

Rationale

Item 05-02 would limit the right to initiate an appeal in a disciplinary case to the accused, a restriction in place prior to the 2004–2005 amendment of D-13.0102 allowing prosecuting committees to appeal for correction of alleged trial errors by sessions or permanent judicial commissions. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that although it is rare for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to reverse a relatively recent amendment of its Constitution, Item 05-02 is not inconsistent with the faithful openness to institutional reform under the guidance of the Spirit of God, as expressed in G-18.0101.

When amendment to D-13-0102 was proposed in 2004, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution gave the following advice:

This provision would allow either the prosecuting committee or an accused convicted of an offense to initiate an appeal. Currently, only an accused may initiate such an appeal. Whether such appeals are desirable raises several questions. Such appeal rights would be broader than the secular judicial system allows. It also would perpetuate disciplinary cases in a manner that may discourage victims from seeking civil remedies. On the other hand, the amendment is consistent with the concern that the potential for error is greater in a voluntary judicial process than it is in the professional secular system. If the 216th General Assembly (2004) believes that it is desirable to allow prosecuting committees to pursue such appeals, the proposed amendment appears clear and adequate to accomplish that intent. (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 306, Item 04-08, ACC Advice on Recommendation 5)

The potential for error exists in any judicial system. Therefore appeal processes are in place for correction. Among the purposes of discipline in the church is to honor God and to preserve the purity of the church. The procedures in the Rules of Discipline can work well for individuals and for the church or can cause harm, including possible financial harm due to a session's or presbytery's obligation to cover the expenses of an investigation, original trial, and subsequent expenses of appeal, as well as reasonable expenses for defense of the accused if that person is unable to secure counsel (D-11.0302).

The rationale for Item 05-02 to the 219th General Assembly (2010) cites several reasons to reverse the subject provisions. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that this rationale correctly summarizes the need for the proposed amendment.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language in Item 05-02 is clear and is consistent with the stated intent.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-02 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-03

[The assembly disapproved Item 05-03. See pp. 57, 60.]

On Amending G-14.0560 Expanding the Role of the Commissioned Lay Pastor—From the Presbytery of South Louisiana.

The Presbytery of South Louisiana overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-14.0560 be amended to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strikethrough; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

"The commissioned lay pastor is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is granted a ~~local~~ *general* commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and ser-

vice. This commission is valid ~~only~~ in one or more congregations, a new church development, or other valid ministries of the presbytery ~~designated~~ approved by the presbytery, or in his/her own congregation at the invitation of the session and with the approval of the pastor and the presbytery. Such an elder is selected by and receives training approved by the presbytery. The elder shall be instructed in Bible, Reformed Theology and Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching. The elder shall be examined by the appropriate committee of presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction mentioned previously. An elder who has been commissioned as a CLP and later ceases to serve whose services are no longer needed in a particular congregation may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions of a commissioned lay pastor again until appointed to a particular congregation by the presbytery as a CLP-at-large, and may also be authorized to continue to perform the functions of a commissioned lay pastor: A CLP-at-large may serve in his/her own congregation at the invitation of the session, with the approval of the pastor, and at discretion of the presbytery. The CLP-at-large would also be able to officiate at the sacraments in those congregations without pastoral leadership under the supervision of presbytery.”

Rationale

These changes would do three things:

1. Provide for a new classification of commissioned lay pastor, CLP-at-large, to serve at the discretion of the presbytery;
2. The CLP-at-large would be able to provide services, although not commissioned to, to a particular congregation, including officiating at the Sacraments; and
3. The CLP-at-large would be able to serve in his/her own church should it have pastoral leadership, somewhat similar to a parish associate.

Given the current reality that many of our smaller membership congregations are unable to afford the services of a commissioned lay pastor, even if one were available in or near the community, much less a minister of the Word and Sacrament, it is incumbent upon the denomination to provide avenues where these congregations may be served by trained laity, especially for the celebration of the sacraments. Having adopted the essential tenets of the Reformed tradition, we should exhibit a visible expression of the Reformed tenet of “the priesthood of all believers” or what Scriptures call the “royal priesthood,” (1Peter 2:9; Ephesians 2:19–22; 1Corinthians 6:16–18).

The current restrictions on the availability and/or accessibility of commissioned lay pastors to smaller membership churches, who are unable adequately to compensate permanent pastoral leadership, or who are located in areas that do not easily attract pastoral leadership, penalizes these congregations. Rather than penalizing such congregations, the denomination needs to be willing to expand our polity in finding ways to make pastoral leadership available.

In addition, the expansion of the role of commissioned lay pastor to include an “at-large CLP,” who could serve in his/her own congregation under the supervision of the pastor, would assist the congregation in expanding its own ministry within the congregation, as well as its outreach to the wider community, in order to more faithfully fulfill the mission of the Church.

The *Book of Order* reminds us that those whom God calls to exercise special functions in the church, whether they be deacons, elders, or ministers of Word and Sacrament, are given, through the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts with which they may build up their various callings. Those whom God calls to undertake particular ministries, including being trained and serving as a commissioned lay pastor, God equips with the necessary spiritual gifts and abilities, natural and acquired. Those who undertake these special functions in the church should demonstrate strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior as a model to those whom they are called to serve in the name of Jesus Christ.

Concurrence to Item 05-03 from the Presbytery of Savannah (with Additional Rationale)

Presently, without a commission, qualified and trained leaders wishing to be of service to the church are often overlooked when needs of ministry in a congregation are considered by sessions, committees on ministry, and presbyteries. The at-large position in affect makes this resource of the church more visible and available as ministry needs are assessed. These at-large commissioned lay pastors (CLPs) might well be used as supply pastors and, with proper training, interim positions in smaller outlying churches. These positions often now fall by default to ministers of other denominations, who are not knowledgeable in our Presbyterian polity.

This amendment raises the level of visibility of this important trained and knowledgeable resource of our church. The need of our smaller church congregations cries out for regular pastoral care, and our commissioned lay pastors have already made a great contribution in some presbyteries. It is time to expand their role in order to provide trained laity to serve more easily in this capacity.

Our Constitution currently allows for an initial commissioning to a ministry within a presbytery. This expansion in the proposed amendment would allow for these CLPs to move to at-large status if there is not a suitable need upon the commission ending. Thus, it would allow these persons to continue to use their gifts in other positions, if available, or simply to continue to allow for their helping in ministry and sacraments at the pastor's discretion within their local church. This continuation of ministry allows for fulfillment of God's calling to them and to their church, or in other work as the presbytery might see a fit, with an at-large CLP.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-03

Advice on Item 05-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 05-03.

Rationale

The aim of Item 05-03 is to change the nature of the commission of a commissioned lay pastor from a limited, local commission to a continuing, general commission. It would amend G-14.0560 so as to create a new classification of "CLP-at-large" which could be empowered to continue to perform the functions of G-14.0562 on an ongoing basis without specific authorization.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the overture stands in conflict with the purposes and definitions of the offices of ministry as defined in G-6.0101 through G-6.0104; the definition of minister of the Word and Sacrament in G-6.0201; and G-6.0304a and G-11.0103z which limit authorization to perform the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to "specific circumstances" that "cannot otherwise be met."

At the heart of this amendment is the question of the nature of ordered ministry. Persons are ordained to these offices to fulfill particular functions (G-6.0102), and "[w]hile the ministry is one, specific forms of ministry may emphasize special tasks and skills and the ordering of the offices of ministry shall reflect this variety..." (G-6.0104). The gifts required by each office reflect the particular functions of each office. Historically, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has recognized three offices of ordered ministry: deacon, elder, and minister of the Word and Sacrament. Deacons and elders are offices under the jurisdiction of the session, while the presbytery has the exclusive power to oversee the ministers of the Word and Sacrament in its bounds.

It has long been the case, however, that presbyteries have had the power to authorize specific elders to preach and, more recently, to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in churches that lack the regular services of a minister of the Word and Sacrament. In 1985, presbyteries were permitted to commission some elders as "lay preachers" to provide regular services of preaching and the Lord's Supper in specific congregations for specific periods of time. In 1997, the name "commissioned lay pastor" was applied to these elders, and presbyteries were permitted to grant additional powers to them, such as performing baptisms and weddings, and moderating sessions. Nevertheless, the General Assembly has always maintained that such commissions were to be limited as to time, place, and powers. Moreover, the ordering of the offices of ministry has continued to be affirmed: elders serving as commissioned lay pastors do so as an extension of the office of elder, not in the capacity of a minister of the Word and Sacrament.

The proposed amendment would fundamentally change the purpose of the commissioned lay pastors and, consequently, the nature of the office of elder. By changing the nature of the commission from local and specific commission to a general commission, it dislodges the commission from its connection to filling a specific need and invests the person with continuing powers and authority. In short, it creates a new office of ministry. This new office of ministry would not only create confusion between the existing offices of elder and minister of the Word and Sacrament, but would complicate issues of jurisdiction, oversight, and accountability between the presbytery and the session.

There are additional concerns arising from the specific provisions of the overture. First, it creates an expectation that a commissioned lay pastor will continuously be placed in congregations or validated ministries, much like a minister of the Word and Sacrament. Second, by allowing a session and commissioned lay pastor to propose service of the commissioned lay pastor in his or her home congregation, the overture places presbyteries in an untenable position when a congregation wishes to have a favorite son or daughter of the congregation serve within that congregation by allowing the process to be initiated in the congregation rather than by the presbytery.

Further, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that several of the stated aims of the amendment already may be accomplished within the current provisions of the *Book of Order*, and thus the proposed amendment is unnecessary. While the current provisions do not allow an elder not commissioned to a congregation to perform baptisms or preside at weddings, G-6.0304a and G-11.0103z provide that elders may, with specific instruction and with the supervision of the presbytery, supply congregations and preside at table at places that are without the regular ministry of the Word and Sacrament. In addition, W-2.2007 and G-11.0502f provide that lay persons authorized by the presbytery may be invited by the pastor or session

to preach at any congregation; this provision would include an elder preaching in his or her own congregation if the presbytery determines such service to be wise.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Adoption of Item 05-03 would have the same profound implications for CLPs in the proposed Form of Government that it would have in the current Form of Government.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 05-03

Comment on Item 05-03—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) consider the following important background information, data, and other issues raised in recent research and reports as it deliberates on Item 05-03.

The 207th General Assembly (1995) approved an expansion of the role of “commissioned lay preacher” by creating the role of Commissioned Lay Pastor. Elders trained and approved by their presbytery for the new role are now commissioned to carry out a specific assignment within the presbytery. Commissioned Lay Pastors may now be authorized to perform—if the presbytery so wishes—virtually all the functions of a minister of the Word and Sacrament.

The creation of Commissioned Lay Pastors was a major move for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). For centuries, Presbyterians have required significant educational preparation for pastoral leaders. Ministers have been required to possess both an undergraduate education and a seminary education in central elements of Christian faith and life. The typical requirements for CLPs total less than a semester of college-level work.

The rationale for creating the exceptional role of CLPs was based on two, limited needs: first, the need of immigrant fellowships and racial ethnic churches for pastors who know their language and cultural practices; and second, the need of small churches in particularly remote settings. Since 1995, the role of CLPs has, in practice, expanded well beyond the limited roles that were the foundation for the office. In fact, more CLPs now serve as solo pastors (in non-remote settings) and as associate pastors in multi-staff congregations than serve either immigrant fellowships or churches in remote settings.

Because this overture calls on the PC(USA) to expand the CLP role even further, careful attention is required.

One significant question involves the role of elders who are not Commissioned Lay Pastors. Section G-6.0304a describes the role of elders: “It is the duty of elders, individually and jointly, to strengthen and nurture the faith and life of the congregation committed to their charge.... They should cultivate their ability to teach the Bible and may be authorized to supply places which are without the regular ministry of the Word and Sacrament. In specific circumstances and with proper instruction, specific elders may be authorized by the presbytery to administer the Lord’s Supper in accord with G-11.0103z...” (*Book of Order*, G-6.0304a). Is there a role to be played by elders in fulfilling the needs cited in Item 05-03?

Another significant question involves the ongoing ministry of ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Currently there are 2,263 persons seeking 527 open positions for ministers of the Word and Sacrament. There are also only 169 positions open to candidates seeking a first call, and 395 qualified candidates. Clearly, the PC(USA) has an oversupply of ministers at the same time that mission needs are unmet. What is the way forward?

For more detailed discussion of the role of CLPs, commissioners should consult the report of the Joint Committee on Leadership needs (a task force of the GAMC, COGA, and COTE): <http://www.pcusa.org/coga/pdfs/item18d.pdf>, and the study of Commissioned Lay Pastors by Barbara Wheeler, commissioned by the Office of Vocation and the Committee on Theological Education: <http://www.pcusa.org/clp/pdf/clpfinalreport.pdf>. Commissioners may also wish to consult Wheeler’s speech interpreting her report: <http://www.pcusa.org/vocation/wheelerspeech.pdf>.

Item 05-04

[The assembly approved Item 05-04 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 57, 60–61.]

[Comment: That the Office of the General Assembly is instructed to devise a means of discovery and reporting the work of all commissioned lay pastors in the presbyteries and that all references in the *Book of Order* be updated to reflect this.]

On Amending G-11.0407 and G-14.0560, and Adding a New G-11.0408b, Regarding Commissioned Lay Pastors—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall G-11.0407 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“G-11.0407 Rolls

“The stated clerk shall maintain ~~[four]~~ *[five]* rolls, one listing the names of all of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are active members, one listing the names of all of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are members-at-large, one listing the names of all of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are inactive members, *and one listing all Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, and a fifth roll listing those who have been deleted from the other rolls.* On or before December 31 of each year, the presbytery shall determine the category of membership of each continuing member in accordance with the relevant sections of this chapter and cause appropriate record of such determination to be made. *The stated clerk shall also maintain two registers, one listing all Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, and one listing all Commissioned Lay Pastors within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice and vote at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in a church or other validated ministry.*”

~~[2. Shall G 14.0560 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]~~

~~“G 14.0560 Commissioned Lay Pastor~~

~~“The commissioned lay pastor is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service. This commission is valid only in one or more congregations, new church development, or other validated ministries of the presbytery designated by the presbytery. Such an elder is selected by and receives training approved by the presbytery. The elder shall be instructed in Bible, Reformed Theology and Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching. The elder shall be examined by the appropriate committee of presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction mentioned previously. An elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in a particular congregation or validated ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions of a commissioned lay pastor again until appointed to a particular congregation or validated ministry by the presbytery.”]~~

~~[3. Shall G 11.0408 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]~~

~~“G 11.0408a. Validated Ministries~~

~~“A minister of the Word and Sacrament who is an active member of presbytery may be engaged (1) in a validated ministry within congregations of this church, (2) in a validated ministry in other service of this church, (3) in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of this church, or may be (4) honorably retired.~~

~~“G 11.0408b. Kinds of Validated Ministries of Commissioned Lay Pastors~~

~~“A commissioned lay pastor may be engaged in a validated ministry within congregations or governing bodies of this church. [Current Sections G 11.0408b c shall be re-lettered as G 11.0408c d. The text of these sections remains unchanged.]”]~~

Rationale

It is the intent of this overture to assure that the Office of the General Assembly maintains a separate and complete roll of commissioned lay pastors and to clarify language regarding validated ministries served by commissioned lay pastors. It is further the intent to clarify that those serving in ministries validated by a governing body beyond a session may be commissioned *to* that governing body.

In order to meet the intent, this overture amends language or introduces new section content. Specifically:

1. The amended and new language proposed in G-11.0407 appropriately sets forth commissioned lay pastors as a distinct classification of ministry and assures that the Office of the General Assembly has a complete and accurate accounting of all commissioned lay pastors. This includes adding a new and separate roll and introduces language that is specific to com-

missioned lay pastors but is identical in form to the language in G-11.0407 regarding certified Christian educators and certified associate Christian educators.

2. The new language added to G-14.0560 again clarifies that a commissioned lay pastor may serve in a validated ministry and is then afforded the same right to continue to be identified as available to serve as this section currently affords those serving in churches.

3. This overture would add to the *Book of Order* a new section G-11.0408b, which extends the understanding of validated ministries as applied to commissioned lay pastors and clarifies that such persons may be commissioned to a particular church or to a higher governing body. The Office of the General Assembly currently only recognizes those commissioned to particular churches. This new language is for clarification.

4. The diversity of ministries of commissioned lay pastors continues to unfold. It is clear that more trained individuals will join the ranks of commissioned lay pastors in the years to come. There are those who may [or do] serve in ministries validated by presbyteries or the General Assembly who should be commissioned directly to those entities. Examples of such validated ministries might include hospice chaplaincies, prison ministries, homeless ministries, rural and migrant farm ministries, etc. Such ministries often extend beyond a specific local church and are instead endorsed *as validated ministries* by presbyteries or the General Assembly.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-04

Advice on Item 05-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 05-04 presents the following issues that the assembly should consider:

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution calls attention to the fact, noted in the rationale, that "... the diversity of the ministries of commissioned lay pastors continues to unfold." The church should consider the implications of this expansion of the role of the commissioned lay pastor (CLP) for the meaning of the ministry of the Word and Sacrament in light of the present overture.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the proposed amendment would continue the practice of mixing two categories of persons related to the presbytery in the keeping of rolls. Our polity distinguishes between continuing members of the presbytery—ministers of the Word and Sacrament engaged in active service, at-large, or inactive—and persons who are temporarily related to the presbytery by virtue of their particular service: Certified Christian Educators and Associate Christian Educators and, if the present amendment is adopted, commissioned lay pastors.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution further notes that, as the term is otherwise used in our polity, a roll names the members of a congregation or presbytery. Properly speaking, therefore, the rolls of the presbytery should contain only the names of those ministers who are continuing members of the presbytery, in the categories of active, at-large, or inactive membership, and the names of those deleted from these rolls. Certified Christian Educators, Certified Associate Christian Educators, and commissioned lay pastors are either members or elders of congregations; their names thus belong on the rolls of the congregations of their membership.

The presbytery does, however, need a way of keeping track of those to whom, by virtue of their service, the presbytery has granted the privileges of voice and vote. Properly speaking, these lists are registers, lists of persons whose status and levels of authorized participation are a matter of ongoing record.

Currently, the language of G-11.0407 does not require the keeping of such registers.

If the 219th General Assembly believes that the intent of Item 05-04 is otherwise appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language for G-11.0407 can be made clearer and more consistent with that intent by being revised to read as follows: [Text to be added is in italic, and that to be deleted is indicated by strikethrough.]

"G-11.0407 *Rolls and Registers*

"The stated clerk shall maintain four rolls, one listing the names of all of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are active members, one listing the names of all of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are members-at-large, one listing the names of all of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are inactive members, *and one listing all Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in an educa-*

tional ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, and a fifth roll listing those who have been deleted from the other rolls. On or before December 31 of each year, the presbytery shall determine the category of membership of each continuing member in accordance with the relevant sections of this chapter and cause appropriate record of such determination to be made. *The stated clerk shall also maintain two registers, one listing all Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, and one listing all Commissioned Lay Pastors within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice and vote at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in a church or other validated ministry*”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the language of the proposed amendment adding a new section G-11.0408b would have the effect of limiting the service to which a presbytery might commission a lay pastor to ministry within congregations or governing bodies. Such a limitation might be understood to rule out service such as hospital or prison chaplaincy.

Since the proposed Form of Government contains no explicit provision requiring presbytery to maintain rolls, the effect of approving either the authoritative interpretation or amendment offered here is limited to the current Form of Government. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning G-3.0305 in the proposed Form of Government (Item 07-01).

Item 05-05

[The assembly approved Item 05-05. See p. 57.]

The General Assembly Nominating Committee recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

1. Shall G-13.0108 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“The General Assembly shall establish a permanent Committee on Representation as required by G-9.0105, which shall advise the General Assembly Nominating Committee of any need for nominations in particular categories needing increased representation. The Committee on Representation shall report to each meeting of the General Assembly (other than special or adjourned meetings) regarding progress toward fair representation of the categories of persons listed in G-4.0403. The committee shall consist of members equal in number to the synods of the church, each member resident in a different synod, and members distributed so that there are ~~one third ministers (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen~~ *ministers and elders (both women and men) in numbers nearly as equal as possible.*”

2. Shall G-13.0111a be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. To ensure careful nomination of members of such boards, agencies, and committees as the General Assembly shall from time to time designate, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose nominees to the General Assembly for such bodies. Consideration shall be given to the nomination of equal numbers of ministers *and church members* (both women and men), ~~laymen, and laywomen~~. The committee shall consist of members equal in number to the synods of the church, each member resident in a different synod, and members distributed so that there are ~~one third ministers (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen~~ *ministers and elders (both women and men) in numbers nearly as equal as possible.* (G-9.0801, G-11.0501, G-12.0102d, G-13.0202) [The rest of the paragraph remains unchanged.]”

3. Shall G-13.0202b be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. In the nominating process, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall consult with the General Assembly Mission Council to identify needed skills, and shall provide for diversity and inclusiveness in accordance with G-4.0403. It will maintain a goal of at least twenty percent racial ethnic membership for the General Assembly Mission Council. It will also follow the provisions of G-9.0104, G-9.0105, and G-13.0111 and shall ensure that, exclusive of the Moderator and predecessor Moderators, ~~one third of the members are ministers of the Word and Sacrament (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen~~ *ministers and elders (both women and men) are in numbers nearly as equal as possible.* The committee will also provide that members be nominated in such a manner as to provide three classes of approximately equal size. Any vacancy occurring during a term shall be filled pursuant to General Assembly policies.”

Rationale

As part of its preparation for review by 219th General Assembly (2010), the General Assembly Nominating Committee engaged in a self-study process that has led to some recommendations for change in the General Assembly nominations process, including the proposals for amendments to the *Book of Order*.

A longstanding Presbyterian pattern of governance has been equal representation of elders and ministers in the governing bodies of the church. This pattern continues in the presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly. The General Assembly Nominating Committee's proposed amendment to require elders and ministers in numbers as equal as possible brings the membership of *Book of Order* committees in conformance with this pattern.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee believes that for specialized programmatic committees, which may need specific skills and expertise, this pattern be altered to enable church members to serve on non-*Book of Order* entities.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-05
Advice on Item 05-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

This proposal recommends amendments to provisions that describe the composition of the General Assembly Committee on Representation, the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and the General Assembly Mission Council. A similar proposal from the General Assembly Committee on Representation makes related proposals for presbytery and synod nominating committees and the same General Assembly level entities. These proposals are intended to implement the historic principle of minister/elder parity.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) draws attention to our advice concerning committees and commissions in response to Item 07-02 from the Presbytery of Western Reserve. The parity of ministers and elders is an important principle within our polity, but it does not require near equality of numbers of ministers and elders on committees that are only advisory, having only the power to make recommendations that their electing bodies may approve.

We note that the General Assembly Committee on Representation performs an essential function in our church's governance, but that its function is ultimately one of advising and making recommendations to the assembly.

We also note that the General Assembly Nominating Committee performs an essential function in our church's governance as well, but that the act of making nominations is ultimately one in the form of making recommendations. Nominations from the floor are possible, and the assembly has the ability to choose which persons to elect.

On the other hand, the General Assembly Mission Council is a coordinating body that is empowered to act on behalf of the assembly. Governing body coordinating entities with decision-making functions should be treated as "commissions" in regards to their composition.

Accordingly, the ACC advises the assembly that the proposed changes to the composition of the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee are not strictly necessary in order to maintain the parity of ministers and elders. Requiring nearly equal numbers of ministers and elders on bodies where it is not necessary runs the risk of reducing the participation of members of congregations on a committee where it would be possible to increase their participation.

The minor differences between the proposals from the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee raise issues that the General Assembly should consider.

The first issue is the need for constitutional language that is flexible enough to anticipate circumstances that could reasonably be expected to occur. The General Assembly Nominating Committee offers examples of this flexibility when it proposes that certain numbers be "nearly as equal as possible". When the total membership of a committee is an even number, it is possible for the numbers of certain groups represented on the committee to be perfectly equal. But the rules defining the sizes of the GACOR and GANC states that the number of their members is to be equal to the number of the synods. It is possible for the number of synods to change (G-13.0103m) requiring an odd number of members on the two committees, thus making it impossible for the numbers in the represented groups to be perfectly equal.

It is also conceivable in the transition from the current rules to the proposed rules that it could be impossible to achieve equal numbers by the election of a single class without seeking resignations of elected members in the middle of their terms of service.

A second issue to be considered is the progress still to be made in the representation of women and men on the various entities. The GANC proposal uses a parenthetical comment "(both women and men)" indicating that both women and men

are to be represented, but not requiring even near equality of representation. The GACOR proposal lists women and men following ministers and elders, thus making gender equality a goal of its proposal.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) believes that the intent of Item 05-05 is appropriate, the ACC advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with its intent and could be improved by being amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Shall G-13.0108 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown in italic]

“The General Assembly shall establish a permanent Committee on Representation as required by G-9.0105, which shall advise the General Assembly Nominating Committee of any need for nominations in particular categories needing increased representation. The Committee on Representation shall report to each meeting of the General Assembly (other than special or adjourned meetings) regarding progress toward fair representation of the categories of persons listed in G-4.0403. The committee shall consist of members equal in number to the synods of the church, each member resident in a different synod, and members distributed so that there are ~~one third ministers (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen~~ [*ministers and elders (both women and men) in*] numbers nearly as equal as possible [*of ministers and elders, and women and men*].”

“2. Shall G-13.0111a be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown in italic.]

“To ensure careful nomination of members of such boards, agencies, and committees as the General Assembly shall from time to time designate, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose nominees to the General Assembly for such bodies. Consideration shall be given to the nomination of equal numbers of ministers *and church members* (both women and men), ~~laymen, and laywomen~~. The committee shall consist of members equal in number to the synods of the church, each member resident in a different synod, and members distributed so that there are ~~one third ministers (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen~~ [*ministers and elders (both women and men) in*] numbers nearly as equal as possible [*of ministers and elders, and women and men*]. (G-9.0801, G-11.0501, G-12.0102d, G-13.0202) [The rest of the paragraph remains unchanged.]”

“3. Shall G-13.0202b be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown in italic.]

“b. In the nominating process, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall consult with the General Assembly Mission Council to identify needed skills, and shall provide for diversity and inclusiveness in accordance with G-4.0403. It will maintain a goal of at least twenty percent racial ethnic membership for the General Assembly Mission Council. It will also follow the provisions of G-.0104, G-9.0105, and G-13.0111 and shall ensure that, exclusive of the Moderator and predecessor Moderators, ~~one third of the members are ministers of the Word and Sacrament (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen~~ ministers and elders[, *and*] [~~both~~] women and men[.][~~are~~] [*shall be represented*] in numbers nearly as equal as possible. The committee will also provide that members be nominated in such a manner as to provide three classes of approximately equal size. Any vacancy occurring during a term shall be filled pursuant to General Assembly policies.”

Implications for the proposal from the Form of Government Task Force. The proposal for the revision of the Form of Government would permit the General Assembly to determine what structures it needs, and to determine the appropriate way in which those structures should be composed. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to implement this proposal through amendments to the proposal from the Form of Government Task Force, the appropriate place to make the amendments would be in the Manual of the General Assembly.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 05-05

Comment on Item 05-05—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation concurs with Item 05-05 and suggests, in considering this item, commissioners read the additional rationale in Item 05-06.

Item 05-06

[The assembly approved Item 05-06 with amendment. See pp. 57, 58.]

The General Assembly Committee on Representation recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall G-9.0801a be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. Each presbytery and synod shall elect a nominating committee broadly representative of the member churches of the presbytery or presbyteries, with a membership of [~~equal numbers of~~] ~~one third~~ ministers of the Word and Sacrament, ~~one third laywomen, and one third laymen and elders, women and men~~, *in numbers as nearly equal as possible*].

[~~2. Shall G 13.0108 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]~~

[~~“The General Assembly shall establish a permanent Committee on Representation as required by G 9.0105, which shall advise the General Assembly Nominating Committee of any need for nominations in particular categories needing increased representation. The Committee on Representation shall report to each meeting of the General Assembly (other than special or adjourned meetings) regarding progress toward fair representation of the categories of persons listed in G 4.0403. The committee shall consist of members equal in number to the synods of the church, each member resident in a different synod, and members distributed so that there are *equal numbers of ministers and elders, women and men* one third ministers (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen.”~~

[~~3. Shall G 13.0111a be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]~~

[~~“a. To ensure careful nomination of members of such boards, agencies, and committees as the General Assembly shall from time to time designate, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose nominees to the General Assembly for such bodies. Consideration shall be given to the nomination of equal numbers of ministers *and church members* (both women and men), laymen, and laywomen. The *nominating* committee shall consist of members equal in number to the synods of the church, each member resident in a different synod, and members distributed so that there are one third ministers (both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen *ministers and elders (both women and men) in numbers nearly as equal as possible.* (G 9.0801, G 11.0501, G 12.0102d, G 13.0202) [The rest of the paragraph remains unchanged.]”~~

[~~4. Shall the third sentence of G 13.0202b be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]~~

[~~“... It will also follow the provisions of G 9.0104, G 9.0105, and G 13.0111 and shall ensure that, exclusive of the Moderator and predecessor Moderators, one third of the members are *consideration be given that membership have equal numbers of ministers of the Word and Sacrament [(both women and men), one third laymen, and one third laywomen and elders, women and men....*”~~]

Rationale

The representational formula of one-third male lay, one-third female lay and one-third clergy is outdated and un-Presbyterian. It was put in place at reunion (in 1983) when there were fewer ordained women ministers. It was designed to honor women’s leadership and decision-making. In the years since, increasing proportions of women have come to graduate from seminaries and be ordained to ministry in significant (though still lesser) numbers. The one-third/one-third/one-third ratio sets up a significant majority presence of elders when theologically we claim to aim at equal representation and shared leadership. Women are frequently a majority among elders in terms of participation levels, though not in every presbytery. Thus, as a compensatory measure for the balance of elders women to men, that formula is no longer needed.

Presbyterians pride themselves in the theological and constitutional concept of shared power. The reality of participation and representation in General Assembly entities is not reaching this standard.

The current measure is un-Presbyterian in its discounting the value of theological education, ministry experience, and understanding of church operation. While elders rightly predominate on sessions, Presbyterians honor minister/elder parity in every other council, including the General Assembly. This parity signifies shared ministry and mutuality between ministers and other servants of Christ, between women and men. It is also about sharing power, general wisdom, and knowledge of the church itself—which should be equitably represented.

In their General Assembly commissioner selections, many presbyteries already show themselves capable of balancing their numbers of men and women elders and are improving in their balance of ministers, women and men (in recent assemblies, women minister commissioner numbers hover at 30 percent of minister commissioners). This change will bring our leadership structure a bit more up-to-date. Should imbalances occur after this change, we would expect the normal representational process to recommend corrective measures.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-06

Advice on Item 05-06—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The ACC advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) with alternative proposed language.

Item 05-06 from the General Assembly Committee on Representation recommends amendments to related proposals for presbytery and synod nominating committees, the General Assembly Committee on Representation, the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and the General Assembly Mission Council. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) has discussed the issues raised in this item in its advice on Item 05-05 (from the General Assembly Nominating Committee).

The ACC draws attention to our advice concerning committees and commissions in response to Item 07-02 from the Presbytery of Western Reserve. The parity of ministers and elders is an important principle within our polity, but it does not require near equality of numbers of ministers and elders on committees that are only advisory, having only the power to make recommendations that their electing bodies may approve.

We note that the nominating committees perform an essential function in our church's governance, but that its function is ultimately one of advising and making recommendations to presbytery or synod.

The ACC advises that the General Assembly answer Recommendations 2, 3, and 4 of this item by its action on Item 05-05 (from the General Assembly Nominating Committee).

Recommendation 1 of this item concerns presbytery and synod nominating committees. We note that presbytery and synod nominating committees perform an essential function in our church's governance, but that the act of making nominations is ultimately one in the form of making recommendations. Nominations from the floor are possible, and the presbytery or synod has the ability to choose which persons to elect.

Accordingly, the ACC advises the assembly that the proposed changes to the composition of presbytery or synod nominating committees are not strictly necessary in order to maintain the parity of ministers and elders. Requiring nearly equal numbers of ministers and elders on bodies where it is not necessary runs the risk of reducing the participation of members of congregations on a committee where it would be possible to increase their participation.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) determines that the intent of Recommendation 1 of Item 05-06 is appropriate, the ACC advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with that intent, and could be improved by being revised as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Shall G-9.0801a be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. Each presbytery and synod shall elect a nominating committee broadly representative of the member churches of the presbytery or presbyteries, with a membership [~~of equal numbers of one third ministers of Word and Sacrament, one third laywomen, and one third laymen and elders, women and men~~] [composed of ministers of Word and Sacrament, women and men, in numbers as nearly equal as possible]. ...”

Implications for the proposal from the Form of Government Task Force. The proposal for the revision of the Form of Government would permit the General Assembly to determine what structures it needs, and to determine the appropriate way in which those structures should be composed. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to implement this proposal through amendments to the proposal from the Form of Government Task Force, the appropriate place to make the amendments would be in the Manual of the General Assembly.

Item 05-07

[The assembly disapproved Item 05-07. See pp. 57, 61.]

On Amending G-14.0553 to Allow an Interim Associate Pastor to Become the Next Installed Associate Pastor with Two-Thirds Vote—From the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley.

The Presbytery of Muskingum Valley respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-14.0553 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“When a presbytery and session determine that an interim pastor, interim co-pastor, or interim associate pastor is necessary and helpful, the session may consult the committee on ministry and seek an interim minister as soon as a date certain for departure has been announced by a pastor or associate pastor planning to leave. An interim pastor, *or* interim co-pastor, ~~or interim associate pastor~~ is not eligible to serve that church as the next permanent or designated pastor. *An interim associate pastor may become the next installed associate pastor by a two-thirds vote of the presbytery.*”

Rationale

The prohibition of an interim pastor becoming the next installed pastor of a congregation is widely accepted, and with good reason. In *The Interim Pastor's Manual*, Alan Gripe lists the five tasks of the interim pastor: joining the system, analyzing the organization as a system, connecting with the denomination, focusing and assuming responsibility, and exiting and evaluating. Interim pastors have rendered invaluable service to congregations in conflict and transition. The very fact that everyone knows they are not eligible to become the next installed pastor makes this work possible.

Why, then, suggest that an interim associate pastor should be eligible to become the next installed associate pastor? Because there is a fundamental difference between the offices of pastor (head of staff) and associate pastor. Section G-14.0513 states: “An associate pastor shall be directed in his or her work by the pastor in consultation with the session.” While an associate pastor is a colleague in ministry with the pastor, the associate pastor is nevertheless subordinate to and receives direction from the pastor. A good working relationship between the pastor and the associate pastor is essential, but often elusive, conditioned by a number of tangible and intangible factors summed up as “chemistry.” Our churches suffer when there is conflict within the pastoral staff, and our churches are blessed when there is unity of purpose in the use of diverse gifts to accomplish the work of the ministry. We believe that if a pastor and interim associate pastor find they work well together, and if the session and the presbytery discern God's will to continue this relationship, there should be nothing in the *Book of Order* to prevent it.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-07

Advice on Item 05-07—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 05-07 would empower a presbytery to approve a call to an interim associate pastor for service as the next installed associate pastor in the congregation he or she serves as interim associate.

Rationale

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) believes that the intent of Item 05-07 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with that intent.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, however, that this amendment would change the church's stance on the nature of interim ministry. Since the inclusion of the term “interim pastor” in the polities of the antecedent denominations, persons who have been so categorized have expressly been prohibited from acceding to the pastorate of the congregation served (See: *Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1975, Part I, p.639; also, PCUS *Book of Church Order*, 1975, 25-4). In 1990, the General Assembly answered a request from Donegal Presbytery by ruling that an interim pastor may not succeed as the next installed pastor of the congregation served as interim (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 245), and in 1992 the General Assembly rejected an amendment to the same effect (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 302). With regard to the specific issue at hand, the 211th General Assembly (1995) rejected a proposed amendment that would have permitted an interim associate from succeeding as the next installed associate pastor (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, pp. 80, 294).

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution further notes that this amendment would introduce a distinction in the treatment of pastors and associate pastors that is not present in our current polity. Current G-14.0553 prohibits equally both interim pastors and interim associate pastors from succeeding as the next installed pastor or associate pastor. This parallel treatment would be disrupted by the insertion of the proposed language, and may suggest to some that there is an inequality in the nature of the call of a pastor and an associate pastor. The church has moved away from such ideas since it eliminated the position of assistant pastor for similar reasons.

If the proposed revisions to the Form of Government are approved to be sent to the presbyteries, no change in the revisions as proposed by the Form of Government Task Force is necessary, since proposed G-2.0504c already makes provision for the succession of both interim pastors and interim associate pastors. However, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the supermajority vote of presbytery required in the overture is two-thirds, where in the proposed G-2.0504c the requirement is for three-quarters.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Since the proposed Form of Government would not prohibit such transitions, the approval of Item 05-07 would have not implications for the proposed Form of Government.

Item 05-08

[The assembly disapproved Item 05-08. See pp. 57, 58.]

On Amending G-14.0480 Regarding Ordinations—From the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.

The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to sending the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-14.0480 through G-14.0485 be amended to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“G-14.0480 [Text remains the same.]

“G-14.0481 Place of Examination and Ordination

“The presbytery placing the call to a candidate for ministry shall ~~ordinarily~~ examine and, contingent upon the candidate’s successful completion of that examination and all requirements in G-14.0450, ~~the presbytery responsible for the candidate’s preparation for ministry shall ordinarily ordain the candidate~~ *shall ordinarily ordain the candidate (see W-4.4000). The presbytery of call shall certify to the presbytery responsible for the candidate’s preparation for ministry that the candidate has been approved for ordination and installation.*

“G-14.0482 [Text remains the same.]

“G-14.0483 Presbytery of Call

“~~The presbytery of call shall certify to the presbytery responsible for the candidate’s preparation for ministry that the candidate has been approved for ordination and installation. Ordinarily, the presbytery responsible for the candidate’s preparation for ministry shall ordain the candidate. (See W 4.4000.) Following the ordination, the stated clerk of the ordaining presbytery shall record the action, notify the session of the particular church of which the candidate has been a member so that the session may record the fact that the candidate is now ordained and has been transferred to the roll of the presbytery, and issue a letter of dismissal to the calling presbytery, which shall enroll the minister and proceed to install the minister.~~

“G-14.0484 Agreement on Place of Ordination

“~~The presbyteries and the candidate may agree that the ordination take place in the calling presbytery, in which case the presbytery may ordain and install the candidate at the same time at a service of worship in the presence of the calling congregation.~~

“~~G-14.0485~~ *G-14.0483* Recording the Ordination

“The presbytery shall record the ordination and installation as a part of its official records along with the acceptance and subscription of the new minister to the obligations undertaken in the ordination vows. It shall also be the duty of the stated clerk of the presbytery to enroll the newly ordained minister as a member of the presbytery and to report these actions to the Office of the General Assembly *and to the presbytery responsible for the candidate’s preparation for ministry when the calling presbytery ordains. The stated clerk of the presbytery of care shall then notify the session of the particular church of which the candidate has been a member so that the session may record the fact that the candidate is now ordained, has been transferred to the roll of the ordaining presbytery, and remove the person from the membership roll.*”

Rationale

These changes would

—remove the necessity of negotiating between the presbytery of call and presbytery of care as to which presbytery will examine and ordain;

—remove the need for the candidate to have a commission for ordination and a commission for installation to a called installed position;

—remove the time delay between ordination and installation;

—remove the need, in some instances, to travel long distances for the ordination;

—remove the possibility of the candidate being examined by two different presbyteries and the examination being sustained by one and not the other;

—and while it would ordinarily remove the ordination service from the home church of the candidate, in many cases the candidate has been away from that church for several years and desires to be ordained in the calling presbytery/church, it would continue to allow ordinations in the home church if the candidate so desires.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-08

Advice on Item 05-08—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 05-08 would alter the current provisions of G-14.0480 by mandating that the presbytery of call shall examine and making normative the expectation that the calling presbytery will ordain and install candidates for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament who are accepting their first call. This represents a change from the current normative practice whereby the presbytery of care ordinarily ordains and the presbytery of call installs such candidates.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) believes that the intent of Item 05-08 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with that intent.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, however, that this issue has had a contested history since the creation of the current *Book of Order*. Originally, G-14.0314a provided that “the calling presbytery shall ordinarily examine and ordain the candidate...” (*Book of Order 1987–88*). As early as 1989, the 205th General Assembly rejected a proposed amendment that would have lodged with the presbytery of care the responsibility for ordination examinations (*Minutes 1989*, Part I, pp. 66, 219). In 1993, the church approved amendments to (then) G-14.0314a and G-14.0402a that placed responsibility for a candidate’s examination and ordination in the hands of “his or her presbytery”—a phrase normally taken to mean the presbytery of care (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 866, 875–76). In 1996, the 208th General Assembly adopted the present language of G-14.0482 (then G-14.0314a), specifying that the presbytery of care ordinarily ordains and the presbytery of call installs the minister (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 734). The effect of Item 05-08 (the current amendment) would thus be to restore the situation of the polity to its status prior to 1993.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution further notes that the effect of approving this amendment would be to eliminate one of the two examinations of a candidate for ordination currently presumed in our polity. A candidate to be ordained by the presbytery of care receives an examination by that presbytery, and then is examined again for membership by the calling presbytery. In some cases, presbyteries of care have accepted the examination of the calling presbytery as sufficient to proceed to the ordination of a candidate, while others have conducted a separate examination. The effect of this amendment would be to eliminate the examination by the presbytery of care, since both ordination and membership/readiness for installation would be accomplished by the calling presbytery.

Finally, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that examining a candidate twice—once in the presbytery of care prior to ordination and once in the presbytery of call prior to installation—is not a requirement of the present wording of G-14.0481. Instead, the presence of the term “ordinarily” in the first clause of the provision implies that a presbytery of call may (or may not) elect to waive its right to examine a candidate for ordination in favor of the examination being conducted by the presbytery of care. Presbyteries across the church vary in their practice in this regard. The effect of the proposed amendment would be to eliminate the calling presbytery’s option to waive its examination.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: The proposed Form of Government provides flexibility on place of examinations. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) believes in making the place of ordination mandatory, it would need to amend the proposed Form of Government at G-2.0702 to remove the word “ordinarily.”

Item 05-09

[The assembly disapproved Item 05-09. See pp. 57, 58.]

On Amending G-5.0300 and G-10.0302a to Include the Designation of Associate Member—From the Presbytery of Mackinac.

The Presbytery of Mackinac overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall G-5.0300 be amended to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown in italic.]

“The membership of a particular church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) includes baptized members, active members, inactive members, affiliate members, *and part-year associate members.*”

2. Shall a new section, G-5.0305, be added to read as follows:

“An associate member of a particular church is an active member of another church of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who maintains more than one residence on a permanent basis in multiple communities. An associate member of a particular church is a person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church by the session, has voluntarily submitted to the government of this church, and participates in the church’s work and worship. An associate member is entitled to all the rights and privileges of an active member. An associate member shall not hold office in multiple churches simultaneously.”

3. Shall a new section, G-10.0302a(5), be added to read as follows:

“Associate Members’ Roll. The associate members’ roll shall list the names of those who have been received into associate membership by the session and who are active in the church’s work and worship.”

Rationale

The existing affiliate member category is intended to allow temporary residents in a community the opportunity to officially align themselves with the ministry and mission of their temporary church while not resigning from their home congregation. This definition does not account for those individuals who permanently split time between two or more residences. Therefore, the classification of affiliate member does not adequately describe an individual’s desire to be a member in one particular church when they are living in that location, and another congregation when they are living near that particular church, nor does it allow for full participation as a member in multiple congregations.

Currently, there is no category within our *Book of Order* to address these situations. By maintaining the strict interpretation of affiliate membership, these individuals are forbidden from voting and holding office within a particular church where they are active unless they designate one congregation as the home church and another as their affiliate church. They must choose which church is their primary church for the sake of membership.

This new category of membership would accurately recognize the role these members play in multiple congregations, while allowing them to serve and worship with all the rights and privileges granted to active members. By limiting their ability to hold office simultaneously, these associate members would not run the risk of serving as a deacon, elder, or commissioner in multiple congregations, presbyteries, or synods.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-09

Advice on Item 05-09—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 05-09.

Rationale

This item seeks to add a category of membership for persons who divide their residency between two or more places each year, and who wish to enjoy the privileges of full participation as an active member of a Presbyterian church in each location.

The proposed category, “associate member,” as defined, would accomplish the stated intent of the overture, but it would do so in violation of constitutional principles. It is a principle of Presbyterian polity that active membership is held in one body at a time. Thus, when a candidate is ordained as a minister of the Word and Sacrament, his/her membership moves from the particular church to the presbytery. Section G-10.0302b(4) provides that when a member joins another church, that member’s name is deleted from the rolls of the first church. For purposes of accountability, oversight, and order membership is held in one place at one time.

The Item 05-09 provides that “associate members” would be “entitled to all the rights and privileges of an active member.” This means that an associate member could vote and hold office. The overture stipulates that “an associate member shall not hold office in multiple churches simultaneously.” This requirement places an undue burden on the churches of membership to ascertain where the associate member is an officer, if at all, requiring consultation between nominating committees of various particular churches. An associate member who is an elder might be a commissioner to two or more different presbyteries during the same year, creating the possibility that one person could vote more than one time on certain issues, such as proposed amendments to the Constitution.

Associate membership gives rise to questions about potential dual obligations for per capita remittance.

Church members remain under the jurisdiction of the session. The amendment does not make clear how jurisdictional matters would be handled in disciplinary cases in which the associate member was accused.

As a practical matter, an associate member serving as a session member or member of the board of deacons in one particular church leaves that session or board with a functional vacancy during the portion of the year he or she resides in another location.

Implication for the proposed revised Form of Government: The proposed Form of Government moves in the direction of less regulation and fewer rolls. This proposed amendment is in conflict with that direction, and, if approved, would attach at G-3.0204.

Item 05-10

[The assembly disapproved Item 05-10. See pp. 57, 58.]

On Amending G-5.0101 Regarding Covenantal Membership—From the Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley.

The Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Amend G-5.0101 by adding a new section “a.” and re-letter sections “b.–f.” as “c.–g.” The new section would read as follows:

“a. It is understood that church membership is first and foremost defined by a covenant, not of human concept, but of divine making. ‘You did not choose me but I chose you’ (John 15:16). All the sections below must need be viewed through this lens.”

Rationale

While the *Book of Order* implies that church membership is covenantal (G-2.0500a(1)–(2), W-1.3011), it never explicitly says so. *The Book of Confessions* is more explicit, in particular The Heidelberg Catechism: “I believe that, from the beginning to the end of the world, and from among the whole human race, the Son of God, by his Spirit and his Word, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself, in the unity of the true faith, a congregation chosen for eternal life. Moreover, I believe that I am and forever will remain a living member of it” (*The Book of Confessions*, 4.055, Question 54). And our Lord’s words in John 15:16 (quoted in the overture) make it clear that we are in the Church by God’s sovereign grace.

This amendment serves to clarify the meaning of membership.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-10

Advice on Item 05-10—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 05-10.

Rationale

“The Church and Its Members” (Form of Government, Chapter V) does not use the words “covenant” or “covenantal” in describing membership in the church, which may mean that church membership is based on human ways of understanding the divine covenant.

Although Item 05-10 cites John, “You did not choose me, but I chose you...” (Jn. 15:16), as a rationale for amending G-5.0101, when it comes to determining membership, the church does not know who is actually chosen by the Lord. The Form of Government describes three human ways for the church to respond to its understanding of the divine covenant with an individual seeking active membership in the church (G-5.0101b): “... by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, or transfer of certificate from some other church” (*Book of Order*, G-5.0101b).

Human ways are not always in perfect conformity with the divine covenant, so the Constitution also has at least three human ways to remove persons from membership in the church: renunciation of jurisdiction (G-6.0701), deletion after a period of time on the inactive roll (G-10.0302b(7)) and removal from membership as a form of censure in a disciplinary case (D-12.0105b).

Therefore, seeing church membership as only “... first and foremost defined by a covenant, not of human concept, but of divine making ...” (Item 05-10) is inconsistent with constitutional provisions which determine church membership through human procedures.

However, if General Assembly prefers to approve Item 05-10, it should focus on the meaning of covenant as it is used in proposed Form of Government (G-1.0301) to specifically emphasize the covenant of membership in baptism upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior:

“1.0301 The Meaning of Membership and Baptism

“In Jesus Christ, God calls people to faith and to membership in the Church, the body of Christ. Baptism is the visible sign of that call and claim on a human life and of entrance into the membership of the church. The baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God’s love claims people before they are able to respond in faith. The baptism of those who enter the *covenant* of membership upon their own profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior witnesses to the truth that God’s gift of grace calls forth a response of faithfulness. Thus, the triune God, incarnate in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, gives to the Church not only its mission but also its understanding of membership” (Item 07-01).

Item 05-11

[The assembly disapproved Item 05-11. See pp. 57, 61.]

On Amending G-13.0103r to Reduce Vexatious and Improper Litigation in the Church—from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area overtures the 219th General Assembly (2009) of the PC(USA) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-13.0103r be amended to read as follows [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]:

“r. to provide authoritative interpretation of the *Book of Order* which shall be binding on the governing bodies of the church when rendered in accord with G-13.0112 ~~or through a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case.~~ The most recent interpretation of a provision of the *Book of Order* shall be binding.”

Rationale

Section G-13.0103r stated that both the General Assembly and the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) can issue “authoritative interpretations” of the *Book of Order*, and that the “most recent” of these shall be binding. In light of this provision, some have sought to change the law of the church through private judicial cases, rather than through proper recourse to the collective discernment of the whole church gathered in General Assembly. Indeed, some have sought to import notions of “judicial activism” from the secular world and argued that the GAPJC (a *commission* of the General Assembly) should have the power to overrule the General Assembly itself.

The proposed amendment would eliminate the incentives for such vexatious and improper litigation by providing that authoritative interpretations of the Constitution that bind the whole church may be approved only by the General Assembly, in plenary sessions. Such actions are properly taken with guidance on our law and polity from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (the process described in G-13.0112).

The GAPJC bears the responsibility to decide cases that are brought by or against the PC(USA) or its governing bodies and agencies, because it is not practical for the General Assembly to hear individual cases in plenary session. Decisions of the GAPJC in such cases are final as to the parties. However, the responsibility to decide matters of more general import to the whole church properly rests with the General Assembly.

Judicial cases are extremely burdensome and costly to governing bodies of the church. When brought improvidently, they violate our biblical obligation to avoid vexatious or unnecessary litigation (D-1.0103) and are inconsistent with our fundamental theological conviction that we are most likely to discern the true movement of the Holy Spirit when we gather together in General Assembly (G-1.0400). Moreover, the GAPJC is woefully unprepared to do the work of the General Assembly, since it hears only from the parties to the case; does not have the wider perspective afforded by all of the persons and resources that inform deliberations by the General Assembly; and must prepare its decisions within very tight time constraints (a number of cases usually must be decided, immediately after hearings, in only one or two days).

The proposed amendment would affirm our historic polity of collective discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and put an end to the “culture of litigation” that is growing in the church. It would do so by removing the incentive to pursue fundamental changes in church law through individual court cases. The judicial commissions of the church still could decide particular cases brought before them, as they do now. However, the authority to interpret the Constitution so as to bind the whole church would rest exclusively with the General Assembly.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 5-11

Advice on Item 05-11—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 05-11. The General Assembly may wish to refer to the advice of the Advisory Committee of the Constitution on Item 05-21 as it considers the present overture.

Rationale

The removal of language in G-13.0103r as envisioned in this overture would eliminate the power of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) to interpret the Constitution through the rendering of a decision in a judicial case.

The assignment of the General Assembly's interpretive responsibility both to the assembly as a whole and to its GAPJC was the result of General Assembly action in 1987. The General Assembly took this action as way of clarifying for the whole church "... the weight to be given to an interpretation of the Book of Order by the General Assembly, either upon recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution or by its Permanent Judicial Commission in judgments in remedial or disciplinary cases" (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, p. 143). The question before the General Assembly at the time was

... whether such interpretations are to be considered advisory by the governing bodies of the church so that, after careful consideration of the interpretation of a particular provision of the Book of Order, a governing body could proceed to act on a different understanding of that provision, or, are governing bodies bound by such interpretations in the same way they are bound by the words of the Book of Order itself. (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, p.143)

In adopting the current language of G-13.0103r, the church decided that it could not permit *either* the plenary decisions of the General Assembly *or* the decisions of the GAPJC to be regarded as advisory. Rather, both carried the authority of the General Assembly, which is the "... highest governing body of this church ..." (G-13.0101)—the plenary because of its character as the most inclusive representative body, and the GAPJC in its capacity to act on the assembly's behalf in judicial matters.

In vesting authority for constitutional interpretation in *both* the assembly plenary and the GAPJC, the church established the principle that the interpretation of the Constitution is both a general and a specific process. It is general in that the General Assembly, acting in plenary session, considers the theoretical and potential implications of the Constitution for the whole. It is specific in that the GAPJC, in deciding a judicial case, applies and may extend or clarify the Constitution to address particular circumstances as they arise in the life of the church.

The rationale offered in support of the overture suggests that the potential exists for "... [changing] the law of the church through private judicial cases (Item 05-11)," and that GAPJC decisions are perhaps used "... to overrule the General Assembly itself" (Item 05-11). But in our current constitutional language, it is precisely this tension between the general and specific interpretive processes described in G-13.0103r that preserves and clarifies the relationship between the church's governance and its experience in the world. It is the responsibility of the General Assembly plenary to interpret the Constitution in response to general questions; it is the responsibility of the GAPJC to interpret the Constitution only as the facts of a particular case require it to do so. To eliminate either of these methods for interpreting the Constitution, as this overture proposes, is to deprive the church of an indispensable corrective for the limitations of the other.

The rationale for the overture implies that eliminating the GAPJC's power to interpret the Constitution authoritatively will reduce the burden of "... vexatious and improper litigation ..." (Item 05-11) it perceives presently to afflict the church. Item 05-11 presumes that judicial cases are, to some extent, filed for the purpose of seeking alternative authoritative interpretations in remedy of General Assembly or previous GAPJC decisions. It is unclear, however, that eliminating the GAPJC as a source of constitutional interpretation would satisfy this concern. It seems equally likely that eliminating the GAPJC as an authoritative interpreter of the Constitution will merely add to the burden of overtures to subsequent General Assemblies seeking constitutional remedy for unpopular actions of previous assemblies.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-11 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 05-11

Comment on Item 05-11—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) concurs with the recommendation and advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) to this overture and respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 05-11.

Rationale

This overture seeks to eliminate an authoritative interpretation (AI) of the *Book of Order* from being rendered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) in its decision in a case before it.

The *Book of Order*, in G-13.0103r, provides two equally weighted ways for the church to be guided and bound by an authoritative interpretation that clarifies a particular provision of the *Book of Order* through action of the General Assembly: either (1) directly in plenary session or (2) through decision of its commission (the GAPJC). Such balance of the general focus and the specific focus is valuable to the church as it lives out its mission under the Constitution.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 05-12

[The assembly approved Item 05-07 with comment. See pp. 57, 61.]

[Comment: Please make the following editorial change: Recommendation 1 remains as it is and Recommendations 2–5 should be listed as sub-items a.–d. under Recommendation 1.]

On Amending G-7.0400, Articles of Incorporation Be Provided to Presbytery – From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Western North Carolina

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer Item 05-12 with the following response:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer the request with the following authoritative interpretation:

As part of their responsibility to review the proceedings of sessions, presbyteries have responsibility to determine that the proceedings of sessions “have been regular and in accordance with the Constitution” (*Book of Order*, G-9.0409a(2)). Sessions are required to produce any articles of incorporation and bylaws adopted by the congregation as part of the annual review of session records and may be required to produce such documents as part of a special administrative review undertaken on learning “of any irregularity or delinquency by a lower governing body” (*Book of Order*, G-9.0408).

[~~4~~] Sessions are required as part of the process of the annual review of records to provide to the presbytery any amendments to the articles of incorporation of the congregation. Because such articles would necessarily have to be adopted by the congregation at a meeting called by the session, the minutes of such a congregational meeting, and any minutes of the session leading to the call of such a meeting, would by necessity have to include copies of such articles or amendments, as well as copies of corporate regulations, bylaws, or standing rules, and any amendments thereto. Section G-9.0407d(1) (“Presbyteries shall review the records of sessions annually. If a session shall fail to submit its records for this purpose, the presbytery shall order them to be produced at a specific time.”) Further, G-11.0103x, which gives presbytery power “to review session minutes and records at least once each year” allows presbytery to require more frequent review than annual review, and thus allows a presbytery to require the submission of proposed amendments to articles of incorporation or bylaws.

[~~2~~] [a] If a presbytery has any reason to believe that a session or congregation is considering changes to its articles of incorporation, regulations, bylaws, or standing rules that are contrary to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), pursuant to G-9.0408 (“If a higher governing body learns at any time of any irregularity or delinquency by a lower governing body, it may require the governing body to produce any records and take appropriate action”) it may require the congregation to produce any proposed or adopted amendments to such corporate documents immediately. A presbytery may delegate the power to require the production of such documents to its council or a committee or entity within the presbytery, or empower an administrative commission of the presbytery to act in such matters.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution further notes that the concerns underlying this question might be understood to suggest that absent a presbytery preventing a congregation from amending its articles of incorporation, regulations, bylaws, or standing rules in a manner inconsistent with the Constitution, such an amendment would be effective and potentially irreversible. However, any attempt by a congregation or governing body to adopt corporate documents inconsistent with our Constitution is fundamentally contrary to the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A congregation therefore lacks the power to adopt changes to its articles of incorporation, regulations, by-

laws, or standing rules that are contrary to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). [In a similar situation, the GAPJC has found that “G-7.0302 and G-7.0304 limit the business of congregational meetings and do not include the topic of seeking dismissal” from the denomination (*Sundquist v. Presbytery of the Heartland*, Remedial Case 219-03 (Oct. 27, 2008)). Adoption of corporate documents containing provisions contrary to the Constitution is:

[3-] [b.] Beyond the legal power of a congregation or session (G-7.0402), and subjects officers and members of a congregation that participate in such actions to the discipline of the church and to legal liability for acting beyond their lawful powers with respect to such property;

[4-] [c.] Cause for a presbytery to exercise original jurisdiction over the affairs of the congregation (G-11.0103s) and to replace the session of that congregation with an administrative commission until actions taken contrary to Constitution are rescinded, provided that the commission acts in accordance with *Sundquist v. Presbytery of the Heartland*, Remedial Case 219-03 (Oct. 27, 2008); and

[5-] [d.] A use of the property of the congregation contrary to the Constitution and causes the property of that congregation to revert to the control of the presbytery until the actions taken contrary to the Constitution are rescinded. Section G-8.0301 (“Whenever property of, or held for, a particular church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ceases to be used by that church as a particular church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in accordance with this Constitution, such property shall be held, used, applied, transferred, or sold as provided by the presbytery.”) If a presbytery becomes aware of such a situation, it has an obligation to exercise oversight over such a congregation to ensure correction of such actions.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation of the *Book of Order* by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its findings and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. *Questions Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution:*

Does the *Book of Order* require that a congregation or its session promptly provide its presbytery with a prior copy of the congregation's proposed articles of incorporation and any proposed amendments thereof - or at least a copy of articles adopted and amended?

2. *Findings*

Pursuant to G-13.0112d, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the questions presented:

With respect to the first question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the relevant provisions of the *Book of Order* are clear, but that the request presents a question of significant importance in the life of the denomination, and therefore that authoritative interpretation of G-7.0402 is advisable.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: The approval of this advice would have similar effect upon the proposed Form of Government as it would under the current Form of Government. The Book of Order citations would have to be changed to reflect the proposed Form of Government numbers.

Item 05-13

[The assembly approved Item 05-13. See pp. 57, 58.]

Pandemic Provisions—From the Director of Operations, Office of the General Assembly.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer Item 05-13 with the following response:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the question requires interpretation of G-9.0500 concerning the membership of an administrative commission.

The Form of Government permits a governing body to appoint a minimum number of its elder and minister members as an administrative commission to consider and conclude specific matters on behalf of the entire governing body (G-9.0502); an administrative commission's actions are reviewable as the actions of the governing body itself (G-9.0502, G-9.0407b, G-9.0407d). The informal statement frequently heard that a commission "is the governing body" points to this representation of the whole governing body.

Under G-4.0403 a governing body has responsibility for expressing its own diversity when it commissions individuals to make decisions for its entire membership and for the wider church (G-9.0104a–b). These constitutional standards concerning participation and representation suggest an administrative commission should not be significantly more homogeneous than the governing body that appointed it. Therefore the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that an office or position held by an individual is by itself insufficient basis for appointment to an administrative commission.

It is constitutional, however, for a governing body to provide by rule for appointment of an administrative commission as might be needed under emergency circumstances such as a natural disaster or a public health order forbidding social gatherings. With regard to representation, a governing body may approve a group of ex-officio members as the core membership of an administrative commission *if* it annually reviews the composition of that group for its representational sufficiency under G-9.0500 and by recorded action augments it as needed in order that the administrative commission can more truly act as and for the governing body.

As is always the case, governing bodies are advised to safeguard against an administrative commission inadvertently or intentionally functioning as the governing body outside of the situation(s) for which it was formed. It is critical to the administrative commission's integrity in representing the whole governing body that the conditions not only activating but also deactivating the commission be set forth at the time of its appointment, so as to prevent open-ended exercise of the governing body's responsibilities and powers. An administrative commission has limited authority. Only the governing body may delegate its own powers, and the governing body powers delegated to an administrative commission, council or committees are not to be further delegated, because "[t]he practice of delegating the 'power to delegate' would seriously weaken our system of accountability and checks and balances" (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I. p. 282).

It is possible in advance of actual need to create an administrative commission based on a core ex officio membership to which are added members to meet the representation requirements of G-9.0504 and G-4.0403. The commission must have a detailed set of conditions for its activation and deactivation in order to function within the expressed intent of the governing body. There are means other than an administrative commission by which a governing body may direct that its responsibilities and powers be discerned and fulfilled by a portion of its membership and suggests that these be considered.

1. Section G-9.0501a states "A committee is appointed either to study and recommend appropriate action or to carry out directions or decisions already made by a governing body. It shall make a full report to the governing body that created it, and its recommendations shall require action by the governing body."

2. Section G-9.0901 states "Within this Constitution, it has been assumed that the governing bodies beyond the session will delegate particular aspects of their tasks to councils, commissions, and committees. ... Reference to such agencies, designated by functions or by formal titles, is not intended to limit the governing bodies to these structures but to describe those which will expedite the mutual work of the whole church." Additionally, G-11.0103v and G-13.0201d–e allow for the authorization of the council of a presbytery or the General Assembly to act for its governing body between meetings.

3. A request may be made that there be a special meeting of the governing body. In the case of a presbytery, the minimum quorum under G-11.0202 ("any three minister members and the elder members present, provided that at least three churches are represented by elders") is smaller than seven, the minimum number for any presbytery's administrative commission except those charged to ordain and/or install ministers (G-9.0504b.(3)). A possible drawback to this option could be the length of time involved in required notice of a special meeting: for a session there must be "reasonable notice" (G-10.0201); for a presbytery there must be at least ten days' notice (G-11.0201); for a synod the required notice is fifteen days (G-12.0201), and for the General Assembly sixty days (G-13.0104).

Another alternative to the appointment of an administrative commission is for the governing body to utilize technological assistance in order to meet and carry out its functions on the record without having a face-to-face meeting; some sessions and presbyteries already do this on an occasional or regular basis. A critical requirement for teleconferences and videoconferences under *Robert's Rules of Order* is that the "meeting must be conducted by a technology that allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time (and, if a videoconference, to see each other as well). The opportunity for simultaneous communication is central to the deliberative character of the meeting ..." (*RONR* (10th ed.), p. 482, l. 30–40). It is important that the governing body provide for situations frequently arising in

physical assemblies but for which procedures common to parliamentary law are not applicable, e.g., a request for ballot voting.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the Director of Operations of the Office of the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the Assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its finding and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The Assembly is free to adopt, amend, or decline to approve the recommendations of Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Question Received

Item 05-13 from the director of Operations, Office of the General Assembly, presents the following question upon which he seeks constitutional interpretation:

May an administrative commission be appointed by stipulating the positions of those who will serve on the commission without identifying the specific individuals?

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-13 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-14

[The assembly approved Item 05-14 with amendment. See pp. 57, 59.]

Authoritative Interpretation—Officer, Moderator, or Stated Clerk Fails to Carry Out Duties of Office, What Recourse Does Governing Body have to Address the Problem?—Member of the Presbytery of New York City.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer Item 05-14 with the following responses:

1. In response to the first question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the request points to a deficiency in the current language of G-9.0203b in the *Book of Order*, best addressed by constitutional amendment. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-9.0203b be amended as follows (Text to be added is shown as italic.):

“b. The clerk of the session shall be an elder elected by the session for such term as it may determine. The clerk of a presbytery, a synod, and the General Assembly shall be called stated clerk, shall be elected by the governing body for a definite term as it may determine, and must be eligible for membership in the governing body. A *[stated]* clerk may be removed from office prior to completion of his or her term of service through the use of the process outlined in G-9.0705.”

2. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer the second question by referring to the 216th General Assembly (2004) interpretation of G-9.0705 (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 86, 331, Item 04-15) and adding the following statement:

Section G-9.0203a lists the following duties of the stated clerk of a governing body in his or her service as an ecclesiastical officer:

- Record the transactions of the governing body;
- Keep its rolls of membership and attendance;
- Preserve its records carefully; and
- Furnish verified extracts from the records when required by another governing body.

The 2004 interpretation defined what it called the “traditional duties of a stated clerk” to include “those enumerated in G-9.0203a, serving as resource for ecclesiastical committees as noted in G-9.0202, providing support for administrative commissions, and fulfilling the responsibilities of the stated clerk for support of the judicial process as

provided in the Rules of Discipline.” While the 216th General Assembly (2004) did not use the term “ecclesiastical” to describe these responsibilities, they are clearly ecclesiastical in nature in that they facilitate the functions of the governing body as required by the Constitution of the church.

In addition, the clerk of a session is expected to serve as secretary for congregational meetings; this, too, is to be understood as an ecclesiastical responsibility.

Section G-9.0700 pertains to persons employed by governing bodies to “be the administrators of those governing bodies, accountable to the governing bodies ... for the implementation of the decisions and matters of strategy, program, and resources” (G-9.0701). Section G-9.0700 describes both “executives” and “other administrative staff positions” as administrative staff. This description implies a distinction between ecclesiastical functions—those having to do with facilitating constitutionally mandated functions of the governing body—and administrative functions—those having to do with strategy, program, and resources.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from a member of the Presbytery of New York City. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation of the *Book of Order* by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its findings and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Questions Received

1. If an officer, moderator or stated clerk, is alleged to have failed to carry out the duties and responsibilities of office, what recourse does the governing body truly have to address the problem?
2. What are the ecclesiastical duties of the stated clerk of a presbytery?

Findings

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has established as an historic principle of church order that “the election of ... persons to the exercise of ... authority, in any particular society, is in that society” (G-1.0306). Except where otherwise stated in the Constitution, it is within the right of every governing body to elect its officers, and to see that those officers faithfully discharge the duties of the offices to which they are elected. However, governing bodies also have an obligation to assure an officer of the same fundamental fairness in responding to allegations of dereliction of the responsibilities of office that it would otherwise accord any member of the body.

Robert’s Rules is helpful in outlining various means of recourse against the failure of a moderator to perform the duties of office:

- In the case of a simple failure of the moderator to perform the duties appropriate to handling a motion, the maker of the motion may raise a point of order, and from the moderator’s decision may raise an appeal.
- In the event of culpable failure of the moderator to perform the duties of the office, a motion can be made to censure him or her (*RRONR*, 10th ed., p. 642, l. 21).
- The process for termination of a moderator or stated clerk of a governing body higher than the session is not specified in the *Book of Order*. Sections G-9.0202b and G-9.0203b indicate only that a moderator or stated clerk “serves for such term as the presbytery may determine,” adding in the case of the moderator of a presbytery that the term shall not exceed one year, and of a synod two years. *Robert’s Rules of Order* provides that a body may rescind on majority vote the election of an officer who is elected for a specific term or until their successors are elected. However, if the officer’s term is specified only in terms of length of time (e.g., “for two years”), that officer may only be removed from office following an investigation and trial (*RRONR*, 10th ed., p. 643, l. 6-14). The committee notes that the investigating committee required in this section of *Robert’s Rules* is not the investigating committee required by disciplinary procedures in D-10.0200.

The committee further notes that in many presbyteries stated clerks carry responsibilities that go beyond ecclesiastical duties and include various administrative tasks. In regard to the latter, the stated clerk is subject to the provisions of G-9.0705 regarding the termination of administrative staff. In its interpretation of G-9.0705 in 2004 (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 86, 331, Item 04-15), the 216th General Assembly (2004) noted that an officer who performs non-ecclesiastical functions “is entitled to the protections of G-9.0705 only as related to the non-ecclesiastical portion of the position.” In light of this interpretation, a hearing under the provisions of G-9.0705 would be required to terminate the officer for failure to discharge such non-

ecclesiastical responsibilities as the position description may entail. The scope of such a hearing would be limited to non-ecclesiastical functions.

Robert's Rules and the language of the 2004 interpretation have the effect of requiring two separate hearing processes for removing a stated clerk whose job description specifies non-ecclesiastical functions. Since the content of both hearing processes is likely to be similar, having separate hearings for removal from ecclesiastical and non-ecclesiastical responsibilities seems unnecessarily burdensome. This situation can be remedied by the addition of the language proposed in the amendment.

With respect to the second question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the request presents a question that does not require fresh interpretation of G-9.0705.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-14 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-15

[The assembly approved Item 05-15. See pp. 57, 59.]

Interpretation (G-13.0112c) Re: Renunciation—From the Stated Clerk, Synod of Lincoln Trails.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer Item 05-15 with the following response:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following authoritative interpretation of G-6.0701:

An officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may renounce the jurisdiction of the church under the provisions of G-6.0701 by submitting to the clerk of the governing body supervising the officer's ministry a written statement of renunciation. The statement must be signed by the officer renouncing, and may not be signed on his or her behalf by another party.

In the absence of a written statement of renunciation signed by the officer, and if the officer engages or persists in a work of which the governing body disapproves, the terms of G-6.0702 would apply.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the stated clerk of the Synod of Lincoln Trails. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation of the *Book of Order* by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its findings and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. *Questions Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution:*

May an officer's authorized representative carry out the terms of G-6.0701, effectively renouncing jurisdiction on behalf of a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) officer so long as that representative has such authority? If not, what process should a commission, such as in the situation described below, utilize in addressing such behavior by a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) officer?

2. *Findings*

Pursuant to G-13.0112d, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the questions presented:

With respect to the question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the request presents a question on which authoritative interpretation of the G-6.0701 is advisable.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-15 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-16

[The assembly approved Item 05-16. See pp. 57, 59.]

Ethical and Polity Implications of Financial Gifts Made Directly by Individuals to Ministers—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer Item 05-16 with the following response:

With regard to the six questions raised, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the *Book of Order* gives very little specific guidance in the area of fiscal responsibility for churches, and even less guidance for ministers. It does lay down some underlying principles, and it specifies the responsibilities of the session, congregation, and presbytery for approving the terms of a minister's call. It mandates that the session is responsible "to challenge the people of God with the privilege of responsible Christian stewardship of money and time and talents" (G-10.0102h); establish the particular church's budget and "determine the distribution of the church's benevolences" (G-10.0102i); to provide for "the annual review of the adequacy of compensation for all staff" (G-10-0102n); and to oversee the finances of the church with minimum standards of financial procedure established at G-10.0401. The *Book of Order* reserves to the congregation matters related to the pastoral relationship, such as changing the terms of call of a pastor (G-7.0304a(3)). The presbytery has the right and responsibility for oversight of all calls within the presbytery, including the approval of changes in terms of call, and the establishment of minimum compensation and benefits requirements for all pastoral calls (G-11.0103n). Section G-14.0534 very clearly specifies two requirements for the terms of call—that they meet the requirements of federal and state tax laws; and that they fully disclose the compensation of the minister.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the basic requirements set forth in G-14.0534 leave latitude and responsibility for presbyteries to determine fiscal policies for their member churches and standards of financial ethical conduct for members of the presbytery, consistent with current and applicable federal and state tax laws. When problems arise, there is adequate remedy available to presbyteries through general and special administrative review processes.

To the extent that further guidance is necessary, one may refer to the General Assembly Mission Council/Office of the General Assembly Standards of Ethical Conduct (<http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/ethical-conduct.pdf>).

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its finding and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendations of Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Questions Received

The request asks a series of questions that have to do with the practice of financial gifts to a minister that amount to undisclosed compensation additional to the terms of call authorized by the congregation and that may not meet the requirements of federal and state tax laws.

1. What are the ethical and polity implications of financial gifts, bonuses, or other offerings made directly by individuals to a minister?
2. Under what circumstances are such gifts appropriate and when are they not appropriate?
3. Does the size of the gift matter and to whom?
4. What reports are required and to whom when these gifts are made or received?
5. When is congregational approval required and is congregational approval necessary to solicit such gifts?
6. What about honoraria or gifts received as extra compensation for presiding at worship during special occasions?

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-16 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-17

[The assembly approved Item 05-17. See pp. 57, 60.]

Interpreting G-14.0440 Regarding Circulation of Personal Information Forms by Candidates—From Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Columbia Theological Seminary, Presbytery of St. Augustine.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following as an authoritative interpretation of G-14.0440:

Section G-14.0440 allows a candidate to enter into negotiation for his or her ministerial service, even if the candidate has not had his or her final assessment from the presbytery's committee on preparation for ministry, provided the candidate

- has completed two full years of theological education (or the equivalent thereof),
- has had an annual consultation within the last year,
- has satisfactorily completed all the standard ordination exams or received certification of readiness under G-14.0472, and
- has received the approval of the candidate's committee on preparation for ministry.

If the committee on preparation for ministry has approved a particular candidate who meets all the aforementioned requirements to enter into negotiation for his or her ministerial service, that candidate may circulate a Personal Information Form or other biographical information."

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the chairman of the board of trustees, Columbia Theological Seminary. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its finding and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. *Question Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution*

Item 05-17 from the chairman of the board of trustees, Columbia Theological Seminary, asks whether G-14.0440 permits a presbytery to authorize the circulation of a Personal Information Form or other biographical information by a candidate who has completed two full years of theological education (or the equivalent thereof), had an annual consultation within the last year, and has satisfactorily completed all the standard ordination exams or received certification of readiness under G-14.0472, even if the candidate has not received final assessment from the presbytery's committee on preparation for ministry (G-14.0450).

2. *Findings*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that there are many factors that contribute to the certification of a candidate as ready to be examined for ordination, pending a call. Some of those factors are listed in G-14.0450. Minimum time requirements for the inquiry and candidacy phases are also controlling factors. The committee on preparation for ministry monitors a candidate's progress toward the goals of the inquiry and candidacy phases and best knows a particular candidate and whether that candidate is ready to begin ordained ministry.

Implications for the Proposed Form of Government: To the extent that the 219th General Assembly (2010) retains the current language of proposed G-2.0607, this authoritative interpretation would attach to the new constitutional language.

Item 05-18

[The assembly approved Item 05-18. See pp. 57, 59.]

Is a Session Bound to Consider Only Those Items Published in the Call for a Called/Special Meeting—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following authoritative interpretation of G-10.0201:

In the absence of specific language in G-10.0201 about limitation of the business that can rightly be considered in a special meeting of the session, the provisions of *Robert's Rules of Order* are controlling: “only business mentioned in the call of a special meeting can be transacted at such a meeting. If, at a special meeting, it becomes urgent in an emergency to take action for which no notice was given, that action, to become legal, must be ratified ... by the organization at a regular meeting (or, if ratification also cannot wait, at another special meeting properly called for that purpose)” (*Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 10th Edition, p. 90*).

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the stated clerk of the Presbytery of New Covenant. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its finding and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendations of Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. *Question Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution*

Item 05-18 from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New Covenant asks whether a session, meeting in a special meeting, is bound to consider only those items published in the call for that special meeting.

2. *Findings and Recommendations as to Requests*

The *Book of Order* addresses the issue of special meetings of all four governing bodies and the congregation. In each case, except the session, there is a requirement that the business to be transacted at a special meeting is limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting.

The underlying question is whether *by its silence* on special meeting business in G-10.0201 the Constitution is implying that the session is not subject to the requirement that business to be considered in special meetings is limited to that which was published in the call for the meeting. This interpretation relies on the exception permitted in G-9.0302 to depart from *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the more compelling concern is the protection of the right of the members to know what business will be considered. This right is foundational to parliamentary procedure. The potential for abuse of the special meeting of the session is multiplied when the restriction on business that can be considered does not exist.

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 10th Edition states that “only business mentioned in the call of a special meeting can be transacted at such a meeting. If, at a special meeting, it becomes urgent in an emergency to take action for which no notice was given, that action, to become legal, must be ratified (see pp. 118–20) by the organization at a regular meeting (or, if ratification also cannot wait, at another special meeting properly called for that purpose)” (p. 90). This provision allows some flexibility to the body but also offers safeguards against abuse.

If the General Assembly believes that greater specificity is desired in the text of the Form of Government, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that can be accomplished by directing the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-10.0201 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“G-10.0201 Meetings

“The session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. The moderator of the session may call a special meeting of the session when he or she judges it necessary and shall do so when requested in writing by any two members of the session. The session shall also meet when directed to do so by presbytery. Reasonable notice of all special meetings must be given when other than routine business is to be transacted. *The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no other business than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.* [The rest of the section remains unchanged.]”

However, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that this amendment will be more restrictive than the application of the provisions of *Roberts' Rules of Order*.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-18 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-19

[The assembly approved Item 05-19 with comment. See pp. 57, 59–60.]

[Comment: The 219th General Assembly (2010) advises that the General Assembly Committee on Representation should be asked to study the current age groups and nomenclature in order to have consistency among all Presbyterian documentation and for the General Assembly Committee on Representation to make recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012).]

Definition of Youth, Overture 90-18—From the Manager, General Assembly Nominations.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer the question with the following authoritative interpretation, adopted in 1991, of G-9.0105a(5) regarding “youth”:

“Different age groups are persons who are unlike each other due to the different stages of life they represent, such as youth, adulthood, or old age. In order to assure greater inclusiveness in the church, persons from all different age groups are needed. The age groups and ages they contain are as follows: Youth—25 and under; Young Adults—26–35; Adults—36–55; Senior Adults—56 and up” (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 402).

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from a General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) staff person. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its findings and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s recommendation.

1. *Question Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution*

Item 05-19 from the Office of the General Assembly seeks clarification of “youth” as found in the G-9.0105a(5) list of required members for the Committee on Representation.

2. *Findings*

Pursuant to G-13.0112d, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the question presented:

In G-9.0105a(5) the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) demonstrates a commitment to the inclusion and participation in the church by its younger members, requiring that there be “youth male and female membership” on committees of representation at the levels of governing bodies above the session. This commitment is also expressed in the G-4.0403 mandate that “[p]ersons of . . . different ages . . . shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church.” In neither context is there a constitutional definition of “youth” that gives guidance to governing bodies as they nominate church members for election to service.

In its advice to the 203rd General Assembly (1991), the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommended that the concern of *Overture 90-18* for definition of “different age groups” be answered by this advice: “‘Different Age Groups’ are persons who are unlike each other due to the different states of life they represent, such as youth, adulthood, or old age. In order to assure greater inclusiveness in the church, persons from all different age groups are needed. The age groups and ages they contain are as follows: Youth—25 and under; Young Adults—26–35; Adults—36–55; Senior Adults—56 and up” (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 402).

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that “youth” includes those in the age group 25 and under for membership in committees on representation.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution therefore recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer the question with the authoritative interpretation that was adopted in 1991 and is set forth above.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: The proposed Form of Government requires full expression of the full diversity of the church. Different age groups would also be required.

Item 05-20

[The assembly approved Item 05-20. See pp. 57, 59.]

D-10.0303, Reviewing Work of Investigating Committee—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Seattle.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

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

Shall D-10.0202 be amended by inserting a new “c” and renumbering the remaining paragraphs, “c.—j.” as “d.—k.”? The new section “c.” shall read as follows:

“c. determine whether the accusation repeats allegations previously made against the accused, and if so, report to the governing body having jurisdiction over the accused that it will not file charges (D-10.0202j) unless the accusation contains new information warranting investigation or is the subject of an investigation that has not been concluded.”

2. Commend the responses submitted to the Office of the General Assembly for its use in responding to questions and advising the church.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the stated clerk of the Presbytery of Seattle. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its finding and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendations of Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. *Questions Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution*

- a. If a petition for review of the work of an investigating committee that has decided not to file charges is not sustained, is the matter concluded?
- b. What is the meaning of “the matter is concluded”?
- c. If additional information is found at a later date upon which the same or similar allegations are made, may a new investigating committee be appointed?
- d. If no additional information is found, may a new investigating committee be appointed if the same allegations are made at a later date?
- e. Who makes the decision whether to appoint a new investigating committee based on same or similar allegations filed at a later date?

2. *Findings*

Pursuant to G-13.0112d, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the questions presented:

a. With respect to the first question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that if a petition for review of the work of an investigating committee that has decided not to file charges is not sustained, the matter is concluded (D-10.0303e; GAPJC 2004, *Sohn v. Hanmi Presbytery, Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 371).

b. With respect to the second question, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that “the matter is concluded” means that there are no procedures in the Rules of Discipline providing for further review of the work of the original investigating committee, and that the outcome of the work of both the original and second investigating committees as resulting in no charges being filed stands as the response of the governing body to the original allegation. The session or permanent judicial commission dismisses the investigating committee and the governing body clerk is then to maintain the investigating committee’s records in accordance with session or presbytery policy (D-10.0304).

c. With respect to the third question, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that a new written statement of an alleged offense must be filed in order to open a new investigation. A new investigating committee may be

formed on the basis of new information concerning the same or a similar alleged offense. Because additional time will have passed since the original alleged offense, if the offense alleged in the new filing is the one originally alleged, then the requirement that any charges be filed no later than three years from the time of the commission of the alleged offense might have to be met well within a year rather than up to a year following appointment of the new investigating committee. (“*No charges shall be filed later than three years from the time of the commission of the alleged offense*, nor later than one year from the date the investigating committee was formed, whichever occurs first ...” D-10.0401, emphasis added.)

d. With respect to the fourth question, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that upon the filing of an allegation with the clerk of the governing body an investigating committee shall be appointed in the usual manner. The presbytery may appoint persons who served on a previous investigating committee to serve on an investigating committee to investigate the same or similar accusations. There is no provision for screening allegations prior to appointment of an investigating committee; it is the duty of the governing body’s clerk to report the allegation “without undertaking further inquiry” in order that the accusation may be immediately referred to an investigating committee (D-10.0103). It then is the responsibility of the investigating committee to determine whether it has sufficient evidence on the basis of which the allegation(s) can be proved (D-10.0202g); it is a responsibility of the investigating committee to conduct an inquiry sufficient to determine whether to file one or more charges based on the previous investigation or upon a new investigation should further inquiry be determined needed.

If informed by the accused or by any papers, documents, records, testimony, or other evidence that the allegation against the accused was investigated by a previous investigating committee, the present committee may review the records of the earlier investigating committee that have been maintained by the governing body and it may make use of those records in its mandated responsibilities to investigate and to make its decision whether to file charges. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution also notes that if a person who is the victim of repeated accusations desires to stop the cycle of accusation and investigation, he or she could request vindication (D-9.0000). If he or she is vindicated, the report of the investigating committee would conclude the matter.

e. With respect to the fifth question, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that it is answered by the response to the fourth question.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-20 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-21

[The assembly approved Item 05-19 with amendment. See pp. 57, 61.]

Responsibility of General Assembly to Provide Authoritative Interpretations of Book of Order (G-13.0103r)—From Member, Presbytery of St Augustine.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following authoritative interpretation of G-13.0103r:

An authoritative interpretation is an interpretation of one or more provisions of the *Book of Order*. The General Assembly may authoritatively interpret the *Book of Order* through the approval of an interpretive statement by a General Assembly after the assembly has heard the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, or by a decision in a judicial case rendered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC).

The purpose of an authoritative interpretation is to clarify for the church the meaning and intent of a provision of the *Book of Order* as that provision impacts the church’s life and witness. An authoritative interpretation of the Constitution approved in accordance with G-13.0103r is binding on all members and governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The most recent interpretation of a provision of the *Book of Order* is binding. Authoritative interpretations are in effect until changed or revoked by a subsequent General Assembly or modified by the GAPJC.

An authoritative interpretation so approved or rendered may include any language approved by the General Assembly or GAPJC that the body sees as explaining the provision(s) of the *Book of Order*. It may cite previous interpretations or decisions, review the history of the provision or its antecedents, refer to portions of Scripture or the Constitution, or make use of other explanatory material the body deems helpful in explaining the meaning and impact of the *Book of Order* provision(s) being interpreted.

With respect to the question of the limits of the General Assembly’s power to interpret the Constitution, it is instructive to examine the wording of G-13.0103r. The General Assembly has responsibility and power

to provide authoritative interpretation of the *Book of Order* which shall be binding on the governing bodies of the church when rendered in accord with G-13.0112 or through a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case. The most recent interpretation of a provision of the *Book of Order* shall be binding.

Because the General Assembly “is the highest governing body of this church and is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (G-13.0101), the power to interpret the Constitution in an authoritative manner belongs finally to the General Assembly. This power is not accorded to any other governing body.

In recent years, the question has arisen in some circles whether the General Assembly’s Permanent Judicial Commission may adopt an interpretation of the Constitution that is contrary to an interpretation rendered by the assembly under the provisions of G-13.0112. Section G-13.0103r makes clear that there are parallel processes for interpreting the Constitution. One method involves an interpretation approved by the assembly after hearing the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution; the other is an interpretation that is part of a decision by the GAPJC in a judicial case. Whether it acts in plenary session or through its commission, the most recent interpretation so rendered is authoritative and binding. The Constitution does not distinguish between levels of authority with respect to these methods. This basic parity between assembly plenary and GAPJC decision is necessary as an important corrective on the interpretive power of both assembly plenary and GAPJC. From a constitutional perspective, it is theoretically possible that plenary and GAPJC may differ, even significantly, in their interpretations of provisions of the Constitution. It is therefore incumbent on both plenary and GAPJC to accord to each other’s interpretations the utmost respect and deference, seeking above all else to discern the guidance of God’s Spirit as it may be heard through each. The corporate health of the people of God is ill-served by anything less.

With respect to the question of the impact of an authoritative interpretation on the Constitution, it should be noted that an authoritative interpretation is not an amendment to the Constitution. Neither the General Assembly nor the GAPJC may alter the wording of the Constitution by means of an authoritative interpretation.

~~[More subtle, however, is the question of whether the act of interpreting *wording* of the Constitution changes the *meaning* of the Constitution. In truth, any interpretation of a text shapes the meaning of that text by addressing its provisions to circumstances perhaps not anticipated when the text was created. It is for this reason that we regard the church’s Constitution as a living document, in that by the act of interpretation we mold the meaning of our Constitution to fit the ever-changing landscape of the church’s life and witness. This interpretive work is therefore essential to the vitality of the church, lest the Constitution become a lifeless conglomeration of words without reference to reality.]~~

The General Assembly and the GAPJC would be wise to consider the following as they render authoritative interpretations of the Constitution:

- The General Assembly and the GAPJC, as noted above, may not add new language to the text of the Constitution by means of authoritative interpretation.
- The General Assembly and the GAPJC must interpret the existing language of the Constitution, rather than replacing that language with antecedent language.
- The General Assembly and the GAPJC must resolve tensions and ambiguities between provisions of the Constitution in such a way as to give effect to all provisions.
- The General Assembly and the GAPJC must exercise great care to ensure that any interpretation remains true to the plain meaning and context of the provision interpreted.
- The General Assembly and the GAPJC must each accord to the previous interpretive deliverances of the other the highest respect and deference in rendering additional interpretations of their own.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the Presbytery of St. Augustine. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its findings and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Constitution.

1. *Questions Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution*
 - a. What may an authoritative interpretation include?
 - b. What limits, if any, exist on the General Assembly’s power to interpret the Constitution?

c. What impact does an authoritative interpretation of a constitutional provision have on the Constitution? Is an authoritative interpretation conditioned by particular patterns of fact in the same way that a decision of the GA Permanent Judicial Commission is?

2. Findings

With respect to the questions presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the request presents a question on which authoritative interpretation of G-13.0103r is advisable.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-21 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-22

[The assembly approved Item 05-22. See pp. 57, 62.]

Section G-7.0306, Pastor Moderator of All Meetings of Congregation—From the Stated Clerk, Synod of Southern California & Hawaii.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following authoritative interpretation of G-7.0306:

The decision to have someone other than the pastor moderate a congregational meeting is a discretionary constitutional power of the presbytery that installed or appointed the moderator and that is “responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout its geographical district” (G-11.0103). It would be impractical for the pastor to moderate congregational meetings under G-7.0306 that involve responsibilities of the presbytery properly exercised on behalf of the church, or in which the moderator has a material conflict of interest. Because the authority to moderate congregational meetings derives from the presbytery, the presbytery has the right to appoint a moderator other than the pastor for a hearing conducted under the provisions of G-9.0505b(1) and a congregational meeting called under the terms of G-9.0505b(2).

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the stated clerk of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly on the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its finding and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. Questions Presented

a. Section G-7.0306 states that “The pastor shall be the moderator of all meetings of the congregation.” Are there exceptions?

b. If an administrative commission has been empowered under the provisions of G-9.0505b(2) to dissolve a pastoral relationship, does the pastor moderate the required congregational meeting at which the commission hears the positions of the pastor and members if they choose to speak?

c. When a congregation is meeting to approve the terms of call for the person who is the pastor, can that pastor be excused during action on the call?

d. Are there other times when it is not appropriate for the pastor to moderate the congregational meeting or portions of it?

2. Findings and Recommendation as to Request

Under G-7.0306 the pastor or moderator of session appointed by the presbytery is constitutionally permitted to be excused from moderating a meeting of the congregation, but is not required to be excused: “If it is impractical for the pastor or the moderator of session appointed by presbytery to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another minister of the presbytery to preside.” There is no constitutional definition of “impractical” governing such invitations. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes the widespread custom of providing for another presbyter to temporarily moderate the meeting when the congregation is to consider changes in the terms of the pastor’s call.

Item 05-22 asks whether there are times when the pastor should be excused from moderating all or part of the congregational meeting. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the appropriateness of the pastor being the moderator should be considered in terms of the practicality of the pastor presiding when the congregation works to fulfill certain of its constitutional responsibilities. The G-7.0304 list of the business that may be transacted at meetings of the congregation includes matters that could relate directly to a pastor's private interest, potentially creating a conflict of interest for the pastor and thereby interfering with the congregation's work. In order to avoid real or perceived conflict of interest, it would be prudent or even necessary for the pastor not to moderate meetings of the congregation with regard to "matters related to the pastoral relationship, such as changing the call, or requesting or consenting or declining to consent to dissolution" [G-7.0304a(3)], and "matters related to buying, mortgaging, or selling real property" [G-7.0304a(4)] when the pastor would benefit from an outcome.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-22 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-23

[The assembly approved Item 05-23. See pp. 57, 59.]

Work within Bounds—From Manager, Polity Guidance and Training.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following as an authoritative interpretation of G-11.0401a:

Work is properly within the responsibility of a presbytery when:

- **Responsibility for the work is constitutionally assigned to the presbytery (e.g., service to congregations under the jurisdiction of the presbytery);**
- **The work is in service to another church and an ecumenical agreement (G-15.0201a) with that church assigns responsibility to the presbytery for permitting a minister to serve the other church; or**
- **The consultation of the presbytery with the governing bodies above and below it (G-9.0404b) has resulted in an agreement that the presbytery is to be responsible for the type of work.**

Work is not properly within the responsibility of a presbytery when:

- **Responsibility for the work is constitutionally assigned to another governing body (e.g., service to synod or General Assembly);**
- **The work is in service to another church and an ecumenical agreement assigns responsibility to a governing body other than the presbytery for permitting a minister to serve the other church; or**
- **The consultation of the presbytery with the governing bodies above and below it (G-9.0404b) has resulted in an agreement that another governing body is to be responsible for the type of work.**

Presbyteries may assert responsibility for work within their bounds where responsibility is not otherwise assigned.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the manager for Polity Guidance and Training. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its findings and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the Advisory Committee on the Constitution's recommendation.

1. *Question*

Does "properly within the responsibility of another presbytery" mean the same thing as "properly within the jurisdiction of another presbytery" or does responsibility carry over beyond jurisdiction, and if so, how far?

2. *Findings:*

Pursuant to G-13.0112d, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the questions presented:

The general principle stated in G-11.0103 is that the presbytery is responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout its geographical district. But there are a number of exceptions to the general principle that geography determines responsibility.

Offices of synods and General Assembly entities are physically located within the geographical district of specific presbyteries, but G-11.0410 makes it clear that ministries in service of synods and General Assembly are not within the responsibility of the presbytery where they are located.

The use of non-geographic presbyteries also creates situations in which congregations are within the geographic bounds of two presbyteries, but are only within the responsibility of one of the two.

Military chaplaincies involve a ministry at a national level, sometimes located within the geographic bounds of presbyteries, and sometimes located overseas, outside the bounds of any presbytery. The General Assembly has created the Presbyterian Board of Military Chaplains so that responsibility for military chaplaincy within our church is located in the General Assembly, rather than the geographic presbyteries.

Congregations of other churches are not under the jurisdiction of the presbytery where they are located (*Jackson v. Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley*, GAPJC 1996, *Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 179), but recent ecumenical agreements (such as the Formula of Agreement) have included provisions for the orderly exchange of ministers, which assign responsibility for the minister's work to the presbytery where the congregation is located.

The broad principles stated above do not address all situations. In areas of work not addressed above, the reserved powers of the presbytery (G-9.0103) give the presbytery the authority either to be expansive in its assumption of responsibility for work within its geographic bounds, or to be restrictive in its acceptance of responsibility for work within its geographic bounds.

When a minister member of one presbytery seeks to have a ministry validated within the geographic bounds of another presbytery, it is essential that the two presbyteries communicate to reach, if possible, a common understanding of where the responsibility for the work lies.

With respect to the question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the question presents a question in which interpretation of G-11.0401a is advisable.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of this advice would interpret G-2.0502 of the proposed Form of Government.

Item 05-24

[The assembly disapproved Item 05-24. See pp. 57, 62.]

On Amending G-13.0103r. to Clarify the Role of the General Assembly and Its Permanent Judicial Commission—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.

The Presbytery of Arkansas overtures the 219th General Assembly (2009) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment of the *Book of Order* to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-13.0103 be amended to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and governing bodies. It therefore has the responsibility and power...

“r. to provide authoritative interpretation of the Book of Order which shall be binding on the governing bodies of the church when rendered in accord with G-13.0112 or through a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case, *which is approved as an authoritative interpretation by the next plenary session of the General Assembly*. The most recent interpretation of a provision of the Book of Order *approved by a plenary session of the General Assembly* shall be binding; ...”

Rationale

Section G-13.0103r states that both the General Assembly and its Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) may provide “authoritative interpretations of the *Book of Order*,” and that the “most recent interpretation” shall be binding. In light of this provision, some have argued that decisions of the General Assembly may be reviewed and overturned by the PJC in subsequent litigation. On this point the Constitution requires clarification.

It is a basic principle of our polity that “[t]he General Assembly is the highest governing body of this church ...” (G-13.0101). This principle reflects our theological conviction that we are most likely to discern the true movement of the Holy Spirit when we gather in large and inclusive groups (G-1.0400). Constitutional interpretation is rightly administered by this highest governing body.

Although comparison is sometimes made between the Presbyterian form of government and the structure of American civil government, the comparison is not entirely accurate. Within our civil society the judicial branch functions as a co-equal and independent branch alongside the legislative. Under the Presbyterian system of church government, the GAPJC is not a “supreme court,” with powers roughly equal to those of the General Assembly. It is a commission of the General Assembly and is bound by the plenary acts of the body that elected it (G-9.0500).

The GAPJC is responsible for deciding cases that are brought by or against individuals, the PC(USA) or its governing bodies and agencies, and its decisions are final as to the parties. However, the responsibility to decide matters of more general import that function to bind the whole church properly rests with the General Assembly.

The proposed amendment makes clear that constitutional interpretations that the GAPJC may apply to particular parties, in individual cases, do not bind the whole church unless and until they are approved by the General Assembly in its next plenary session. The possibility of approval by the General Assembly, in plenary session, ensures that the benefits of any legal insights developed by the GAPJC are not simply lost. The proposed amendment will eliminate confusion about the role of different groups in our polity and reaffirm our historic conviction that the General Assembly acts as the highest governing body of this church.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-24

Advice on Item 05-24—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 05-24. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution suggests that the assembly may find it beneficial to review its advice on Item 05-21 as it considers the present overture.

Rationale

Antecedent polities of the current *Book of Order* did provide for General Assembly review and approval of GA Permanent Judicial Commission decisions, but this requirement was eliminated with the adoption of the current text. The 205th General Assembly (1993) rejected an overture that would have amended the Rules of Discipline to restore the practice. The rationale of the assembly’s response is instructive:

Review of a judicial process by the General Assembly would be a costly, cumbersome, and altogether irresponsible act. In order for the commissioners to General Assembly to be able to engage in a true review of a judicial decision, since the recommendations of the overture do not permit oral arguments, they would have to be given documentation from all of the governing bodies involved that shaped the final decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission. Materials would have to be sent with all other commissioner materials. To do otherwise is to deny to each of the parties involved an honest, thorough review of their cases. (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 316).

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the desired aim of the proposed amendment is already achievable through existing constitutional provisions. In those cases where the General Assembly, acting in plenary session, finds that a GAPJC authoritative interpretation based on a decision is in error, it may correct that error simply by adopting its own interpretation of the Constitution under the provisions of G-13.0112.

The rationale accompanying the overture notes that the General Assembly is “the highest governing body of this church” (G-13.0101) and argues that “Constitutional interpretation is rightly administered by this highest governing body” (Item 05-24). The implied assumption is that the GAPJC is a lesser voice in the task of constitutional interpretation. Such a position represents a fundamental shift in our current Constitution. Currently, the Constitution invests both its plenary session and its GAPJC with the right and responsibility authoritatively to interpret the Constitution. In so doing, the *Book of Order* balances two approaches to constitutional interpretation. The action of the General Assembly to interpret the Constitution in general terms is balanced and tested by the work of the GAPJC to interpret the Constitution as needed to resolve judicial cases. Together, these interpretive paths provide both general and specific foundations for the Constitution. Eliminating either has the effect of weakening the church’s ability to use its Constitution in a living and life-giving manner.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 05-24

Comment on Item 05-24—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) concurs with the recommendation and advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to this overture and respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 05-24.

Rationale

This overture seeks to require an authoritative interpretation (AI) rendered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) in a case before it to be binding on the church only if it is later approved by the General Assembly (GA).

In making an AI, the General Assembly speaks through either (1) an action at a General Assembly meeting or (2) through a decision of its commission, the GAPJC. In both cases the General Assembly has rendered the AI. To require the GA to approve an AI that it has already given by way of its commission is unnecessary.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 05-25

The Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

[The assembly approved Item 05-25, Recommendation 1. See pp. 57, 59.]

1. Shall D-6.0306, D-8.0302, and D-13.0302 be amended by adding a new section “d.” to read as follows:

“d. If no challenge is made to a finding of the moderator and clerk that one or more points listed in D-6.0305 (or D-8.0301, or D-13.0106, as applicable) has been answered in the negative, the case shall be dismissed without further action or order of the permanent judicial commission.”

Rationale

In situations where there is no challenge made to the findings of the moderator and clerk, the proposed change makes dismissal automatic without any further action by a permanent judicial commission.”

[The assembly approved Item 05-25, Recommendation 2. See pp. 57, 59.]

2. Shall the first paragraph of D-10.0401 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“No charges shall be filed later than ~~three~~ five years from the time of the commission of the alleged offense, nor later than one year from the date the investigating committee was formed, whichever occurs first, except as noted below.”

Rationale

This will allow more time for the governing body to gain notice that an offense has been committed.

[The assembly approved Item 05-25, Recommendation 3. See pp. 57, 59.]

3. Shall the first paragraph of D-13.0404 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“After the hearing and after deliberation, the permanent judicial commission shall vote separately on each specification of error alleged. The vote shall be on the question, ‘Shall the specification of error be sustained?’ The minutes shall record the numerical vote on each specification of error. If the appeal was initiated by a prosecuting committee appealing a verdict of not guilty and the permanent judicial commission sustains that portion of the appeal, the permanent judicial commission shall remand the case for a new trial.”

Rationale

There is a problem when a prosecuting committee appeals a decision in a disciplinary case. A 2/3 majority vote is required for a judgment of guilt by the trial adjudicatory but a simple majority vote is required to sustain a specification of error on appeal. When an appellate permanent judicial commission reverses the trial court in a case in which the prosecuting committee has appealed a not guilty decision, the appellate permanent judicial commission’s remedies should be limited to remanding the case for a new trial. This would protect the integrity of the original super-majority vote by the trial court. It is the trial court who has the opportunity to hear witnesses and evaluate their credibility.

[In response to Item 05-25, Recommendation 4, the assembly approved an authoritative interpretation with comment. See pp. 57, 59.]

[Authoritative Interpretation: An offense does not include the act of participating in deliberations and decisions ultimately made by a committee or commission of a governing body or of the governing body.]

[Comment: An offense does not include the mere act of participating in deliberations and decisions ultimately made by a committee or commission of a governing body of the governing body.]

4. Shall D-2.0203b be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“An offense is any act or omission by a member or officer of the church that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); *however an offense does not include the mere act of participating in deliberations and decisions ultimately made by a committee or commission of a governing body or of the governing body.*”

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral:

2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 04-07. That the Stated Clerk Be Instructed to Prepare an Advisory Opinion Outlining Existing Remedies to Address Abuses of Judicial Process, and the Office of the General Assembly Be Instructed to Prepare Any Necessary Constitutional Amendments for Presentation to the 219th General Assembly (2010) in Order to Provide for Responses Following Due Process, for Permanent Judicial Commissions and Sessions to Censure Persons Found Guilty of Abusing Judicial Process Through Frivolous and/or Harassing Complaints and/or Allegations (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 49, 249).

The 218th General Assembly (2008) requested that the Office of the General Assembly suggest to the 219th General Assembly (2010) any changes to the PC(USA) Constitution that would limit abuse in disciplinary process created by individuals filing multiple complaints and/or allegations. This suggested change will address the unfortunate circumstance when an individual tries to challenge the decision of a governing body or a governing body committee or commission by giving written allegations of “offense” against each member of the governing body or governing body committee or commission that made the decision based solely upon their participation in the deliberation and decision making of the body. However, any behavior such as lying or physical violence in the context of deliberation or decision making would still be considered an offense that would trigger the appointment of an investigating committee because such an offense is not the “mere act of participating” but happened to be committed in the context of deliberation or decision making.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-25

Advice on Item 05-25—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Recommendation 1 of Item 05-25.

The manager of Judicial Process, in consultation with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, recommends that D-6.0306, D-8.0302 and D-13.0301 be amended by adding a new subsection “d.” The Rationale stated “In situations where there is no challenge made to the findings of the moderator and clerk, the proposed change makes dismissal automatic without any further action by a permanent judicial commission.”

2. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Recommendation 2 of Item 05-25.

The manager of Judicial Process, in consultation with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, recommends that D-10.0401 be amended by deleting the word “three” and adding the word “five.” The Rationale stated that “This will allow more time for the governing body to gain notice that an offense has been committed.”

3. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Recommendation 3 of Item 05-25.

The manager of Judicial Process, in consultation with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, recommends that D-13.0404b be amended to add a new sentence to read as follows: “*If the appeal was initiated by a prosecuting committee appealing a verdict of not guilty and the permanent judicial commission sustains that portion of the appeal, the permanent judicial commission shall remand the case for a new trial.*”

4. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Recommendation 4 and approve the following authoritative interpretation of D-2.0203b:

“An offense does not include the act of participating in deliberations and decisions ultimately made by a committee or commission of a governing body or of the governing body.”

Findings

These recommendations come to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution in response to a referral from the 218th General Assembly (2008), Item 04-07 to address three issues in the Rules of Discipline for which remedy was sought: (1) to limit abuse in disciplinary process by the filing of multiple complaints and or accusations; (2) to clarify the process following a finding by the moderator and clerk of a permanent judicial commission that one or more of the questions has been answered in the negative; and (3) to clarify the permanent judicial commission’s action when it has sustained an appeal initiated by a prosecuting committee.

1. With respect to Recommendation 1 of this item, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the language is clear and consistent with the stated intent.

2. With respect to Recommendation 2 of this item, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the referral provides insufficient justification for this change. The more time that elapses after an alleged offense, the less likely that the testimony of witnesses will be accurate and credible.

3. With respect to Recommendation 3 of this item, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that when the amendments allowing the prosecuting committee to appeal a decision of not guilty were proposed in 2004, it was not envisioned that the permanent judicial commission hearing the appeal would overturn a decision of the original court. The intent was stated “Under the current form of the Rules of Discipline there is no recourse at the first level of a disciplinary case for the prosecuting committee if a session or permanent judicial commission commits reversible error in the process leading to finding the accused not guilty” (*Minutes*, 2004, Part 1, p. 306). Since the original session or permanent judicial commission was the trier of fact, it is appropriate for that body to retry the case when an appeal has been sustained. For this reason, requiring the remand of a case when the appellate permanent judicial commission has sustained a specification of error is advisable.

However, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution also notes that it has recommended approval of Item 05-02 that seeks amendment of D-13.0102 and D-13.0106 deleting the possibility that a prosecuting committee could appeal a decision of not guilty. The approval of the amendments recommended in Item 05-02 would eliminate the need for the amendment of D-13.0404b. If both amendments were to be approved by the presbyteries, this one would have no effect.

4. With respect to Recommendation 4 of this item, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the proposed amendment to the Constitution is unnecessary, and that the intent can be accomplished with an authoritative interpretation.

Item 05-26

[The assembly approved Item 05-26. See pp. 57, 59.]

The Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall D-6.0103 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“D-6.0103 Stay of Enforcement

~~“The action or decision of a governing body, of its permanent judicial commission, or of a respondent named in D-6.0202b may be suspended by a stay of enforcement. A stay of enforcement is a written instruction, obtained in the manner described in D-6.0103a, that orders the implementation of a decision or action be delayed until a complaint or appeal is finally determined.~~

~~“a. A stay may be entered in any of the following manners after the filing of a complaint or notice of appeal, but no later than forty five days after the decision or action:~~

~~“(1) From an action of a governing body, by delivering to the stated clerk of the governing body whose action the complainant seeks to stay, and the stated clerk of the governing body whose permanent judicial commission has jurisdiction, (a) a complaint concerning the irregularity signed by one or more persons or governing bodies having standing to challenge the action taken, and (b) a request for a stay of enforcement signed by at least one third of the members recorded as present when the decision or action was made by the governing body; or~~

~~“(2) From a decision of a permanent judicial commission, by a stay of enforcement signed by at least one third of the members of the permanent judicial commission who decided the case, obtained by means of a request directed to the commission through the clerk of the permanent judicial commission or the stated clerk of the permanent judicial commission’s governing body; or~~

~~“(3) From an action of a governing body or a decision of a permanent judicial commission, by a stay of enforcement signed by at least three of the members of the permanent judicial commission having jurisdiction to hear the complaint or appeal on the decision or action, submitted to such members of the permanent judicial commission through the stated clerk of the governing body of that permanent judicial commission. The following procedure shall be followed for seeking a stay under this subsection:~~

~~“(a) The complainant or appellant shall deliver to the stated clerk either in person or by certified mail directed to the stated clerk’s office address a copy of the complaint or notice of appeal and a request for stay containing a short statement of the basis for challenging the decision or action, a short statement of the harm that will occur if the decision or action is not stayed, and a list of telephone numbers and addresses for the complainant or appellant and the opposing party or governing body;~~

~~“(b) The stated clerk shall promptly transmit the request for stay by the most expeditious means available to all members of the permanent judicial commission eligible to participate in consideration of the complaint or appeal;~~

~~“(c) Any member who determines that entry of a stay is appropriate shall sign and return to the stated clerk a certification stating that in her or his judgment probable grounds exist for finding the decision or action erroneous and for finding that harm will occur if the decision or action is not stayed;~~

~~“(d) Upon receipt of certifications finding a stay is appropriate from three or more members of the permanent judicial commission, the stated clerk shall immediately advise the parties that a stay has been entered.~~

~~“b. A copy of the stay of enforcement must also be provided to the permanent judicial commission that will hear the complaint or appeal.~~

“A stay of enforcement is a written instruction from the permanent judicial commission having jurisdiction that orders the suspension of a decision or an action until a complaint or appeal is finally determined.

“a. No later than thirty (30) days after the alleged irregular action of the governing body or the remedial decision of a permanent judicial commission being appealed, a person having standing to file a complaint or appeal may simultaneously file either a complaint or an appeal, and a request for a stay of enforcement with the stated clerk of the governing body having jurisdiction to hear the case. The request may be made in the following manner:

“(1) A request signed by one third of the members recorded as present when the decision or action was made by the governing body;

“(2) A request signed by one third of the members of the permanent judicial commission that decided the remedial case; or

“(3) A request signed by the complainant or appellant requesting that at least three members of the permanent judicial commission having jurisdiction to hear the complaint or appeal sign the stay of enforcement.

“b. The complaint or appeal shall be promptly transmitted by the most expeditious means available by the stated clerk along with the request for a stay of enforcement to the permanent judicial commission moderator and clerk for their determination as to:

“(1) whether the complaint or appeal meets the preliminary issues in D-6.0305 or D- 8.0301, and

“(2) if the request is made under D-6.0103a(1) or D-6.0103a(2), either:

“(a) whether the request made under D-6.0103a(1) is complete and timely, including validation of the signatures and intent of those who signed; or

“(b) whether the request made under D-6.0103a(2) is complete and timely.

“c. The moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission within seven (7) days after their receipt of the request shall report their findings to the permanent judicial commission and the parties.

“d. The permanent judicial commission may enter a stay of enforcement within ten (10) days of the moderator and clerk’s findings in the following manner:

“(1) By the moderator and the clerk in determining that the request made under D-6.0103a(1) or D-6.0103a(2) is complete and timely and the preliminary issues are met for the complaint or appeal.

“(2) If the request is made under D-6.0103(a)(3), by three members of the permanent judicial commission filing with the stated clerk of the governing body that has jurisdiction to hear the case a statement that in his or her judgment substantial harm will occur if the action or decision is not stayed and that in her or his judgment probable grounds exist for finding the decision or action erroneous. Each permanent judicial commission member must include a summary of the specific governing body action or decision being stayed.

“e. The stated clerk shall send a copy of the stay of enforcement to the parties and to the permanent judicial commission members.

“e. f. The stay of enforcement shall be effective until the time for filing a complaint or notice of appeal shall have expired or, if timely filed, until the decision of the permanent judicial commission having jurisdiction over the case, except as hereafter provided.

“d. g. The respondent may, within forty-five days of the filing of a stay of enforcement, file with the permanent judicial commission having jurisdiction over the case an objection to the stay of enforcement, whereupon no fewer than three members of such permanent judicial commission shall conduct a hearing on all of the issues relating to the stay of enforcement. The parties may be present or represented at such hearing. At such hearing, the stay of enforcement may be modified, terminated, or continued until the decision on the merits of the case by the permanent judicial commission.”

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral: *2006 Referral. Item 05-29. Request 06-13. Interpretation of D-6.0103 Re Stay of Enforcement—From the Manager of Judicial Process and Social Witness Policy, Office of the General Assembly (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 40, 445).*

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-26

Advice on Item 05-26—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 05-26.

Rationale

Upon referral from the 217th General Assembly (2006), the manager of Judicial Process, in consultation with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, recommended amendments to D-6.0103, D-6.0103a, and D-6.0103b clarifying procedures for obtaining a stay of enforcement.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the recommended language is clear and consistent with the stated intent.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-26 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 05-27

[The assembly approved Item 05-27 with amendment. See pp. 57, 61.]

On Adopting a Gracious Dismissal Policy—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

The Presbytery of San Francisco humbly overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take the following actions:

1. Instruct the Stated Clerk to distribute the Gracious Dismissal policy of the Presbytery of San Francisco as a resource for presbyteries and synods to use in engaging congregations that have voiced questions about departing from the denomination in a peaceful process of discussion and resolution;

2. Instruct the Office of the General Assembly to post the Gracious Dismissal policy (Appendix A below) on the Middle Governing Bodies website so that it remains available to the whole church.

3. Instruct the Office of the General Assembly to consider this policy as one resource to use in response to recommendation seven in Item 08-06.

[4. Instruct the Office of the General Assembly to invite other presbyteries who have established gracious dismissal policies to submit their policy to be posted on the middle governing bodies website along with the San Francisco policy.]

Rationale

The 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urged "... presbyteries and synods develop and make available to lower governing bodies and local congregations a process that exercises the responsibility and power 'to divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in consultation with their members' (*Book of Order*, G-11.0103i) with consistency, pastoral responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, openness, and transparency" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 284). The assembly continued:

Believing that trying to exercise this responsibility and power through litigation is deadly to the cause of Christ, impacting the local church, other parts of the Body of Christ and ecumenical relationships, and our witness to Christ in the world around us, the General Assembly urges congregations considering leaving the denomination, presbyteries, and synods to implement a process using the following principles:

- *Consistency*: The local authority delegated to presbyteries is guided and shaped by our shared faith, service, and witness to Jesus Christ.
- *Pastoral Responsibility*: The requirement in G-11.0103i to consult with the members of a church seeking dismissal highlights the presbytery's pastoral responsibility, which must not be submerged beneath other responsibilities.
- *Accountability*: For a governing body, accountability rightly dictates fiduciary and connectional concerns, raising general issues of property (G-8.0000) and specific issues of schism within a congregation (G-8.0600). But, full accountability also requires preeminent concern with "caring for the flock."
- *Gracious Witness*: It is our belief that Scripture and the Holy Spirit require a gracious witness from us rather than a harsh legalism.
- *Openness and Transparency*: Early, open communication and transparency about principles and process of dismissal necessarily serve truth, order, and goodness, and work against seeking civil litigation as a solution." (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 284–285)

Quoted from the Gracious Dismissal Policy of the Presbytery of San Francisco

The Presbytery of San Francisco followed the admonition of the 218th General Assembly (2008) to take this charge and commissioned a task force to study national policies that fairly followed the intent of the overture. The Presbytery of San Francisco, by nearly unanimous vote, adopted the following policy of Gracious Dismissal (see Appendix A), which is clear, balanced, and fair to all parties. It provides a peaceful way of dialogue and dispute resolution regarding issues of property and membership, and is worthy of being held up as a national model for PC(USA) presbyteries to use. (See Appendix A for the policy on following pages.)

In presenting this overture to the General Assembly, the Presbytery of San Francisco hopes to help it and the whole church to converse about ways to demonstrate the principles that were lifted up in the Commissioner's Resolution adopted in 2008 and enumerated above. The presbytery originally proposed an overture asking the General Assembly to make this policy developed by the presbytery a policy of the whole church, but now share it as an example to the church. We suggest that this overture be referred to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations as one possible resource to use in response to Item 08-06, Recommendation 7 shown below:

"7. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to develop resources to support presbyteries with congregations and/or ministers engaged in a process of discernment or undergoing the process of dismissal, in light of denominational learnings in the recent past."

Appendix A

Presbytery of San Francisco
Policy for Dismissing Churches
Adopted September 15, 2009

1. Introduction

The 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) urged that presbyteries and synods develop and make available to lower governing bodies and local congregations a process that exercises the responsibility and power "to divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in consultation with their members" (*Book of Order*, G-11.0103i) with consistency, pastoral responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, openness, and transparency. Believing that trying to exercise this responsibility and power through litigation is deadly to the cause of Christ, impacting the local church, other parts of the Body of Christ and ecumenical relationships, and our witness to Christ in the world around us, it urges *congregations considering leaving the denomination*, presbyteries and synods to implement a process using the following principles:

- *Consistency*: The local authority delegated to presbyteries is guided and shaped by our shared faith, service, and witness to Jesus Christ.
- *Pastoral Responsibility*: The requirement in G-11.0103i to consult with the members of a church seeking dismissal highlights the presbytery's pastoral responsibility, which must not be submerged beneath other responsibilities.
- *Accountability*: For a governing body, accountability rightly dictates fiduciary and connectional concerns, raising general issues of property (G-8.0000) and specific issues of schism within a congregation (G-8.0600). But, full accountability also requires preeminent concern with "caring for the flock."
- *Gracious Witness*: Scripture and the Holy Spirit require a gracious witness from us rather than a harsh legalism.
- *Openness and Transparency*: Early, open communication and transparency about principles and process of dismissal necessarily serve truth, order, and goodness, and work against seeking civil litigation as a solution.

2. Statement of Values the Presbytery of San Francisco

a. Commitment to the ministry of churches and acknowledging good will of parties in dispute

The Presbytery of San Francisco seeks to uphold one another, respect each other's integrity, affirm freedom of conscience, even as we acknowledge significant differences in our views on what the Bible teaches about a number of issues. We desire to encourage peace and unity while minimizing confrontation between and among our congregations and members as we seek together to find and represent the will of Christ. In all that we do, it is our prayer to strive to be a church modeled on the body of Christ, a church made up of many different parts, all of which are necessary for its mission to the world, for its building up, and for its service to God and on our organic spiritual unity found in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

In order to achieve the goals of servanthood, encouragement and support the Presbytery has historically seen its role as being a resource. The *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), (G-11.0103), challenges the Presbytery to order all resources ...for the mission and government of the church throughout its geographical district. It therefore has the responsibility and power to develop strategy for the mission of the church in its area consistent with (G-3.0000) and to coordinate the work of its member churches, guiding them and mobilizing their strength for the most effective witness to the broader community for which it has responsibility. As a result, the Presbytery has an abiding interest in the location and facilities of the member churches as an expression of the missions of the Presbytery.

b. Specific exposition of what "Held in trust" means to us

According to the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

All property held by or for a particular church, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether the property is used in programs of a particular church or of a more inclusive governing body or retained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). (G-8.0201)

The Trust Clause is meant to reflect the church's organic unity as it fulfills "The Great Ends of the Church", strengthening its ability to guide its member churches into their witness to the broader community. Because the trust clause is meant as a means of witness to our unity in the covenant of common mission, it is incumbent upon the Presbytery to act ministerially rather than adversarially to its member churches in regard to its provisions. It is also the right of a congregation to seek and to request dismissal with its property to another Reformed denomination.

We affirm these principles that will guide the Presbytery's use of the Trust Clause:

- It will not be used to shackle churches to the institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) if a church genuinely desires to depart.
- It will not be used as a weapon to threaten civil action against a congregation over issues of conscience. (G-1.0300)
- It reflects a tangible exhibition of the inter-connected relationship organically existing between the Presbytery and its congregations.

c. Commitment to avoid litigation

Scripture calls us to seek in all humility to resolve our disagreements and avoid the harm that is done to the Gospel and Christ's body when Christians resort to civil litigation rather than love for neighbor. The Trust Clause will not be used by Presbytery to initiate civil litigation preemptively. If a church initiates a civil action, the Presbytery may take legal action to defend its mission strategy for the Presbytery.

d. Commitment to dialogue and openness without the threat of punishment

The goal of this presbytery will always be reconciliation and continued engagement in relationship for all congregations within the presbytery without the threat of isolation, estrangement or blame. The presbytery is to be a servant to the churches God has entrusted to us, encouraging and supporting them toward becoming healthy, growing, congregations. This is especially true for those congregations for

whom the bonds of unity are stretched and ecclesiastical connections frayed over issues of conscience to the point of considering disaffiliation.

1 John 4:18 states “*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*”

The presbytery’s commitment to this passage in how we dialogue with each other means that we are committed to engage either the leaders of the congregation or the congregation as a whole, as circumstances dictate, without threat of punishment. We encourage congregations wrestling with these issues to share their concerns with presbytery leadership and know that the response will not be hostile, but instead one of prayerful dialogue and a commitment to act in love and in the best interest of that congregation.

3. Outline of Process for Engagement with Presbytery

a. Initial Contact and Dialogue

When the leadership of the presbytery becomes aware, either through formal session action or discussion, or through informal contacts with church leaders or members, that a congregation is in serious disagreement with the denomination to the extent of considering leaving the PC(USA), a Presbytery Engagement Team (PET), formed for such a purpose, will offer to meet with the session and jointly, or subsequently, with the congregation as the church tries to discern God’s will for denominational affiliation. This process is meant to insure that the congregation is fully informed on the issues at hand, equipped with knowledge of this presbytery’s process, as well as the processes and values that have guided other churches and presbyteries in their decision making. In doing so, the presbytery hopes to creatively engage the concerns of the congregation, and enable them to make decisions based on facts and not assumptions, which could cause suboptimal decisions to be made.

b. Prayerful discussion of differences and determination of possibility of reconciliation

The PET will attempt to “bridge the gap” with the congregation through discussion of possibilities for reconciliation and likely impacts in the case where dismissal is the course decided upon. The PET will outline the process and likely consequences of the congregation requesting dismissal from the presbytery, and will use the following principles to guide the PET’s dialogue with the church:

- To engage either the leaders of the congregation or the congregation as a whole, as circumstances dictate, in a time of prayer and conversation aimed at understanding the issues of the session/congregation that desire that their congregation be dismissed, and also to hear from those congregation members who wish to remain within the PC(USA).

- If the team determines that progress can be made toward reconciliation through continued and constructive dialogue, the session and the team will establish a mutually agreeable timeline of talks to be held and proceed to engage in such dialogue.

- In its dialogue with the church session and/or congregation, the team will share implications for a church considering leaving the PC(USA). The PET will discuss with all minister members the likely impacts on their benefits and ordination status of the various options available to them, so that they fully understand the implications of their transfer to another Reformed body, or staying as a member of presbytery.

- The best goal of presbytery team conversations with congregations when there is a group that desires to remain within the PC(USA) and a group that desires to be dismissed to another Reformed body, is to discuss financial, property and other issues that will enable both members of congregations (groups) to be as healthy as possible in the aftermath of separation.

If after a period of dialogue, the PET and the leadership of the congregation are not able to establish a process for reconciliation, the PET and the leaders of the congregation will begin the process of negotiation of the terms of dismissal, and the validation of the true desire of the members of the congregation with regards to denominational affiliation.

4. Process for a congregation to request dismissal

a. Negotiation of terms of dismissal

The dismissal of a church from the presbytery will be a traumatic event in the life of the congregation and the presbytery. The actions of the presbytery are truly focused on the preservation and even the advancement of ministry through the process of negotiation and after the congregation is dismissed.

The PET will engage with a special committee of the congregation (SCC) to negotiate the terms of dismissal. The presbytery strongly recommends that the congregation’s committee be comprised of a mixture of pastoral leadership and elders, with representatives from the congregation’s finance, property, and personnel committees, and should be selected with a goal of being representative of the congregation. Every effort should be made to represent those desiring to remain with the PC(USA). This will better prepare the leadership of the church to converse with the PET and also avoid being disconnected with the broader congregation, so that any vote to request dismissal would not be divisive and lead to long term harm to the community of believers.

It is expected that once the process has reached this stage, the negotiations should be able to progress relatively quickly and be able to be completed within 60 days.

(1) Terms for release to another body

Consistent with PC(USA) polity and General Assembly actions taken in *Anderson v. Synod of Florida*, and *Strong vs. Bagby*, congregations seeking dismissal from the presbytery may only be dismissed with their property to another reformed body.

(2) Policy for releasing claims to property

If a church seeking dismissal has outstanding loans to the Synod or other PC(USA) body, before the actual transfer of title occurs, the loans must be paid back or transferred to another creditor as part of the loan being repaid. Since the church being dismissed will no longer be under the authority of PC(USA), the denomination body that holds the loan should not be placed in the position of being exposed to loss without having a position of oversight of the church, or having the presbytery being able to act as a guarantor of the loan. This repayment does not have to be made before the presbytery acts on the request to dismiss, but must be made within 90 days of the presbytery vote to dismiss. If the PET does not believe a viable plan for repayment exists, the PET shall recommend to the SCC that the process be put on hold before the congregational vote until a viable plan to repay the loan is established.

Prior to the presbytery voting on the dismissal, the SCC shall provide the PET details regarding to whom the church property shall be transferred, such that the appropriate legal documentation can be prepared. Such transfer should occur no later than 90 days of the vote taken by presbytery to dismiss.

(3) Status of minister members of presbytery

If a church is dismissed by presbytery, one of the paramount concerns of this process is to assure that the rights and status of minister members are considered and properly handled.

Ministers may choose to remain as members of presbytery and not transfer to the other reformed body that the church is being dismissed to, or to request transfer along with the congregation. Such transfers may be requested concurrent with the church requesting dismissal, or may occur separately. If the transfer is not requested concurrently, the minister(s) shall be placed on inactive status. This allows them to continue to seek calls within the PC(USA) during the period of inactive status, or request to become members at large if their call at the church ends. At the end of 3 years of inactive status, the COM will normally remove the member from the roles of the presbytery.

Transfers to another reformed body shall normally be approved, unless the minister member is the subject of a pending judicial or investigative action. Members under discipline of the presbytery may not be transferred until the administrative process is complete and any required remedial actions completed. At that point the transfer may be completed, but a record of IC or PJC must be transmitted to the other body prior to the transfer being requested so proper disclosure of any issues can occur.

(4) Status of members of the congregation being dismissed

Members of the church being dismissed shall be notified by mail after the vote by presbytery to dismiss of the action being taken, and the church shall inform them of the process available to them to have their membership transferred to another PC(USA) church. The church being dismissed must provide a list of members whose membership is not being transferred to the new body to the PET, so as to make sure they are invited to join another PC(USA) congregation. This list should be provided within 30 days of the vote by presbytery to dismiss the congregation. It is important that throughout the process that both the PET and SCC communicate well so that both the members who transfer out of PC(USA) and the members who remain are properly ministered to so that the level of divisiveness and conflict can be minimized, and that the ministry of both groups may continue.

Members of the church being dismissed who are on presbytery committees shall have their terms of service end on the day the presbytery votes to dismiss the congregation. The presbytery welcomes former elder commissioners' participation at presbytery meetings as a way of continuing shared ministries and mission in the Presbytery of San Francisco, but such participation will be limited as visitors without standing or voice.

(5) Mitigation of financial impact on mission and ministry of the Presbytery

Just as this process is designed to aid in presbytery's ability to respectfully deal with the congregation's desire to be dismissed, and to have that happen in a way that minimizes the impact on that congregation's ministry, it is also important for the congregation to act in a way as to minimize the impact on the mission and ministry of the presbytery.

Recognizing that the presbytery's ability to sustain ministry is related to its financial health, it is assumed that the congregation that is being dismissed would want to minimize the financial impact of its departure on presbytery. This comes in two forms: per capita giving and mission giving. The dismissal of the church shall not be conditioned on these payments being made, as they are intended to be voluntary contributions driven by this reciprocal concern for ministry.

It is encouraged that the congregation agree to a declining per capita contribution over the span of 5 years so that the presbytery can adequately adjust to a smaller base of per capita contributions. The first year after the dismissal is granted, the contribution should be 80 percent of the last per capita payment the church made before its dismissal, followed by 60 percent the following year, followed by 40 percent the following year, followed by 20 percent the following year, and nothing in year 5.

A similar sort of declining contribution to the mission budget of the presbytery is likewise encouraged. The first year after the dismissal is granted, the contribution should be 80 percent of the last mission payment the church made before its dismissal, followed by 60 percent the following year, followed by 40 percent the following year, followed by 20 percent the following year, and nothing in year 5. The congregation may want this contribution targeted at ministries that the congregation has previously supported. It may even be the case that the ministry integration is such that declining contributions would not be necessary and that the congregation may want to continue to support these ministries at the 100 percent level or more over a long period of time. This is completely consistent with the goal of remaining in fellowship and continuing to serve together even after the dismissal is complete, just as many PC(USA) churches work closely with non-PC(USA) churches on mission today.

b. Validation of Congregation's desire and discernment to request dismissal

After the PET and the congregation's SCC have met and negotiated the terms of dismissal, the next step in the process is to validate the congregation's desire for dismissal, and to ascertain the congregation's unity in that decision. That validation must be performed through a congregational vote.

While the quorum for congregational meetings is set by the *Book of Order* and by the bylaws of particular congregations, the PET should expect at least 50 percent of the active members of the congregation be in attendance for a congregational meeting where the vote to accept the terms of the dismissal agreement are voted on and thereby voting to leave the PC(USA). This should be relatively easy for a smaller congregation, but impractical for a larger one, and the PET can negotiate a more practical number if 50 percent is deemed unreasonable.

Such a called meeting of the congregation must be noticed at least 30 days in advance, and every action should be taken to maximize the participation of the congregation in this meeting. It is also expected that representatives of the PET would have an opportunity to address the congregation and be able to discuss specific issues that would enable the congregation to make an informed decision based on the facts of the situation and prayerful discernment.

If the results of the vote to request dismissal and to accept the terms of the negotiated agreement is 75 percent or greater, the dismissal request is considered validated and, and then will be scheduled for a vote at an upcoming presbytery meeting.

5. Process for the presbytery to vote to dismiss a congregation

Once the congregation has voted to request dismissal from presbytery and accepted an agreement on terms of dismissal, the presbytery will vote on accepting the terms of the negotiated agreement and the dismissal of the congregation to another reformed body.

To do this and maintain the trust and integrity of the process, it's essential that the motion be a "thumbs up or thumbs down" vote. Renegotiation of the terms of dismissal through the use of amendments on the floor would essentially invalidate months of work between the PET and the congregation, and destroy any trust built between the presbytery and the congregation. Therefore, the following steps shall be taken by the presbytery to avoid this outcome:

- The vote shall be scheduled at a regular meeting of presbytery.
- The proposal will be presented as a whole, with the understanding that the agreement was arrived by good faith negotiations between both the PET and the congregation
- The proposal will be preceded by a 2/3rds vote required to limit debate and amendments or tabling

It should be assumed that after following through the steps of this process that if the presbytery votes down the proposal, that the outcome would be the initiation of civil litigation to force a separation, with all that entails, as well as a deep sense of betrayal by the presbytery. Our prayer above all, through the above process is to ultimately avoid litigation and in good faith attempt to resolve differences reasonably and civilly.

Item 05-28

[The assembly answered Item 05-28 by the action taken on Item 05-21. See pp. 57, 62.]

On Amending G-13.0103r Regarding Authoritative Interpretations—From the Presbytery of the Mid-South.

The Presbytery of the Mid-South overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-13.0103r be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

"r. to provide authoritative interpretation of the Book of Order which shall be binding on the governing bodies of the church when rendered in accord with G-13.0112 or through a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case. The most recent interpretation of a provision of the Book of Order shall be binding. *No authoritative interpretation shall be issued by a General Assembly which amends or alters a clear mandate contained in any provision of the Book of Order.*"

Rationale

The Presbytery of the Mid-South desires to overture the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding the proper limits to the use of authoritative interpretations.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-28

Advice on Item 03-01—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to answer 05-28 with this assembly's action on Item 05-21, on the responsibility of general assembly to provide authoritative interpretation of the *Book of Order* (G-13.0103r) from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the overture does not specify the location of the sentence to be added. It presumes, however, that the intent of the overture is to add the sentence as a new final sentence to paragraph G-13-0103r.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 05-28 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have for the current Form of Government.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 05-28

Comment on Item 05-28—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) concurs with the recommendation and advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) to this overture and respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 05-28.

Rationale

This overture seeks to restrict the General Assembly (GA) from issuing an authoritative interpretation (AI) which amends or alters a “clear mandate” in the *Book of Order*.

An Authoritative Interpretation (AI) rendered by the General Assembly under G-13.0112 or by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in its decision in a case before it, clarifies the meaning and intent of a provision of the *Book of Order*. By definition, an AI cannot amend the provision or alter its wording. Therefore, presumably if a *Book of Order* provision is “clear,” there would be no need for an AI to clarify it. The COGA believes the proposed amendment is unnecessary.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 05-Info
A. General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission1. *Roster of Former Members (D-5.0206b)*a. *Class of 2008*

Catherine Borchert, 13415 Shaker Blvd, #9C2, Cleveland, OH, 44120; Ernest E. Cutting, 3145 40th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55406; Wendy Warner, 139 Corson Avenue, Modesto, CA 95350; Mildred Morales, URB Punto Oro, 4018 Calle El Anaez, Ponce, Puerto Rico, 00728, Leon Fanniel, 5588 Village Green, Los Angeles, CA 90016.

b. *Class of 2006*

Jesse Butler, 8316 N. Flora Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64118; Gwen Cook, 1104 Oak Drive, Durango, CO 81301; Jane Fahey, 2930 Habersham Way, Atlanta, GA 30305; John Dudley, P. O. Box 1488, Hattiesburg, MS 39403, David Snellgrove, P. O. Box 616, Batesville, MS 38606; Christopher Yim, 20701 Frederick Road, Germantown, MD 20876.

[Note: The Reverend John Dudley resigned in 2005 and the Reverend Snellgrove was appointed as Rev. Dudley’s replacement.]

c. *Class of 2003*

Mary Lou Koenig, 114 Downing Road, DeWitt, NY 13214; James McClure, 440 South Gulfview Blvd, #1204N, Clearwater, FL, 33767; Patricia K. Norris, 40 North Central, Phoenix, AZ 85004; Daniel M. Saperstein, 1630 NE Stadium Way, Pullman, WA 99163.

NOTE: The 2004 General Assembly approved class reassignments; therefore, the GAPJC did not have any outgoing members in 2005.

2. *Final Decisions of the Permanent Judicial Commission*

The Permanent Judicial Commission met in Louisville, Kentucky, on July 24–28, 2009; in Baltimore, Maryland, on October 23–27, 2008; in San Diego, California, on February 26–March 2, 2009; in Louisville, Kentucky, on August 6–10, 2009;

in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 29–November 2, 2009; and in Louisville, Kentucky, on February 24–28, 2010. Having received the final decisions from the commission from its clerk, Gregory Goodwiller, the Stated Clerk now reports to the 219th General Assembly (2010) the final decisions received in the following cases and advises the General Assembly that they will be included in the *Minutes*:

a. *Remedial Case 217-21*

Robert E. Leech, as President and CEO of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Complainants,)	
v.	)	PRELIMINARY ORDER
The Advisory Committee on the Constitution of the General Assem- bly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),	)	AND ORDER FOR DISMISSAL
Respondent.	)	Remedial Case 218-21

This remedial case came before this Commission as a matter of original jurisdiction by a Complaint filed by Robert E. Leech, as President and CEO of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on May 21, 2008. The Respondent appeared by a Limited Appearance and Objection to the Issuance of a Stay of Enforcement received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on May 23, 2008.

The Executive Committee of this Commission finds that the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly is the appropriate body before which a complaint would be heard against the Advisory Committee on the Constitution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as an entity of the General Assembly, and that this Commission has jurisdiction to determine the Complaint.

The Executive Committee of this Commission finds that while Complainant Robert E. Leech is an employee of an entity of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), he does not have standing to file a complaint under D-6.0202b.(3) in this matter because he has not “sustained injury or damage to person or property.” The Executive Committee further finds that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, as an entity of the General Assembly, does not have standing to file a complaint under D-6.0202. According to that provision, the Commission’s power to consider remedial cases is limited to complaints which are submitted by “those eligible to file such . . . complaint(s).” There is no constitutional provision which grants eligibility to one General Assembly entity to file a complaint against another General Assembly entity. Therefore, the Foundation, as an entity of the General Assembly, is not eligible to file a complaint with this Commission against the Advisory Committee on the Constitution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which is also a General Assembly entity (D-6.0305b).

The Executive Committee of this Commission also finds that the Complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Advice and/or recommendations do not constitute “actions” and therefore cannot be addressed by remedial complaints (see *Presbytery of National Capital v. Office of the General Assembly, Remedial Case 210-5*, 1998, p. 136, and *The Session of the Concord Liberty Presbyterian Church v. Office of the General Assembly, et al.*, 2006, p. 501).

With respect to Complainants’ Request for a Stay of Enforcement, the Executive Committee of this Commission finds that since the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution do not constitute “actions” that can be addressed by remedial complaints, a stay of enforcement cannot prevent the General Assembly’s consideration of the matter.

Since one or more of the questions in D-6.0305 has been answered in the negative, the case is hereby dismissed in accordance with D-6.0306c. The findings herein may be challenged, either by a party or by a member of this Commission, by filing a written notice with the Commission within thirty (30) days after receipt of this Preliminary Order.

In view of this decision, the parties are strongly encouraged to heed the biblical obligation to meet together to “conciliate, mediate and adjust differences without strife” (D-1.0103) and to do so prior to the meeting of the General Assembly.

Dated the 26th day of May, 2008.

b. Remedial Case 219-01 (Formerly 218-16)

Sharon Moody, Sandra Hillquist, Tracey Carper, and Mary Williams Complainants	) ) )	ORDER FOR DISMISSAL
v.	)	Remedial Case 219-01 (formerly 218-16)
Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Respondent))	

This remedial case came before this Commission on a Complaint in original jurisdiction filed by Complainants against Respondent, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, dated October 3, 2007. The Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly in its Order and Decision dated April 28, 2008, determined that this Commission has jurisdiction in this matter.

By letter dated January 9, 2009 from Complainants’ counsel, this Commission has been advised that the matter has been settled.

Therefore, at the request of Complainants, the case is hereby dismissed with prejudice.

Dated the 2nd day of March, 2009.

c. Disciplinary Case 219-02 (Formerly 218-17)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, Complainant/Appellee,	) ) )	DECISION AND ORDER
v.	)	Disciplinary Case 219-02 (formerly 218-17)
Veronica L. Ransom, Respondent/Appellant))	

Headnote

Rationale for Decisions not Required but Recommended: While the Constitution does not require that a permanent judicial commission provide a rationale for every specification of error assigned in the Notice of Appeal when rendering a decision (D-13.0404), this Commission recommends that permanent judicial commissions provide enough explanation so that decisions can be understood.

Arrival Statement

This disciplinary case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by the Appellant Veronica L. Ransom (Ransom) from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of South Atlantic (SPJC) dated March 14, 2008. A hearing on Ransom’s challenge to the GAPJC’s Executive Committee dismissal of this matter on a preliminary question was held on July 25, 2008. The Executive Committee’s decision was overturned by this Commission and all preliminary questions were answered in the affirmative on July 27, 2008 (see 219-02: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta Decision and Order on Challenge to Preliminary Questions v. Veronica Ransom and 219-02: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta Decision and Order v. Veronica Ransom (formerly 218-17)).

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Ransom has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal in D-13.0106.

Appearances

Veronica L. Ransom, Respondent/Appellant, was present and represented by Robert B. Eyre. The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (Presbytery), Complainant/Appellee, did not appear at the hearing, but relied on its brief.

History

Persistent conflict between Ransom and the pastor of Radcliffe Presbyterian Church (RPC) twice led to attempts to utilize the denomination’s judicial system for resolution. Following receipt of a complaint against the pastor on September 14,

2004, the Presbytery formed an Investigating Committee (IC), which, on January 12, 2005, reported that no charges would be filed.

On February 10, 2005, the Presbytery Stated Clerk received a request by Ransom for a Petition to Review the findings of the IC. On May 25, 2005, it was determined that the Petition to Review would not be sustained, and the matter was closed.

On May 8, 2005, Ransom received an unsigned letter by a group called “Pastor Support Committee” (Committee), informing her that it had been established by the Session of RPC to deal with conflict between Ransom and the pastor. The Committee requested a meeting with Ransom. On May 24, 2005, Ransom replied to the Committee asking a series of questions and indicating a possible willingness to meet with them pending her receipt of the Committee’s answers. The Committee sent another letter on October 11, 2005—this one by certified mail to Ransom—requesting a meeting. Ransom refused to pick up the certified letter at the post office.

On November 14, 2005, the Pastoral Support Committee requested that official charges be brought against Ransom by the Session of RPC alleging “failure to be governed by the oath of elder,” and offering in support, information about Ransom’s “failure to accept the findings of the IC and the findings following a Petition to Review.” The Session, in turn, filed a Request for Reference with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, on December 2, 2005, on behalf of the Pastoral Support Committee of the RPC, which Reference was accepted on February 22, 2006.

After receiving the report from its IC, the Presbytery filed twelve charges against Ransom. A trial was held by the Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC) on April 21, 2007, resulting in a finding of “guilty” against Ransom on three charges of “Failure to be governed by the oath of Elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” and one charge of “Disrupting the peace and unity of the Church.” The Presbytery cited specific behaviors which Ransom demonstrated to support each of the four “guilty” verdicts.

A censure was read into the record of the Presbytery on May 8, 2007, and an order for supervised rehabilitation was entered on behalf of their Committee on Ministry. Ransom has participated in the supervised rehabilitation.

Ransom filed a Notice of Appeal with the Stated Clerk of the Synod of South Atlantic (Synod) which was received on June 12, 2007. This was followed by a Hearing on Appeal on January 10, 2008, before the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission (SPJC), based on thirteen specifications of error. On January 10, 2008, the SPJC voted not to sustain any of the specifications of error.

On March 4, 2008, Ransom filed a Notice of Appeal with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly based on two specifications of error. Ransom presented oral argument at a hearing conducted by this Commission on October 24, 2008. The Presbytery submitted its brief in lieu of an appearance.

Specifications of Error

The Specifications of Error argued in Appellant’s brief to the GAPJC do not correspond with the Specifications of Error in her Notice of Appeal. This Commission is only required to address those errors set forth in the Notice of Appeal (*Congregation for Reconciliation v. Presbytery of Miami, Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 580), and thus, this Decision is based upon determination of those errors. The Appellant’s Notice of Appeal differs significantly from her brief to this Commission. The GAPJC has exercised its discretion to address all those Specifications of Error identified as issues in the Notice of Appeal, Appellant’s brief and in oral argument of this Appeal.

Below are the Specifications of Error in the Notice of Appeal:

Specification of Error No. 1. The SPJC committed injustice in the process by:

(a) recording a “not sustained” vote for each and every specification of PPJC error without either explanation or basis for the decision; and

(b) convening absent any racial ethnic member.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

(a) D-13.0404 establishes the process by which an appellate body renders its decision. Requirements include a vote on each Specification of Error and the recording of that vote. The Constitution does not require that a permanent judicial commission provide a rationale for every specification of error assigned in the Notice of Appeal when rendering a decision. It should be noted, however, that in the remedial case of *Buescher v. Presbytery of Olympia, Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 317, this Commission recommended that permanent judicial commissions provide enough explanation so that decisions can be understood. It would be helpful to follow this recommendation in future disciplinary cases.

(b) This Specification of Error was withdrawn by Ransom at oral argument.

Specification of Error No. 2. The degree of censure was unduly severe.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

The basis for the degree of censure is formed from the body of facts developed at trial. Factual determinations made by the trier of fact have a presumption of correctness and are not to be disturbed on appeal unless “plainly or palpably wrong, without supporting evidence, or manifestly unjust” (*Hardwick v. Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of North Carolina, PCUS Minutes*, 1983, Part I, p. 45; *Chesterbrook Taiwanese Presbyterian Church v. National Capital Presbytery, Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 493; *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Presbytery of Wyoming v. Gordon R.J. King, Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 311). The censure imposed was not unreasonable.

Following is a discussion of Specifications of Error identified in Appellant’s brief which have been reworded and re-grouped under appropriate D-13.0106 grounds for appeal in a disciplinary case:

Specification of Error No. 3. The SPJC erred and committed injustice in the process when it did not hold that:

(a) The Pastoral Support Committee’s action in intervening in the disciplinary allegation brought by Ransom against her pastor violated the provisions of D-3.0102; and

(b) The Investigating Committee unduly broadened the investigation of Ransom and inappropriately deprived her of both notice of the breadth of the investigation and the nature of the accusation.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

(a) The formation of the Committee was not a judicial action and did not prejudice Ransom’s petition to review the dismissal of the last accusation against RPC’s pastor. This Commission finds no reason to disturb that factual determination.

(b) The nature of an allegation presumes that the whole story may not yet be known. In fulfilling its responsibility to substantiate the allegation or dismiss it, the IC must make a thorough inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the alleged offense (D-10.0202c). It is not unusual that details, including newly discovered elements of the whole story, expand the breadth of an original allegation as they are gathered. Nothing in the Constitution precludes an IC from filing more than one charge from a single, core allegation, as was done in this case.

Specification of Error No. 4. The SPJC erred in not holding that the PPJC should have dismissed all of the charges against the accused on the grounds that:

(a) The acts charged were separately not significant enough to rise to the level of chargeable offenses under D-2.0203b; and

(b) There are no identifiable offenses within the Constitution or Scripture for “failing to be governed by the Oath of Elder,” or “disrupting the peace and unity of the church.”

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

(a) Appeals in disciplinary cases exist to review proceedings of lower governing bodies (D-13.0100) and not to re-try issues of fact (King, p. 311). The determinations of fact are made by the trier of fact, not the appellate body. Whether the charges were or were not of facts significant enough to rise to the level of chargeable offenses under the Constitution or Scripture was a determination appropriately made by the PPJC, the trier of fact, whose presumptions of correctness are not to be disturbed on appeal unless they are “plainly wrong, without supporting evidence or manifestly unjust” (King, p. 311). Nothing either in the record or presented at oral argument warrants such a finding.

(b) Rather than contain a criminal code, where conduct specifically proscribed may be prosecuted, the Constitution is infused with principles and standards to which ordained officers voluntarily submit. G-6.0106b states that “those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. ...” This standard is also affirmed in the answers to the ordination questions at W-4.4003 with which all officers agree to comply. Additional guidance can be found in “Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” which the 210th General Assembly (1998) recommended to presbyteries as a model for their study, approval, and inclusion of their manuals of operation (Minutes, 1998, Part I, p. 67). Further, ICs are charged with determining “whether there are probable grounds or cause to believe that an offense was committed by the accused” (D-10.0202f).

The church is called to remember that church discipline is not punishment; rather, it is the “church’s exercise of authority given by Christ, both in the direction of guidance, control, and nurture of its members and in the direction of constructive criticism of offenders” (D-1.0101). All judicial process through which church discipline is implemented must be within the context of pastoral care and oversight (D-2.0100).

Specification of Error No. 5. The SPJC erred in not finding that there was a failure of the prosecution to meet the burden of “proof beyond a reasonable doubt.”

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

This Specification of Error was not included in the Notice of Appeal, appropriately briefed, nor argued on appeal. It is, therefore, deemed to be withdrawn.

Decision

None of the Specifications of Error is sustained; therefore, the Decision of the SPJC is affirmed.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the South Atlantic is hereby affirmed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the South Atlantic report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-participants

William Scheu was recused and did not participate in this case. A. Bates Butler III was not present and took no part in this case.

d. *Remedial Case 219-03 (Formerly 218-18)*

Robert Sundquist, Mark Hawke, Elise Hawke, Charles Lupton and Di Lupton, Appellants (Complainants),	)	DECISION AND ORDER
v.	)	Remedial Case 219-03
Heartland Presbytery, Appellee (Respondent).	)	(formerly 218-18)

Headnotes

1. Delegation to and Exercise of Power by an Administrative Commission. The functions of an administrative commission are limited by the appointing body and may include any function that the appointing body wishes to delegate (with few exceptions). Powers delegated to administrative commissions must be specifically described (G-9.0502). When an administrative commission reaches a decision on a matter referred to it, the commission’s decision becomes the action of the appointing body. A governing body may amend or rescind an action or decision of an administrative commission in the same manner that it may change its own decisions and actions.

2. Congregational Consultations for the Purpose of Seeking Dismissal. Withdrawal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is not a matter that can be considered absent the participation of the presbytery. G-7.0302 and G-7.0304 limit the business of congregational meetings and do not include seeking dismissal from the PC(USA). The presbytery is required to afford all persons affected by a dismissal notice an opportunity to be heard on the subject (G-9.0503b(2)). Consultations between a congregation and a presbytery about dismissal are for the benefit of facilitating reconciliation and informing the presbytery as it considers a request for dismissal, but are not meetings at which any business of the congregation may be conducted.

3. Covenantal Relationship between Churches and Presbyteries. In consulting with members of local churches about dismissal, the presbytery’s witness, concern, and responsibility are not solely to one congregation, but to each congregation in light of the whole. The congregation’s responsibility must be seen in light of its call to fulfill its responsibilities as the local unit of mission for the service of all people, for the upbuilding of the whole church, and for the Glory of God (G-4.0104). Unity in Christ and the relational nature of our polity are fundamental to Presbyterianism and to a gracious witness to Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

4. Limitations on Conscience. Appointment of an administrative commission to deal with churches, sessions and pastors contemplating leaving the PC(USA) does not improperly bind the conscience of church officers or pastors. Belief and behavior are distinguishable. Free expression of conscience is limited for officers and pastors under G-6.0108b. Calling congregational meetings, moving churches to seek dismissal from the denomination or obstructing constitutional governance of the church are actions, not expressions of free conscience.

Arrival Statement

This remedial case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by the Appellants Robert Sundquist, Mark Hawke, Elise Hawke, Charles Lupton and Di Lupton, from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Mid-America (SPJC) dated January 25, 2008.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that the Appellants have standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

The Appellants, Robert Sundquist, Mark Hawke, Elise Hawke, Charles Lupton and Di Lupton (Sundquist, *et al.*) were represented by Robert Howard. The Appellant Heartland Presbytery (Presbytery), was represented by Stephen Taber, Chad Herring and Landon Whitsitt.

History

The parties agreed that the facts of this case are not in dispute. Accordingly, this statement of the case history and relevant facts is adopted from the parties' statements.

At the May 3, 2007, meeting of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM), the Executive Presbyter reported concerns about actions of Kirk Johnston, the Pastor, and the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Paola, Kansas, including concerns about their apparent efforts to diminish or sever the congregation's connection with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In response to those concerns, the COM appointed an Administrative Review Committee (ARC) to explore the current state of the relationship and to work pastorally to strengthen the relationship among First Paola, its Pastor and Session, the Presbytery, and the PC(USA).

In May, 2007, the ARC attempted to meet with the Pastor and Session of the Paola Church, but did not hold the meeting when it became aware that the Session had already called a congregational meeting to take place on June 24, 2007, for the purpose of voting to request dismissal with property from the PC(USA) to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

On May 21, 2007, the Executive Presbyter was notified by Laurie Johnston, Pastor of Hillsdale Presbyterian Church, that the Hillsdale Session would be voting on May 31, 2007, to recommend that the congregation seek dismissal from the PC(USA). The Session of Hillsdale subsequently called a congregational meeting on June 10, 2007, to vote to seek dismissal from the PC(USA) with property to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

On June 7, 2007, the COM adopted a resolution that the Presbytery form an Administrative Commission (AC) to address the situations at the Paola and Hillsdale churches. The COM Resolution was published to ministers and commissioners of the Presbytery and slated for action at the Presbytery's stated meeting on June 16, 2007.

At the June 16, 2007, stated meeting of the Presbytery, after the COM motion was offered, a substitute motion was proposed that made substantial changes to the COM motion. Both motions were debated extensively and perfected. The main motion (the COM Resolution) was passed by a vote of 91 to 39, and provided in relevant part as follows:

1. *The purpose of the Commission shall be to act on behalf of the presbytery on all matters regarding ministers, congregations, and members of congregations who are considering withdrawal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*
2. *[Naming members of the Commission]*
3. *The Presbytery by this action shall delegate to the Commission the following powers, to take effect when it should become evident to the commission that minister(s) or congregation member(s) are moving toward expressing a desire for separation, and that reconciliation is not likely:*
 - a. *Access to all church records, including but not limited to: membership rolls, minutes of Session and all boards and committees, financial records, membership directories, newsletters, and materials distributed for congregational information.*

b. Authority to call a congregational meeting (G-7.0303.a.(2)) and to obtain current and accurate membership lists from the church for this purpose.

c. Authority to engage appropriate legal counsel.

d. Authority to take all necessary steps to discern the “true church” (G-8.0601), that is, those wishing to remain loyal to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

e. In the event that a Session calls a congregational meeting for the purpose of considering actions leading to separation from the PCUSA, the Commission shall have authority to dissolve the Session and assume the full powers and jurisdiction of the Session. In the event that this has occurred prior to this action of presbytery, the power shall be effective immediately. With the full authority of the Session, the Commission shall be empowered to:

i. Provide for worship and for the continuing pastoral care of all members of the congregation, in the manner of Christ.

ii. Receive and act on request from members to be transferred or deleted from the rolls.

iii. Determine and negotiate appropriate distribution of all property and assets of the congregation, with any final resolution to be recommended to the Presbytery Council for approval.

f. Authority to dissolve the pastoral relationship upon evidence that the pastor has advocated separation from the denomination or upon renunciation of jurisdiction, fully observing the due process requirements of the Constitution, G-9.0505b.(2).

g. Authority, in consultation with the Committee on Ministry, to transfer the minister to an established judicatory of another Reformed denomination with which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in correspondence.

h. Authority to declare a minister to have renounced jurisdiction in accordance with G-11.0416 upon evidence that they have obtained membership of any character in another denomination.

4. The current list of churches for which the Administrative Commission has authority is:

*First, Paola, Kansas
Hillsdale, Kansas*

5. Other congregations may be added to this list by vote of the Committee on Ministry or the Presbytery Council, or such subcommittees as they may designate, according to procedures established by those bodies.

On June 24, 2007, the Paola congregation voted on the question: *Shall the First United Presbyterian Church of Paola, Kansas request dismissal with property from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.* The vote was 200 in favor and 81 against dismissal.

On June 24, 2007, the Hillsdale congregation voted by ballot with two options: to “*Keep the Hillsdale Presbyterian Church in the PC(USA) denomination*” or “*dismiss with property the Hillsdale Presbyterian Church to the New Wineskins Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) denomination*” (emphasis in original). The vote was 77 in favor of requesting dismissal and 5 against.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1. The SPJC erred in Constitutional interpretation by failing to sustain Specification of Error “a” in the Complaint, which specified:

The Presbytery erred by empowering an Administrative Commission to assume original jurisdiction of the session of one or more particular churches within its bounds without having complied fully with the requirements of G-11.0103s, viz, an affirmative determination that a session cannot exercise its authority and a prior thorough investigation and a prior and full opportunity for the subject session to be heard.

This Specification of Error is not sustained for the reasons discussed in Part I below.

Specification of Error No. 2. The SPJC erred in Constitutional interpretation by failing to sustain Specification of Error “b” in the Complaint, which specified:

The Presbytery erred by empowering an Administrative Commission to dissolve a pastoral relationship prior to discharging its affirmative duty to make findings to establish that the church’s mission under the Word imperatively demands the dissolution (G-11.0103o).

This Specification of Error is not sustained for the reasons discussed in Part I below.

Specification of Error No. 3. The SPJC erred in Constitutional interpretation by failing to sustain Specification of Error “c” in the Complaint, which specified:

The Presbytery erred by delegating to its Committee on Ministry and its Council the authority to sub-delegate to any subcommittee its powers to “divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in consultation with their members” (G-11.0103a) and “to dissolve [the pastoral relationship] ... when it finds that the church’s mission under the Word imperatively demands it” (G-11.0103e).

This Specification of Error is not sustained for the reasons discussed in Part IV below.

Specification of Error No. 4. The SPJC erred in Constitutional interpretation in its rationale for sustaining Specification of Error “e” resulting in injustice in the process or decision by failing to grant adequate relief to Appellants, which specified:

The Presbytery erred by empowering the Administrative Commission to assume the full powers and jurisdiction of the Session when “a Session calls a congregational meeting for the purpose of considering actions leading to separation from the PCUSA,” effectively preventing a Session from exercising its right, implicit in G-15.0203b, to call for a congregational meeting to consider requesting dismissal from the PC(USA) to another reformed denomination in correspondence with the PC(USA).

This Specification of Error is not sustained for the reasons discussed in Part II below.

Specification of Error No. 5. The SPJC erred in Constitutional interpretation by failing to sustain Specification of Error “F” in the Complaint, which specified:

The Presbytery erred by making powers of the Administrative Commission effective “when it should become evident to the Commission that minister(s) or congregation member(s) are moving toward expressing a desire for separation and that reconciliation is not likely” [emphasis omitted], violating the requirement of G-1.0307 that “no Church governing body ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority.”

This Specification of Error is not sustained for the reasons discussed in Part III below.

Decision

I.

Specifications of Error Nos. 1 and 2

Delegation to and Exercise of Power by an Administrative Commission

Role and Responsibility of Administrative Commissions. Administrative commissions have an important role in Presbyterian polity and governance. Presbyteries need to rely on administrative commissions to act in a variety of situations. G-9.0502 provides:

A commission is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by a governing body. The appointing body shall state specifically the scope and power given to a commission. A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to its governing body to be incorporated in its minutes and to be regarded as the actions of the governing body itself.

The functions of an administrative commission are limited by the appointing body, and may include any function that the appointing body wishes to delegate (with few exceptions expressly provided for in the *Book of Order*). Ordinarily these functions may include: ordaining ministers of the Word and Sacrament, organizing churches, merging churches, receiving candidates under the care of presbytery, making pastoral inquiry in certain situations where judicial proceedings have terminated as the result of death or renunciation of jurisdiction by a person accused of sexual abuse (G-9.0503). Commissions appointed as judicial commissions have other functions, and commissions may be assigned other duties as committees (G-9.0503b and c).

Among the appropriate and ordinary functions for an administrative commission are the following: to visit particular churches, governing bodies, or other organizations of the church reported to be affected with disorder, and to inquire into and settle the difficulties therein, except that no commission shall have the power to dissolve a pastoral relationship unless such power has been specifically delegated to it by the appointing body (G-9.0503a(4)). *See also Session of Second Presbyterian Church of Tulsa v. Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery, Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 469, (Presbytery may delegate authority to dissolve a congregation to an administrative commission.); Londonderry v. Presbytery of New England, Minutes, 2001, Part I, p. 577, (demonstrating presbytery’s use of an administrative commission to work with a session struggling over its constitutional obligations in light of disagreement with specific constitutional provisions).*

Powers delegated to administrative commissions must be specifically described (G-9.0502). This is consistent with the principle that the jurisdiction of each governing body within the church is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution, and that powers not expressly mentioned in the *Book of Order* are reserved to the presbyteries (G-9.0103).

Decisions of Administrative Commissions. When an administrative commission reaches a decision on a matter referred to it, the commission's decision becomes the action of the appointing body. A governing body may amend or rescind an action or decision of an administrative commission in the same manner that it may change its own decisions and actions. Specifically, G-9.0505a states:

The decision of an administrative commission shall be the action of the appointing body from the time of its completion by the commission and the announcement, where relevant, of the action to parties affected by it. Such decision shall be transmitted in writing to the stated clerk of the governing body, who shall report it to the governing body at its next meeting. A governing body may rescind or amend an action of an administrative commission in the same way actions of the governing body may be modified.

Fair Process. When an administrative commission has been appointed to settle differences within a church or other entity, there are requirements that it must observe in order to assure the fair exercise of authority. Those requirements for a fair process are set forth in G-9.0505b, which states:

(1) When an administrative commission has been appointed to settle differences within a church, a governing body, or an organization of the church, it shall, before making its final decision, afford to all persons to be affected by the decision fair notice and an opportunity to be heard on the matters at issue. (See G-9.0503a(4), G-9.0503a(6), G-9.0505b-d) Fair notice shall consist of a short and plain statement of the matters at issue as identified by the commission and of the time and place for a hearing upon the matters at issue. The hearing shall include at least an opportunity for all persons in interest to have their positions on the matters at issue stated orally.

(2) Whenever the administrative commission has been empowered to dissolve a pastoral relationship and the administrative commission chooses to exercise that power, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation at which the commission shall hear the positions of the pastor and the members if they choose to speak. The pastor shall be accorded the right to hear the concerns expressed by members in the meeting and to have reasonable time to respond during the meeting. (See G-14.0610, G-14.0611, G-14.0612, G-11.0103o).

Use of Administrative Commissions in Presbyteries. Administrative commissions appointed by a presbytery to settle differences in a church are required to follow G-9.0505b, even if the presbytery did not quote or refer to these requirements when it appointed the administrative commission and specified the commission's scope of power. When a presbytery creates an administrative commission to divide, dismiss or dissolve churches; establish or dissolve a pastoral relationship; or assume original jurisdiction over a session (G-11.0103i, o and s, respectively), the commission must follow the requirements of G-9.0505b, including obligations for investigation and providing an opportunity for those affected to be heard. When the presbytery's powers are specifically assigned to an administrative commission, the commission then is acting with the full power and authority of the presbytery as to the powers assigned. Moreover, the administrative commission must follow all applicable requirements for fair notice and an opportunity to be heard. An administrative commission may, in its absolute discretion, offer additional procedures that it deems appropriate to investigate, consider and decide the matters before it in a fair, open and pastoral manner (*see* G-9.0505c and d).

Application of Principles in This Case. Applying these principles and provisions to this case, this Commission finds that the Presbytery acted appropriately in appointing the AC and delegating specific authority to it. The argument of Sundquist, *et al.* that, the Presbytery must take all the steps to dissolve a pastoral relationship or assume original jurisdiction over a session, including investigation, notice and an opportunity to be heard, **before** appointing an administrative commission or delegating power to it, has no Constitutional basis and is in error. However, when an administrative commission is granted the authority to assume original jurisdiction over a session, it may not exercise that authority without first finding that the session is unable or unwilling to manage wisely the affairs of its church as required by G-11.0103s and by following the procedures of G-9.0505b(1). Similarly, an administrative commission may not dissolve a pastoral relationship without adhering to the requirements of G-11.0103o and G-9.0505b(2).

Sundquist, et al. are correct that when a session calls a meeting for the purpose of considering actions that may lead to separation from the PC(USA), neither the Presbytery, nor an administrative commission, may *automatically* assume original jurisdiction over that session. That is not in fact what happened with respect to the Paola or the Hillsdale churches.¹ The SPJC correctly held that the AC, acting under its delegated powers, must make the determinations specified in G-11.0103s before assuming the powers and jurisdiction of a session and may not assume such powers and jurisdiction solely because the session has called a meeting for the purpose of separating the congregation from the PC(USA). (*See* Part II below regarding the session's authority to call a congregational meeting for this purpose.)

Appointing an administrative commission with the power to assume original jurisdiction or dissolve or dismiss a congregation or dissolve a pastoral relationship does not mean that the commission will inevitably exercise this power. In this case, the Resolution provided a process that insured that granting of such powers was separated from the exercise of the powers by the requirement that the AC must first determine that it is "evident to the commission that minister(s) or congregation member(s) are moving toward expressing a desire for separation, *and that reconciliation is not likely*" (Resolution, section 3 [emphasis added]). This determination is an important buffer between the grant of authority and exercise of that authority by the AC. This provision for phased implementation of the Resolution reflected the Presbytery's view that in dealing with issues as

grave as dissolution of pastoral relationships, dissolving or dismissing churches or assuming original jurisdiction over sessions, it is generally wise to proceed deliberately and with due consideration for the opportunity for reconciliation. It is to be expected that a session and congregation will proceed with that same deliberation in seeking reconciliation. The Resolution reflected the Presbytery's desire and intent to give broad powers to an administrative commission that may be faced with particularly fluid and difficult circumstances, but conditioned the exercise of those powers on appropriate pastoral considerations for reconciliation in addition to the procedural safeguards imposed by G-9.0505b and G-11.0103i, o and s.²

Without an administrative commission in place, the alternative would have required the Presbytery to call the session and pastor to the next plenary meeting of the Presbytery to air the differences in front of the entire Presbytery.³ Such a process would be unwieldy, use an undue amount time and resources, result in poor stewardship of Presbytery resources, and would in all likelihood not afford the best opportunity for a full hearing or reconciliation. There is greater potential to act pastorally, build trust and seek reconciliation in smaller groups.

II.

Specification of Error No. 4 Congregational Consultations for the Purpose of Seeking Dismissal

Sundquist, et al. assert that a session has an "implicit" or "implied right" to call a congregational meeting to consider requesting dismissal to another denomination, but at oral argument to this Commission suggested that it was a "privilege," not a "right." Any such privilege exists only within a covenantal relationship between a church and the presbytery. On the contrary, G-7.0302 and G-7.0304 limit the business of congregational meetings and do not include the topic of seeking dismissal. In 2008, the 218th General Assembly adopted Item 04-20 (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 48), which refers to G-7.0304 and states, "Withdrawal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is not a matter that can be considered at a congregational meeting."

This does not mean that a congregation is prohibited from requesting dismissal. However, it is the presbytery (or its duly appointed administrative commission or its Committee on Ministry) that has the responsibility to consult with the members of a church about dismissal (G-11.0103i). The presbytery is required to afford all persons affected by a dismissal notice and an opportunity to be heard on the subject (G-9.0503b(2); Item 04-20). These consultations (which may be in the form of listening sessions, hearings or other consultations) are for the benefit of informing the presbytery as it considers a request for dismissal, but are not meetings at which any business of the congregation may be conducted (*id.*; see also *Gaba v. Presbytery of Eastern Virginia*, *Minutes*, 2003, Part I, p. 269, [The purpose of this provision is not merely matter of fairness or information gathering, but also exercise of pastoral oversight of churches by the presbytery to facilitate reconciliation.]).

"Our unity in Christ and the relational nature of our polity require dialogue between and among governing bodies. ... [D]ialogue requires participation by both parties ..." (*Johnston, et al. v. Heartland Presbytery*, *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 462, 466). This obligation and mutual responsibility for dialogue was made explicit by the 218th General Assembly (2008) when it approved the Resolution for a Gracious, Pastoral Response (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, Item 04-28, pp. 51, 284), expressing its will that all governing bodies and persons dealing with members of a church seeking dismissal act in a consistent and pastoral manner, with accountability and due consideration for fiduciary and connectional concerns, with open and transparent communication in the context of gracious witness to one another. Presbyteries and congregations have a *reciprocal obligation* for this process (G-4.0302). Whether the presbytery's power "to divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in consultation with their members" (G-11.0103i) is retained or delegated to an administrative commission, it is to be exercised in a pastoral manner, with litigation seen as a last resort, "deadly to the cause of Christ" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 284, Item 04-28, Recommendation 2).

Any privilege to seek dismissal is conditioned on the cooperation of the congregation, the session and the pastor(s) with the presbytery in a process that operates in the manner set forth in Item 04-28. There shall not be any secret or secretive acts by sessions, pastors or congregations; bylaw changes or transfers of assets effectively negating the *Book of Order* or diminishing a church's connection to the PC(USA); or curtailment of communications with the presbytery as a prelude to dismissal. Congregational meetings called or conducted by sessions for the purpose of voting on dismissal without the involvement of the presbytery are improper and have no binding effect.

G-11.0103i requires the presbytery to consult with members of local congregations seeking dismissal. The presbytery should consult with pastors and congregations seeking dismissal at the earliest practicable opportunity and in the manner described by the Resolution for a Gracious, Pastoral Response (Item 04-28). In consulting with members of local churches about dismissal, the "presbytery's witness, concern, and responsibility are not solely to one congregation, but to each congregation in light of the whole. The congregation's responsibility is not to itself, but to itself in light of its call to 'fulfill its responsibilities as the local unit of mission for the service of all people, for the upbuilding of the whole church, and for the glory of God.' (G-4.0104)" (*Johnston*, p. 467). This understanding of our unity in Christ and of the relational nature of our polity is fundamental to Presbyterianism and a gracious witness to Scripture and the Holy Spirit. We are bound together in covenantal relationships that assume and require the blessings and difficulties of dialogue based on trust and love (G-7.0103).

The several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one Church of Christ, called emphatically the Church; that a larger part of the Church, or a representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein; that, in like manner, a re-

presentation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part, and to all the parts united: that is, that a majority shall govern; and consequently that appeals may be carried from lower to higher governing bodies, till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church. ... (*Book of Order*, G-1.0400)

Likewise, “Each particular church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be governed by this Constitution. ... It shall fulfill its responsibilities as the local unit of a mission for the service of all people, for the upbuilding of the whole church, and for the glory of God” (G-4.0104). This union requires each governing body within the church to treat the others pastorally and with high moral obligations to care for and respect the other. “In this way, without the congregations, the presbytery is a hollow shell; without the presbytery, the vision of the churches is limited” (*Johnston*, p. 466). Thus congregations, sessions, and pastors who fail to abide by the principles of the Resolution for a Gracious, Pastoral Response or presbytery policies (such as the Heartland Resolution) that embody these principles shall have breached important responsibilities and duties. As Presbyterians, the church at every level must visibly demonstrate the covenantal ties that bind us as the one church of Jesus Christ.

III.

Specification of Error No. 5 Limitations on Conscience

Citing the phrase in part 3 of the Presbytery’s Resolution, “moving toward expressing a desire for separation,” Sundquist, *et al.* argued that the Resolution was an improper attempt to bind the conscience of pastors, elders and members and that it would have a chilling effect on the free expression of conscience. However, the record is clear that the Paola and Hillsdale pastors and sessions had done much more than express their views about a desire for separation, but had taken action to withdraw their congregations from the denomination.

This Commission has distinguished between belief and behavior on several occasions. In *Hambrick v. Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of North Carolina (PCUS Minutes, 1983, Part I, p. 43)*, this Commission addressed a presbytery’s approval for membership of a pastor whose views on the ordination of women and the participation of unconfirmed children in the Lord’s Supper did not comport with the Constitution, and drew an important distinction between “the right of individuals to hold *views* contrary to the Constitution...and *actions* contrary to the Constitution [which] are not sanctioned.” In *Presbytery of West Jersey v. Synod of the Northeast (Minutes, 1993, Part I, p. 17)*, the GAPJC affirmed the right of the Synod to adopt a resolution in opposition to the *Book of Order*, as interpreted under an authoritative interpretation, and differentiated between opinion and action. In *Londonderry* (at p. 580), this Commission found that a purported expression of opinion on G-6.0106b actually went further, declaring an intent not to enforce that provision, and thus went too far. *Williamson v. Presbytery of Western North Carolina (Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 475)* holds that those ordained to office in the PC(USA) must exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds, and are answerable to the governing bodies of the church in order that all may live and work together in love and unity. Finally, most recently in *Spahr v. Presbytery of the Redwoods (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 330)*,⁴ this Commission held:

Rather than describing freedom of conscience in any absolute way, G-6.0108 declares the manner in which the conscience of an officer of the church is bound. The binding of the conscience of an officer of the church permits freedom of conscience with regard to the interpretation of Scripture only insofar as it ‘may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church.’ G-6.0108a. Submission to the current standards of the church may not always be comfortable, but it is not optional. (*Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 334*)

In this case, there is no evidence that Presbytery, either by adopting or following the Resolution, in the exercise of its constitutional powers, has, or necessarily would, improperly bind the conscience of church officers.⁵ The mere creation of an administrative commission is not an act of discipline. Free expression of conscience is limited for officers and pastors under G-6.0108b, and does not encompass the calling of congregational meetings, moving churches to seek dismissal from the denomination or obstructing constitutional governance of the church.

IV.

Specification of Error No. 3 Additional Churches

Presbytery’s Resolution specified that the AC had authority over two churches: First United Presbyterian of Paola, Kansas, and Hillsdale Presbyterian of Hillsdale, Kansas. In addition, the Resolution (at section 5), provided for the addition of other congregations by “the Committee on Ministry or the Presbytery Council, or such subcommittees as they may designate, according to procedures established by those bodies.” The SPJC did not sustain Sundquist, *et al.*’s Specification of Error on this point, but expressed its concern about the breadth of section 5, and stated, “It is our considered view that churches should only be added to the list by vote of the presbytery.” One additional church was subsequently added to the list by the COM.

Here the Presbytery acted to make every church in the Presbytery potentially subject to the AC, conditioned upon action by the COM or the Presbytery Council (or their designated subcommittees) to name a particular church to be actively subject to specified powers of the AC.⁶ Although not prohibited by any specific provision of the *Book of Order*, a better practice would be for the Presbytery itself to name any additional specific churches to come under the authority of the AC.

Order

IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Mid-America is hereby sustained.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Heartland report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Mid-America report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-participants

A. Bates Butler was absent and did not participate in this case.

Concurring Opinion of Mary Eleanor Johns, Bradley C. Copeland, Michael Lukens, and Susan J. Cornman

Remedial Case 219-03
Sundquist, et al. v. Heartland Presbytery

Historic principles of the PC(USA) regarding schism, dating back to the plan of reunion of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, contained the following: “That when any matter is determined by a major vote, every member shall either actively concur with or passively submit to such determination; or if his conscience permit him to do neither, he shall, after sufficient liberty modestly to reason and remonstrate, peaceably withdraw from our communion without attempting to make any schism. Provided always that this shall be understood to extend only to such determination as the body shall judge indispensable in doctrine or Presbyterian government.” (Hist. Dig. (P) p. 1310, Plan of Union of 1758, par. II: see also footnote 1 to G-6.0107b.) Though a presbytery may dismiss a congregation to another reformed body within certain bounds, members and officers are urged to remember and abide by these principles.

e. Remedial Case 219-04 (Formerly 218-19)

-----)	
Janet E. Wolfe,)	
Appellant (Complainant),)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER
v.)	
	)	Remedial Case 219-04
Presbytery of Winnebago,	)	(formerly 218-19)
Appellee (Respondent).)	

Arrival Statement

This remedial case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by the Appellant Janet E. Wolfe (Wolfe) from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (SPJC) dated March 14, 2008.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Wolfe has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal in D-8.0105.

Appearances

Wolfe was present and represented by Archibald Wallace, III. The Appellee, Presbytery of Winnebago (Presbytery), was represented by David Arey.

History

Wolfe is a minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbytery. Effective July 31, 2005, Wolfe was honorably retired. Subsequently, she expressed a desire to seek a call and began circulating her Personal Information Form (PIF). In an October 20, 2006, letter from the Presbytery’s Executive Presbyter, Wolfe was directed to discontinue circulating her PIF and was encouraged to find secular employment. In January of 2007, Wolfe accepted a pulpit supply position in the Presbytery but

was immediately advised by the Committee on Ministry (COM) to resign, which she did. On April 19, 2007, the COM limited the ways in which, and the frequency with which, Wolfe could serve as a minister to a congregation. Following Wolfe's requests to have the limits removed, the COM modified those limits on August 27, 2007.

On October 12, 2007, Wolfe filed a Complaint with the Synod of Lakes and Prairies in which she alleged that the COM had improperly restricted her from fully exercising the office of minister of the Word and Sacrament without a disciplinary hearing or affording her due process.

On December 8, 2007, the officers of the SPJC issued a Preliminary Order, dismissing the Complaint, because the Complaint did not state a claim upon which relief can be granted (D-6.0305d). On January 15, 2008, Wolfe challenged the Preliminary Order under D-6.0306a.

On March 14, 2008, via a conference call, a hearing was held before the SPJC to consider Wolfe's challenge. The SPJC affirmed the Preliminary Order. The case was dismissed on the ground that one of the items in D-6.0305 was answered in the negative, that is, that the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Wolfe filed her Notice of Appeal to the GAPJC on April 11, 2008. The executive committee of the GAPJC found that the GAPJC has jurisdiction, that Wolfe has standing to file the appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for Appeal under D-8.0105. A hearing was held before the GAPJC on July 25, 2008.

Specification of Error

The SPJC erred by ruling that the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

The specification of error is sustained.

Decision

The issue to be decided by this Commission is whether the SPJC erred in ruling that the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. In determining whether the Complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted, the SPJC and this Commission must assume the truth of facts as alleged by Wolfe in the Complaint (*McKittrick v. Session of West End Presbyterian Church, Minutes, 2003, Part I, p. 272*).

This Commission must accept Wolfe's allegation that the COM did not report to the Presbytery with a recommendation for action as required by G-11.0502b. Further, both parties conceded that this did not happen.

In *Rice v. Presbytery of Philadelphia, Minutes, 1996, Part I, p. 172, paragraph 12.068*, the GAPJC held that "a presbytery clearly has the right and responsibility to approve or disapprove of the ministerial tasks undertaken by its members This power should not be exercised arbitrarily." Under *Lewis v. Presbytery of New York City, Minutes, 1995, Part I, p. 134, paragraph 11.066*, a presbytery is "obligated to treat all parties fairly and provide them with an opportunity to present their positions. The test is fundamental fairness—the opportunity to be heard and a consideration of their respective positions without prejudice." Under the *Rice* and *Lewis* standards, there are two disputed issues which the SPJC should have tried: the absence of a COM report and recommendation to Presbytery; and, whether sufficient opportunities were otherwise provided by the COM for Wolfe to be heard.

In rendering this decision, this Commission concludes that the Complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted and the SPJC has the authority to grant the relief requested by Wolfe. This Commission makes no determination of the merits of this case or whether Wolfe will be able to prove the facts she alleges in her Complaint.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Final Order of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies dated March 14, 2008, be reversed and this case is remanded for pre-trial and trial proceedings consistent with the *Book of Order*. The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies is also encouraged to explore with Janet E. Wolfe and the Presbytery of Winnebago alternative means to resolve the dispute prior to trial.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Winnebago report this decision to the Presbytery of Winnebago at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Winnebago enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies report this decision to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-participants

Commissioner H. Clifford Looney was absent and did not participate in this case. Commissioner Michael Lukens was recused and did not participate in this case.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 219-04 (formerly 218-19), Janet E. Wolfe, Appellant (Complainant) v. Presbytery of Winnebago, Appellee (Respondent), on July 27th , 2008.

Dated this 27th day of July, 2008.

f. Remedial Case 219-05 (Formerly 218-20)

Jae G. Lee, Ji Suk Kim, and Hyung Young Choi,)	
Appellants (Complainants),)	
)	
v.	)	DECISION AND ORDER
)	
Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi,	)	Remedial Case 219-05
Appellee (Respondent).	)	(formerly 218-20)

Headnote

Authority delegated to administrative commissions must specify powers and authority delegated; those not delegated are reserved to the delegating body. Under the *Book of Order*, when a governing body establishes an administrative commission, it shall state specifically the scope of power given to the commission (G-9.0502). Powers not delegated by a governing body are reserved to that body.

Arrival Statement

This remedial case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by the Appellants, Jae G. Lee, Ji Suk Kim, and Hyung Young Choi (collectively Lee), against Appellee Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi (Presbytery), from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lincoln Trails (SPJC), dated April 26, 2008.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Lee has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal required under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Lee was represented by W. Dan Lee and Robert Worley. Presbytery was represented by David G. Strom.

History

Canaan Presbyterian Church (Canaan) is a member church in the Presbytery, which is a non-geographic Korean-language presbytery, created in 1994. Canaan became a charter member when it transferred to the Presbytery from the Presbytery of Chicago.

In 2006, Canaan was severely affected with disorder, and its Session became unwilling or unable to manage Canaan’s affairs. On October 5, 2006, at a special called meeting, the Presbytery appointed an administrative commission (AC) pursuant to G-9.0500 for the peace and unity of Canaan. The AC was directed by Presbytery to dissolve the Session of Canaan and to exercise jurisdiction over Canaan as the session according to G-11.0103s. The AC was granted “both the authority of the Session stated at G-10.0000 of the *Book of Order* and the authority of the Presbytery listed at G-11.0000 of the *Book of Order*.” Presbytery did not grant to the AC the power to act as the Presbytery or as the Session with respect to other matters. When dealing “with matters as to the search for the new pastor and dissolving pastor relationship” with Canaan, the AC was limited to the powers and authority of a session. This limitation was consistent with G-9.0503a(4), which provides that an administrative commission may be granted power:

to visit particular churches, governing bodies, or other organizations of the church reported to be affected with disorder, and to inquire into and settle the difficulties therein, *except that no commission shall have the power to dissolve a pastoral relationship unless such power has been specifically delegated to it by the appointing body ... [emphasis added].*

The AC Plan

On October 24, 2006, the AC adopted a “Road Map,” which dealt almost exclusively with the retirement of the pastor, Yong S. Rhee (Rhee). It was crafted by the AC based in part on discussions held with Rhee concerning his retirement and with an opposition group at Canaan known as “CaSaMo.”

The Canaan November Response to the AC Plan

On November 1, 2006, nine elders filed a complaint with Presbytery stating that the AC had exceeded its powers by dealing with the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between Canaan and Rhee, and by establishing a process for naming Rhee’s successor. That complaint was never heard by Presbytery. On November 7, 2006, the AC reaffirmed the “Road Map” and dealt with other matters, including directing that a congregational meeting that had been called for the purpose of electing officers be postponed until the Session’s functions were restored.

On November 28, 2006, the “Board of Directors” (trustees) of the CPC Corporation, of which Rhee was the president, voted to withdraw Canaan’s membership in Presbytery and transfer back to the Presbytery of Chicago. On December 1, 2006, the AC requested by letter to Rhee that Canaan’s previous organizational structure be maintained.

The “December 5 Actions” of the Rhee/Elders Group

On December 5, 2006, in defiance of the November 7, 2006, request of the AC and of the action of Presbytery in establishing the AC, Canaan held, without notice, a congregational meeting at which the congregation purported to direct the board of trustees to form a “steering committee” for the operation of the church and “have it take the church session’s position.” Until the session was organized, the steering committee would consist of five people who had attended the church’s worship services and would exclude persons who had “never paid offerings.” At that meeting the congregation also elected elders and deacons. On December 5, 2007, the so-called steering committee wrote to the congregation explaining what had transpired at the congregational meeting, detailing the disagreements with the AC and stating that “we reached a conclusion in which we couldn’t help but declare a separation from the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery, and from now on we will remove any kind of interference from the Presbytery.” Also on December 5, 2006, Canaan’s attorney wrote a letter to the moderator of Presbytery asserting violations of the *Book of Order* by the AC and by Presbytery, and advising that Canaan was withdrawing from Presbytery. Canaan’s steering committee wrote a letter to the members of Presbytery stating: “we announced to leave the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery. Of course, this does not mean to leave the denomination. From now on, if permitted, we will return to the Presbytery of Chicago of which we were a member for over seventeen years.”

Following the December 5 Actions, on December 8, 2006, Canaan’s steering committee published a newspaper ad containing the same content as the steering committee’s December 5 letter to the congregation.

The December 11 Meeting of Presbytery

On December 11, 2006, at its regular stated meeting, Presbytery observed in its minutes that Canaan’s December 5 congregational meeting was not legitimate because it had not been called by the AC. It considered the meeting to be a fractional gathering of Rhee and his supporters. The Presbytery further observed that it respected the decision of the pastor and elders to withdraw from the Presbytery, but that since the withdrawal did not recognize the jurisdiction of the Presbytery, the Presbytery would consider the pastor and elders who made that decision to have renounced the jurisdiction of the PC(USA). The Presbytery went on to state that the persons who had made the decisions may have made them without an understanding of the resulting consequences of their withdrawal from Presbytery.

The Presbytery recommended that those persons cancel their decisions to withdraw and resolved that if by December 20, 2006: (i) Rhee did not send a letter cancelling the withdrawal (and advertise such in the congregation newsletter), and stating that he would be in compliance with the governance of the Presbytery; and/or (ii) certain elders did not do likewise; then, the Presbytery would presume that Rhee had renounced the Presbytery’s jurisdiction, and that pursuant to G-6.0502 (now G-6.0702), he would be terminated from ordained office, removed from the list of ministers of the PC(USA) and his exercise of office ended. Likewise, the elders who supported the withdrawal resolution would be “automatically removed from membership and ordained office and the exercise of their office shall be terminated.” The Presbytery further resolved that it would only acknowledge those members of Canaan who did not “renounce jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” as the true church.

At the December 11, 2006, meeting of Presbytery, the AC’s request that Presbytery delegate to the AC from the Committee on Ministry the authority to call Canaan’s next pastor and dissolve the pastoral relationship between Canaan and Rhee was denied.

Actions of Rhee and Elders to Correct Conduct

On December 14, 2006, Canaan placed a newspaper ad: “accepting sincere recommendations from members of the Presbytery and pastors, we inform the resolution adopted by the board of trustees and steering committee to resolve the issues while staying with the Presbytery” [emphasis in original]. On December 19, 2006, Canaan’s attorney wrote to the Presbytery, stating that: (i) the Presbytery had not responded to his previous advice concerning alleged violations of the *Book of Order* by Presbytery; (ii) the withdrawal was not from the PCUSA but from the Presbytery; and (iii) he represented Canaan, not any minister, officer or member. He wrote that Canaan was not renouncing the jurisdiction of the “church,” but rather of the Presbytery. He requested that the Presbytery grant an extension of time from December 20, 2006, to February 14, 2007, for Canaan to respond. He advised that his client was “considering and contemplating joining other Presbytery with the P.C.U.S.A.”

On December 20, 2006, Rhee wrote to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery that he “never expressed the renunciation of the jurisdiction of the denomination.” He requested that his part in the December 5 Actions be taken to the Presbytery’s Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC). He indicated that even if the PPJC punished him, he would still “prefer to transfer to the Chicago Presbytery but I am not withdrawing the membership from the PCUSA.” He also requested an extension of time but, if Presbytery dismissed Canaan, it “would transfer to the Chicago Presbytery.”

2006 Year-end and Early 2007 AC/Presbytery Actions

On December 28, 2006, the AC declared as “unauthorized and illegal” the nomination and election of Canaan’s new officers and as “illegal” the special meeting of the congregation on December 5, 2006. The AC determined that such officers would not be recognized.

At a meeting on January 4, 2007, of Presbytery’s Coordinating Council, Rhee, who was a member of the Coordinating Council as the chair of Presbytery’s Policy and Record Committee, stated his position that he “had never expressed any intention to terminate and withdraw from the denomination.” The Coordinating Council discussed and by implication affirmed Rhee’s continuing status as a member of the Presbytery. The chairman admonished Rhee to “faithfully follow all power of governance and decisions that need to be complied with as a member of the presbytery, since he clearly announced his stand-point stating he had never expressed terminating and withdrawing from the membership of the denomination.”

Also on January 4, 2007, the AC called a congregational meeting to be held on February 4, 2007, for the purpose of dissolving the pastoral relationship between Rhee and Canaan. In a letter dated January 18, 2007, Rhee objected to the calling of the congregational meeting, arguing both constitutional grounds and that the AC had exceeded its authority. He also filed a complaint with the Presbytery concerning the actions of the AC, including those related to the calling of the congregational meeting, and requested that an investigating committee be formed. It does not appear from the record that the congregational meeting was held.

The “January Actions” of Rhee and Elders

The calendar portion of Canaan’s worship bulletin of January 7, 2007, contained a date for “recognition of the 2007 Church Officers” and “Retirement of Elders and Deacons.” On January 8, 2007, a banner on Canaan’s pulpit proclaimed “Chicago Canaan Church” instead of “Canaan Presbyterian Church.” On January 14, 2007, the annual meeting of the Canaan congregation was held, at which the December 5, 2006, withdrawal resolution was vacated and the previously elected officers were “inaugurated.” A new committee structure was approved, including a board of trustees, pastor nominating committee and commissioners to the Presbytery. The congregation also confirmed the new officers elected at the December 5, 2006, congregational meeting and confirmed the members of the steering committee. These actions were clear violations of the directives and findings of the AC. On January 16, 2007, Rhee withdrew \$19,500.00 from the “Canaan Presbyterian Church” bank account and deposited it into a new bank account created in the name of “The Canaan Church.”

The AC Hearing

Following those January Actions, the AC, on January 26, 2007, set a hearing pursuant to G-9.0505b(1), and notified Rhee and certain Elders that because Rhee had “persisted doing actions that may lead to a renunciation,” his views were sought before the AC drafted its final report. The notice cited G-6.0502 and G-9.0505b(1). The notice contained no specific enumeration of how Rhee or the elders had “persisted doing actions” that might lead to renunciation. On January 30, 2007, Canaan’s steering committee objected that the hearing was “illegal” and that its members, including Rhee, would not attend.

On February 1, 2007, the AC hearing was held. No minutes of that hearing were produced in these proceedings. On February 8 and 11, 2007, Rhee and an elder, in separate letters, objected to the findings of the AC. On February 12, 2007, at the Presbytery’s regularly scheduled meeting, the AC presented its written Report, determining that Rhee had “renounced the jurisdiction of the *Book of Order*” by certain enumerated actions, citing in the last paragraph, G-6.0501 (now G-6.0701) and G-6.0502 (now G-6.0702). The Report made no determination as to the status of the Elders. At the point when the AC Report was made to the Presbytery, the meeting erupted into a physical melee. The Record is unclear what further action, if any, the

Presbytery took with respect to the AC's determination that Rhee was presumed to have renounced jurisdiction of the PC(USA). It appears that the AC Report was accepted and approved as action of the Presbytery at its next meeting.

On February 14, 2007, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery notified Rhee that, based on the report of the AC at the February 12 Presbytery meeting, Rhee had been removed from the rolls of the Presbytery. On February 19, 2007, Rhee wrote to the Stated Clerk objecting to the AC Report.

On February 22, 2007, the Chair of the AC wrote the Elders notifying them that they had been removed from ordained office and from membership in Canaan, because they had renounced the jurisdiction of the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery, based on the December 5 Actions and the January Actions. On March 3, 2007, one of the many complaints concerning the actions of the AC was filed by elder Hyung Young Choi.

Consolidation of Complaints and Stipulations

The various complaints were consolidated for trial and the parties stipulated that the issues to be tried were:

Issue 1, whether the administrative commission acted within scope of the powers authorized by Midwest Hanmi Presbytery set forth in its resolution adopted at the 50th Presbytery meeting on October the 5th, 2006.

Issue 2, whether the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery erroneously applied the *Book of Order* G-6.0501, now G-6.0701 in finding that Reverend Rhee renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America in writing to the stated clerk of the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery.

Issue 3, whether the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery erroneously applied the *Book of Order* G-6.0502, now G-6.0702 in finding that Reverend Rhee was presumed to have renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America.

Issue 4, whether the administrative commission of the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery, the acting session of the Canaan Presbyterian Church, erroneously applied the *Book of Order* G-6.0501, now G-6.0701 in finding that the eight elders of the Canaan Presbyterian Church renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America in writing to the clerk of the administrative commission that is the acting session of the Canaan Presbyterian Church.

Issue 5, whether the administrative commission of the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery, the acting session of the Canaan Presbyterian Church, erroneously applied the *Book of Order* G-6.0502, now G-6.0702 in finding that the eight elders of the Canaan Presbyterian Church were presumed to have renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America.

SPJC ruled in favor of Presbytery on issues 1, 3 and 5, and in favor of Lee on issues 2 and 4. Lee appealed the SPJC decision as to issues 1, 3 and 5. Presbytery did not appeal the SPJC decision as to issues 2 and 4. Therefore, this Appeal involves only issues 1, 3 and 5.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1. The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation in failing to rule that the AC acted beyond the scope of its authority.

This Specification of Error is sustained for the reasons discussed below in the Decision, Part I.

Specification of Error No. 2. The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation in failing to rule that the AC acted beyond the scope of its authority, acting as the Presbytery, in presuming that Rhee had renounced the jurisdiction of the church pursuant to G-6.0702.

This Specification of Error is sustained for the reasons discussed below in the Decision, Part I.

Specification of Error No. 3. The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation in failing to rule that the AC acted beyond the scope of its authority, acting as the Session of Canaan, in presuming that certain elders had renounced the jurisdiction of the church pursuant to G-6.0702.

This Specification of Error is sustained for the reasons discussed below in the Decision, Part I.

Specification of Error No. 4. The SPJC erred in denying Lee's motion for production of documents related to or pertaining to the minutes and related documents of the proceedings of the AC.

This Specification of Error is not sustained for the reasons discussed below in the Decision, Part II.

Specification of Error No. 5. The SPJC erred in receiving the testimony of the stated clerk of the Presbytery as both fact and expert witness.

This Specification of Error is not sustained for the reasons discussed below in the Decision, Part II.

Specification of Error No. 6. The SPJC erred in finding that the decisions of the AC and the Presbytery were not unjust and unfair.

This Specification of Error is not sustained for the reasons discussed below in the Decision, Part II.

Decision

I.

Specifications of Error 1, 2 and 3

This case is tragic. It involves issues of culture and language, power and stubbornness. It also reflects misunderstandings on the part of individuals and governing bodies as to processes and procedures set forth in the *Book of Order*. Because the facts in this case reflect extraordinary and egregious conduct and unique cultural circumstances, the application of this Decision to other circumstances is limited.

The actions of Rhee and his supporters were egregious in many respects and certainly improper under the Constitution; but, the actions of the AC were sometimes ill-considered in that its attempts at reconciliation often did not allow sufficient time for process and consultation. Communication on both sides was problematic, if not obfuscatory.

The Commission is dismayed at the conduct of Rhee and his supporters. However, the Presbytery's attempts to address this conduct by an administrative commission were procedurally flawed. When a governing body establishes an administrative commission, it shall state specifically the scope of power given to the commission (G-9.0502). Powers not delegated by a governing body are reserved to that body (*see Sundquist v. Presbytery of Heartland, Remedial Case 219-03, Minutes, 2010, Part I, p. 64*). In its resolution creating the AC for the purpose of promoting the peace and unity of the CPC, Presbytery granted to the AC both the authority of a session as stated in G-10.0000 and the authority of a presbytery as stated in G-11.0000. Presbytery could have but did not grant to the AC the power to act as the Presbytery with regard to matters arising under G-6.0702. Nor did it grant to the AC, acting as a session, the power of a governing body with regard to matters arising under G-6.0702.⁷

Therefore, despite the improper actions of Rhee and his supporting Elders, the AC acted improperly when, acting as the Presbytery, it presumed the renunciation of jurisdiction by Rhee as a minister of Word and Sacrament and when, acting as the Session, it presumed the renunciation of jurisdiction by certain Elders. The power to presume renunciation remained with the Presbytery. In fact, the retention of that power by the Presbytery is implied by the Presbytery's actions at its December 11, 2007, meeting, when it resolved that Rhee and the Elders would be presumed to have renounced if they did not correct their December 5 Actions, and by the action of Presbytery's Coordinating Council on January 4, 2007, when it apparently (the record being unclear) determined that Rhee and the Elders had responded affirmatively to the Presbytery's admonitions, and that Rhee, at least, remained a member in good standing of the Presbytery.

As noted above, the Record is unclear as to the Presbytery's actions as a plenary body in presuming the renunciation of Rhee. The AC, acting alone under the authority granted to it by the Presbytery, could not have made the presumption of renunciation. Only the Presbytery could have done this based on the limited authority delegated to the AC (which did not include powers under G-6.0702). Further, it is not clear whether Rhee and the Elders received notice that even after their cure of the December 5 Actions, they were persisting in conduct disapproved by the Presbytery.

In addition, there is no evidence in the record that the AC, acting as the Session, ever made a determination of presumed renunciation of jurisdiction by the designated Elders. The report of the AC to Presbytery on February 12, 2007, is silent in regard to the Elders. On February 22, 2007, the chairman of the AC wrote a letter to the Elders stating that they had "renounced the jurisdiction of the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery" and thereby from ordained office and membership in the CPC, on the basis of their part in the December 5 Actions and because of unidentified decisions they were said to have made on February 13, 2007. As suggested above, the record before this Commission implies that the December 5 Actions had been corrected, and there is no indication in the record of any notice from the AC concerning the February 13 decisions.

For all of these reasons, including the limited delegation of authority given to the AC and failure to notify Rhee and the Elders of their continuing disapproved conduct, and because the Record is unclear, this Commission is unable to affirm the Decision of the SPJC, and this case is remanded for a new trial.

II.

Specifications of Error 4, 5 and 6

As to Specification of Error 4, this Commission finds that the documents requested by Lee were not relevant to the resolution of the issues at trial, as stipulated by the parties. However, this Commission notes that G-9.0502 requires a commission to keep a full record of its proceedings, which must be submitted to its governing body and incorporated into the minutes of that governing body.

As to Specification of Error 5, witnesses may be both factual and expert if qualified and if a proper foundation is laid. Fact witnesses should have first-hand knowledge. Experts should have sufficient expertise to aid the trier of fact and the ability to express opinions that assist the trier of fact. The expert to which Lee objects on this Appeal had the requisite factual knowledge and expertise.

As to Specification of Error 6, the procedures at trial were just and fair to all parties and, therefore, the Specification of Error is without merit.

Order

IT IS ORDERED that the portions of the SPJC decision that are before this Commission are set aside and this case is remanded for further proceedings consistent with this Decision.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the SPJC is instructed to conduct a pre-trial conference or other proceeding(s) with the parties to clarify issues with respect to the current status of the parties under G-6.0702 before commencing any further judicial proceedings in this matter. The parties are cautioned that in the event this matter is re-tried, they should take steps to assure that the Record is clear with respect to actions of the parties.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi report this decision to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lincoln Trails report this decision to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-participants

A. Bates Butler was absent and did not participate in this case.

Dated this 27th day of October, 2008.

g. Remedial Case 219-06

Hyung K. Yun, Yoon Soo Kim, Young Yoon Kim,)	
Kwan Young Lee, Seung G. Ahn, In Bae Chun, Richard)	
Yun, and Kee Ho Lim,	)	DECISION AND ORDER
Appellants (Complainants),)	
v.	)	Remedial Case 219-06
)	
The Session of the Korean United)	
Presbyterian Church of New Jersey,)	
Appellee (Respondent).)	

Arrival Statement

This remedial case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by Appellants, Hyung K. Yun, Yoon Soo Kim, Young Yoon Kim, Kwan Young Lee, Seung G. Ahn, In Bae Chun, Richard Yun, and Kee Ho Lim (Yun, et al.) from a Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Northeast (SPJC) dated April 25, 2008.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Yun, *et al.* has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal in D-8.0105.

Appearances

Yun, *et al.* were represented by Ralph Clingan and Hyung K. Yun. The Session of the Korean United Presbyterian Church of New Jersey (Session) filed a brief, but did not attend oral argument.

History

This case arose from remedial complaints filed by members of the Korean United Presbyterian Church of New Jersey (KUPC) with the Presbytery of Newark Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC) concerning two congregational meetings

held in October, 2005. One complaint alleged irregular actions by the pastor (Pastor) and clerk (Clerk) at the meetings and also alleged that the Clerk had failed to maintain and review accurate membership rolls. A second complaint alleged irregularities against the Session and an elder involving the formation and election of the church officer nominating committee. A third complaint alleged irregularities and delinquencies at the congregational meetings.

The three complaints were consolidated into a Restatement of the Complaint against the Pastor and Session (Restated Complaint) alleging irregularities and delinquencies at congregational meetings held on October 2 and October 30, 2005, such as involvement of inactive members, inadequate maintenance and availability of membership rolls at the meetings, improper voting procedures, improper formation of the church officer nominating committee, and improper procedures of the nominating committee. Yun *et al.* sought a declaration that the 2005 elections were invalid, that the nominating committee be dissolved and a new committee constituted, and that a new congregational meeting be held for the purpose of electing elders.

The case was tried on April 4, 2006, based on the allegations in the Restated Complaint and in two additional complaints filed on March 20, 2006, regarding certain alleged auditing and financial irregularities. The PPJC issued a Decision on May 8, 2006 (PPJC Decision), reciting all parties' acknowledgment that irregularities and delinquencies had occurred and stating that all parties had agreed to six specific remedies. The PPJC found that the church officer nominating committee had been properly formed. Those persons elected at the congregational meeting were later ordained and installed and have completed their terms of office or have resigned.

Nevertheless, Yun *et al.* appealed the PPJC Decision to the SPJC. The SPJC dismissed the appeal under D-8.0302c, holding that the Notice of Appeal did not state one or more of the grounds for appeal as set forth in D-8.0105. Yun *et al.* appealed to this Commission, asserting that the SPJC had improperly dismissed the appeal. On July 27, 2007, this Commission held that the Notice of Appeal stated grounds for appeal and remanded the case to the SPJC. In remanding the case, this Commission directed the SPJC to consider whether the PPJC had jurisdiction over errors alleged to have occurred at congregational meetings and, based thereon, whether relief could be granted. On April 25, 2008, the SPJC held that the PPJC erred in accepting jurisdiction of the case because the complaints were directed toward actions of the congregation and nominating committee, which are not "governing bodies" as defined by G-9.0101. The SPJC set aside the PPJC Decision. Yun, *et al.* appealed the SPJC decision to this Commission.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred by rejecting the claim that the PPJC erred when it did not set aside the October 2005 elections on the basis of specific irregularities in election procedures.

This specification of error is not sustained.

In response to the request of Yun, *et al.* to set aside the October 2005 elections, the PPJC found that there was no basis to invalidate them. Even if there were, those persons elected have completed their terms, thereby rendering the issue moot.

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred in rejecting the claim that the PPJC denied access to certain evidence, with the result that the PPJC hastened to an unfair and unjust decision on the basis of insufficient evidence.

This specification of error is not sustained.

The record reflects that all parties had the opportunity to present evidence appropriate to the claims against the Session, as a governing body. Additionally, all parties agreed to the remedies adopted by the PPJC. These remedies were adequate to resolve this case. The Presbytery is encouraged to ensure that the remedies are fully implemented and that all parties honor their agreements.

Specification of Error No. 3: The SPJC erred in finding that no portion of the Restated Complaint alleged irregularities or delinquencies by a governing body, and therefore the PPJC had no jurisdiction.

This specification of error is sustained.

The SPJC correctly stated that remedial complaints can only be filed against governing bodies. To the extent that there are portions of the complaints in this case, including the Restated Complaint, that are addressed to individuals and the congregation generally, the SPJC did not err in finding that the PPJC had no jurisdiction over those complaints.

The PPJC did have jurisdiction, however, to consider those portions of the Restated Complaint alleging irregularities and delinquencies of the Session. The Restated Complaint alleged and the PPJC Decision found that there were irregularities and delinquencies in the acts of the Session. To that extent, the PPJC had jurisdiction and the SPJC erred.

Decision

The Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Northeast is affirmed in part and reversed in part.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Presbytery of Newark Permanent Judicial Commission is reinstated.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Newark report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences

Commissioner Angel Casaus-Urrutia was not present and took no part in this case.

Dated this 2nd day of March, 2009.

h. *Disciplinary Case 219-07*

-----)	
The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through)	
the Presbytery of Wyoming,)	
Appellee (Complainant),	)	DECISION AND ORDER
)	
v.	)	Disciplinary Case 219-07
)	
Gordon R. J. King,)	
Appellant (Respondent).)	
-----)	

Arrival Statement

This disciplinary case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by the Appellant Gordon R. J. King (King), from a Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Rocky Mountains (SPJC), dated May 7, 2008.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that King has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal in D-13.0106.

Appearances

King was represented by Elizabeth Dunning. The Presbytery of Wyoming (Presbytery) was represented by Lynne Reade.

History

This disciplinary case began on May 5, 2000, with the filing of sixteen charges by an Investigating Committee of the Presbytery against King.

On March 1–2, 2002, a trial was held by the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery (PPJC). On March 2, 2002, the PPJC delivered a “provisional decision” on the charges, with a finding of guilt on one of the charges, that:

Between October 26 and November 3, 1999, you, Gordon R. J. King, did commit the offense of sexual misconduct in relation to [an 18 year-old female] of Midvale, Utah, in that you sent her a series of e-mail messages containing sexually suggestive language and inappropriate innuendoes. This is also an offense of conduct contrary to Scripture, namely I Timothy 5:1–2: ‘Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters—with absolute purity’. (NRSV)

The provisional decision specified the degree of censure as “Rebuke with Supervised Rehabilitation,” with the order to attend a career guidance center which is under contract with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and approved by the PPJC to do an evaluation.

On August 8, 2005, the PPJC sent a letter to King advising him that “further rehabilitation is necessary for you, in the form of long-term individual, and probably group therapy and also spiritual direction, if you want to maintain your ordination in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” specifying the counselor, and identifying eight areas for counseling.

On September 21, 2006, the PPJC issued a "Final Decision of the Commission" which was read at an open meeting held October 20, 2006. This Final Decision was appealed by King to the SPJC on December 7, 2006.

On May 6, 2008, the SPJC had a hearing, subsequently voted not to sustain any of the specifications of error, and affirmed the PPJC's decision, which is the basis of King's Appeal filed June 19, 2008. This Commission heard the arguments of the parties on February 27, 2009.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1. The SPJC committed injustice in the process and error in constitutional interpretation by misstating King's first specification of error and substituting its own.

This Specification of Error is sustained.

Specification of Error No. 2. The SPJC committed injustice in the process and error in constitutional interpretation by:

a) *applying an incorrect standard of review and thereby failing to meet its obligation to review the decision of the PPJC; and*

b) *sustaining the decision of the PPJC convicting King of the charge of sexual misconduct.*

This Specification of Error is sustained.

Specification of Error No. 3. The SPJC committed injustice in the process and error in constitutional interpretation by sustaining the finding of guilt on the charge of "Sexual Misconduct" made by the PPJC on the basis of the Presbytery's Standard on Sexual and Ethical Conduct (Standard):

a) *in the absence of evidence that King had ever been given a copy of the Standard;*

b) *by relying on provisions of the Standard not relied upon by the PPJC, and*

c) *by relying on provisions in the Standard that by their express terms were inapplicable to the conduct at issue.*

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Individuals have the responsibility to know the policies of the governing bodies they serve.

Specification of Error No. 4. The SPJC committed error in constitutional interpretation by affirming the imposition of supervised rehabilitation that fails to comply with the requirements of Rule D-12.0103 in that it fails to include a clear statement of how progress will be evaluated and how it will be determined when and if the supervised rehabilitation has been satisfactorily completed.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

The question raised by this specification of error is moot in light of the determinations stated above.

Decision

Factual determinations made by a trier of fact are accorded a presumption of correctness. Questions of law are not subject to the same deference (*Spahr v. Presbytery of Redwoods, Minutes, 2008, Part I, p 314*). The application of a local standard for conduct (ie., the Standard) does not relieve an appellate body of the obligation to determine whether that or any other legal standard has been properly applied. That determination is a question of law, not a question of fact.

The Record was undisputed and did not support a finding that King engaged in "sexual misconduct" as the term was defined in the Standard and as King was charged in May, 2002. The sections of the Standard on which the PPJC relied, specifically 3 and 5, required proof of misuse of authority and/or power to find that sexual misconduct occurred. The Record did not support such a finding. Because this determination is dispositive in this matter, the PPJC decision is reversed and King's remaining specifications of error are moot.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Rocky Mountains is hereby reversed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Wyoming report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Rocky Mountains report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-participants

Angel Casaus-Urrutia was not present and took no part in this case.

Dated this 2nd day of March, 2009.

i. Remedial Case 219-08

-----)	
David Bierschwale, David Lenz, and Carol Shanholtzer,)	
Appellants (Complainants),)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER
v.)	
)	
Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area,	)	Remedial Case 219-08
Appellee (Respondent).)	
-----)	

Arrival Statement

This remedial case came before this Commission on an appeal filed by Appellants, David Bierschwale, David Lenz, and Carol Shanholtzer (Bierschwale, *et al.*), from a Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (SPJC) dated August 12, 2008.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, Bierschwale, *et al.* have standing to file the Appeal, the Appeal was properly and timely filed and the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal in D-8.0105 of the *Book of Order*.

Appearances

Bierschwale, *et al.* were represented by Charles Shreffler. David Bierschwale and David Lenz were present in person. The Presbytery of Twin Cities Area (the Presbytery) was represented by Douglas Nave and Barbara Saunders Lutter.

History

This case concerns the action of the Presbytery in restoring Paul Capetz, a minister of Word and Sacrament, to the exercise of his ordained office. Capetz was ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament in 1991, but asked in 2000 to be released from the exercise of ordained office because of his conscientious objection to the then newly adopted section G-6.0106b of the *Book of Order*. The Presbytery granted the requested release. *See* G-6.0600.

After the 217th General Assembly (2006) adopted an Authoritative Interpretation from the Report of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, addressing section G-6.0108 of the *Book of Order*, on August 15, 2007, Capetz requested that he be restored to the exercise of ordained office under the procedure set forth in G-6.0600c. Capetz responded to questions put to him by the Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry, and stated: “I affirm the Constitutional Questions asked of me at my ordination. However, I have to raise a principled objection or scruple. I cannot affirm G-6.0106b. Nor can I affirm the position of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on the question of the morality of homosexual relationships.”

The Presbytery met on January 26, 2008, and, based on the recommendation of the Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry, considered three motions:

- First, that Capetz’s “declared departure from G-6.0106b be found not to constitute a failure to adhere to the essentials of Reformed faith and polity under G-6.0108 of the *Book of Order*” (Departure Motion);
- Second, that Capetz “be restored to the exercise of ordained office of minister of Word and Sacrament” (Restoration Motion); and
- Third, that the Presbytery validate Capetz’s “ministry as member of the faculty of United Theological Seminary” (Validation Motion).

During the debate on the Departure Motion, Capetz answered questions. In response to one question, Capetz stated: “The 2006 GA has recognized a right of candidates for ministry to declare a departure, or scruple. My departure: I refuse to take a vow of celibacy.” Capetz was asked whether he was in compliance with the constitutional standards, and responded: “Even if I could look in a crystal ball and know that I would have no future sexual relationships, I would still refuse to be in compliance with the *Book of Order* as it now stands.” Capetz was asked in reference to G-6.0106b, whether he would refrain

from intimate sexual activity outside the bounds of marriage between a man and a woman, if he were to be restored to exercise of his ordained office. Capetz responded: "I refuse to take a vow of celibacy." The Presbytery passed all three motions on January 26, 2008.⁸

Bierschwale, *et al.* filed a complaint on February 27, 2008, alleging that the Presbytery acted irregularly in passing the three motions, and asked the SPJC to order the Presbytery to nullify all three of its actions with respect to Capetz and determine that Capetz's declared departure from G-6.0106b was a failure to adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity under G-6.0108. The Presbytery moved to dismiss the Complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

In an April 25, 2008, Preliminary Order, the Moderator and Clerk of the SPJC dismissed the Complaint, finding that granting the relief requested would nullify Capetz's ordination and that such action could be taken only in a disciplinary proceeding. Bierschwale, *et al.* challenged this Preliminary Order on June 4, 2008, and later amended their Complaint to request that, in addition to the relief previously sought, the SPJC admonish the Presbytery and order it to refrain from conducting further irregular ordinations, installations, restorations or validations.

After a hearing on August 12, 2008, the SPJC issued a final Decision and Order dismissing the Amended Complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Bierschwale, *et al.* filed a Notice of Appeal to this Commission on September 23, 2008. A hearing was held before the GAPJC on February 27, 2009.

Specifications of Error

Bierschwale, *et al.* alleged that they were wrongfully denied an opportunity to present evidence and be heard when the SPJC dismissed their Amended Complaint because it did not state a claim upon which relief could be granted. Specifically, Bierschwale, *et al.* alleged the following Specifications of Error in the Notice of Appeal:

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC failed in its responsibility to warn or bear witness against error in doctrine or immorality in practice in the area of its jurisdiction, citing G-12.0102m.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred by failing to issue a Stay of Enforcement.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 3: The SPJC erred in characterizing the claim of Bierschwale, et al. as seeking to nullify Capetz's ordination, rather than challenging his restoration to the exercise of ordained office.

This Specification of Error is not sustained. This Commission understands from Bierschwale, *et al.* that they are not seeking to revoke Capetz's ordination. In light of the discussion below, this Specification of Error is not sustained because it is moot.

Specification of Error No. 4: The SPJC erred by not conducting a trial to determine whether there are facts that show: (a) Capetz stated a departure from G-6.0106b and (b) if so, whether that departure was a failure to adhere to the requirements of G-6.0108; and if the facts show that (a) and (b) occurred, whether the Presbytery's action was irregular.

This Specification of Error is sustained.

Specification of Error No. 5: The SPJC erred by not conducting a trial to determine whether there are facts that would show the Presbytery waived the "fidelity and chastity" requirement of G-6.0106b in considering Capetz as a candidate or applicant for membership in the Presbytery; and if so, whether that action by the Presbytery was irregular.

This Specification of Error is sustained. This case is not remanded for a determination in the abstract as to whether any presbytery may decide that the "fidelity and chastity" requirement of G-6.0106b can be waived for any candidate or applicant for membership in a presbytery. Rather, the SPJC shall decide only on the basis of the facts of what the Presbytery did with respect to Capetz, and whether that particular action was irregular.

Specification of Error No. 6: The SPJC erred in ruling implicitly that compliance with requirements in G-6.0106b for "those who are called to office" is not a continuing obligation.

This Specification of Error is not sustained. There was no such implication in the ruling of the SPJC.

Specification of Error No. 7: The SPJC erred by not determining whether the Presbytery's action was irregular in restoring Capetz to the exercise of his ordained office even after he expressed a refusal to comply with the fidelity and chastity requirement of G-6.0106b.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 8: The SPJC erred by determining that a presbytery's action to deny restoration to exercise of ordained office would not in effect nullify an individual's ordination.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 9: The SPJC erred by not determining whether any decision that would affect the ordination status of any individual must be addressed in a disciplinary and not a remedial action.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 10: The SPJC erred by not determining whether granting a departure from compliance with G-6.0106b is the same as exempting the minister from any future disciplinary charges related to sexual practice contrary to the terms of G-6.0106b.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 11: The SPJC erred in failing to admonish the Presbytery to refrain from future irregular ordinations, installations or restorations of anyone who refuses to comply with the requirements of G-6.0106b.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

*Specification of Error No. 12: The SPJC erred by ruling that *Bush, et al. v. Presbytery of Pittsburgh, 2008 minutes, p. 314*, applies only to ordinations and is not applicable to restorations to exercise of ordained office.*

This Specification of Error is not sustained. The SPJC was correct that *Bush* did not address restorations to exercise of ordained office. The Specification of Error misstates the SPJC decision.

Decision

The Departure Motion. Bierschwale, *et al.* did not allege that there was any procedural irregularity in the manner in which the Presbytery took action on any of the three motions, including the Departure Motion. Any alleged irregularity in the process by which motions such as the Departure Motion are adopted is reviewable by the SPJC under the holding of *Bush*. In this case, Bierschwale, *et al.* complained that the Presbytery acted irregularly in adopting the Departure Motion because Capetz's statements to the Presbytery were a serious departure from essentials of Reformed faith and polity and not a proper exercise of freedom of conscience under G-6.0108b.

This Commission finds that Bierschwale, *et al.* have stated a claim upon which relief may be granted, and the SPJC should determine whether Capetz's statements and the Presbytery's adoption of the Departure Motion are in violation of G-6.0108. The SPJC should address whether Capetz's statements were a proper exercise of freedom of conscience under G-6.0108, and whether the Presbytery properly approved them in the Departure Motion. The standards for determining whether departures from essentials of Reformed faith and polity are permitted include whether a departure deviates from the standards in *The Book of Confessions* and the Form of Government, infringes the rights and views of others, or obstructs the constitutional governance of the church (G-6.0108 a, b). The trial of this case should include a presentation of evidence to determine whether these three requirements of G-6.0108 have been met.

The Restoration Motion. The primary issue in this case is whether the Restoration Motion was valid. Capetz's restoration required the approval of the Presbytery, but did not require that he be reordained. (G-6.0600c.) Nor did Capetz's restoration require the Presbytery to adopt the Departure Motion. However, having elected to adopt the Departure Motion, there will now be a determination of the propriety of the Departure Motion as discussed above.⁹ Bierschwale, *et al.*'s challenge to the Restoration Motion is based on their contention that Capetz's statements were in fact a refusal to comply with G-6.0106b. The undisputed record shows that Capetz did not go that far, and there is nothing in the record to show that he has taken any action that could be deemed to be an act in violation of G-6.0106b. There was no irregularity in the Presbytery's action with respect to the Restoration Motion, and no relief upon which this claim can be granted.

To the extent that Bierschwale, *et al.*'s challenge to the Restoration Motion is based on G-6.0108b, it also fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. The Presbytery was not ordaining Capetz, but was acting to restore him to the exer-

cise of the office of minister of Word and Sacrament as provided for in G-6.0600c. Noncompliance with any ordination standard or constitutional requirement by one who has already been ordained may only be addressed in a disciplinary proceeding.

The Validation Motion. Having properly restored Capetz to the exercise of the office of minister of Word and Sacrament, there was no irregularity in validating Capetz's ministry under G-11.0408 and G-11.0411.

Effect on Capetz. Capetz's past, present or future conduct is not at issue in this remedial action. If there is any question about Capetz's conduct, including whether he has led a life in obedience to Scripture and in compliance with historic confessional standards of the church, he, like any other officer of the church, may be held accountable for his conduct under the Rules of Discipline. A remedial case may not be used to challenge the actions of an individual church officer. *Weir v. Second Presbyterian Church*, (Minutes, 2002, Part I, p. 339). Thus, specifications of error alleged by Bierschwale, *et al.* that rest on the past, present or future conduct of Capetz fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted in this remedial case. Any contention that disciplinary action may never be brought against Capetz is erroneous. If the SPJC finds that the Departure Motion was proper under G-6.0108, Capetz still may be subject to disciplinary action based on his conduct. Having been restored to the exercise of the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament, Capetz is fully accountable under all standards and requirements for ministers of Word and Sacrament to abide by the Constitution of the PC(USA), including G-6.0106b.

Effect on Future Actions of the Presbytery and Others. The questions raised in this case about the individual exercise of freedom of conscience, restoration to the exercise of ordained office and validation of a particular ministry are by their very nature matters that must be considered in the context of the ministry and circumstances of the individual at issue. These questions require case-by-case consideration. The SPJC did not err in finding that Bierschwale, *et al.* failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted as to their request for an admonition to the Presbytery with respect to future ordinations, installations or restorations.

The SPJC did not rule (even implicitly) that compliance with requirements in G-6.0106b for "those who are called to office" is not a continuing obligation. In making this allegation, Bierschwale, *et al.* confused ordination requirements with the process for restoration to exercise of ordained office and obscured the differences between remedial and disciplinary cases.

This Commission cannot reach the questions raised by the parties in this appeal as to the validity and effect of the 2008 Authoritative Interpretation (AI) on G-6.0108b or whether *Bush* has effectively been overruled by the 2008 AI. The 2008 AI and *Bush* do not address restoration of officers to the exercise of church office. There is no ordination at issue in this case. Questions as to the validity and application of the statement in the 2008 AI that the requirements of G-6.0108 "apply equally to all ordination standards" of the PC(USA) are not properly raised in this appeal.

Finally, the parties and the SPJC are reminded that this order concerns only the preliminary question of failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted as to Specifications of Error Nos. 4 and 5.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies is hereby affirmed in part and reversed in part.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this case is remanded to the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission for trial as to Specifications of Error Nos. 4 and 5 consistent with this Decision and Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-participants

Angel Casaus-Urrutia was not present and took no part in this case.

Dated in San Diego, California, on March 2, 2009.

j. *Disciplinary Case 219-09*

Richard L. Davis)	
Appellant (Accused),)	
)	
v.	)	DECISION AND ORDER
)	
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the)	
Presbytery of San Francisco,	)	Disciplinary Case 219-09
Appellee (Complainant).)	

Headnotes

1. Judgment of Guilt: A two-thirds majority vote is required for any judgment of guilt.
2. Conduct of Church Officers: There are biblical and constitutional principles which guide behavior of church officers.
3. Violation of Ordination Vows Can Be a Constitutional Offense (D-2.0203b): Whether a church officer has departed from biblical and confessional principles must be determined by the governing body to which the officer is accountable.
4. Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church: Use of pornography by a church officer on a church computer does not further the peace, unity, and purity of the church.

Arrival Statement

This disciplinary case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by the Appellant Richard L. Davis (Davis) from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Pacific (SPJC) dated September 13, 2008.

Jurisdiction Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Davis has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal in D-13.0106.

Appearances

Davis was represented by Lynne Reade. The Appellee, Presbytery of San Francisco (Presbytery), was represented by Kurt Franklin and Donald Dressler.

History

Davis was the Designated Pastor of the Broadmoor Presbyterian Church from July, 2004 until January, 2006. Shortly after Davis moved to another state, a seminary intern working at the church discovered pornography on the church computer used by Davis. Two system administrators for the Broadmoor Church were promptly notified and also viewed the images, and sought to determine the source of the images. The administrators reported to the session of the Broadmoor Church (Session).

There was conclusive evidence that, over at least a nine-month period, Davis frequently visited hundreds of pornographic internet sites while using a church-owned computer in the pastor’s office on church premises. Davis would often visit these sites while working on church business. A forensic computer specialist documented the extensive use of the church computer to visit sites that contained hardcore pornography, including scenes of sexual subordination and mistreatment of women, violence, and numerous degrading and dehumanizing acts involving men, women, and adults who appeared like children.

The Session referred the matter to the Presbytery. Disciplinary charges were filed by the Presbytery against Davis in March, 2007 alleging:

- (1) Between the approximate dates of May 19, 2005, and January 17, 2006, you, Rev. Dr. Richard Louis Davis, did violate the Seventh Commandment as defined by paragraph 7.249 of *The Book of Confessions* (©1999), of *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. You used Broadmoor Presbyterian Church’s computer to “go online and look at sexual sites...once or twice a week...the sites (you) visited would likely be considered in the category of ‘erotica’...in that some of them may have been sexual (sic) stimulating, they in the least could be offensive to others and devaluing to (your) marriage.”
- (2) Between the approximate dates of May 19, 2005 and January 17, 2006, you, Rev. Dr. Richard Louis Davis, did violate your ordination vows in that you failed to be instructed, led and guided by the confessions of our church as defined by paragraphs G-14.0405 b. (3) and (4) of the *Book of Order*

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2005–2007 (©2005), of *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. You used Broadmoor Presbyterian Church’s computer to “go online and look at sexual sites.”

(3) On or about January 31, 2006, you, Rev. Dr. Richard Louis Davis, did violate your ordination vows in that you failed to further the peace, unity and purity of the church as defined by paragraph G-14.0405 b. (7) of the *Book of Order 2005–2007*(©2005), of *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* when James Kosko discovered “six images most people would consider inappropriate in the workplace and pornographic in nature.” Mr. Kosko showed the images to Bob Fishtrom and asked him to clean the computer of the images. Both men said they were horrified and shocked by what had been left on the computer. Mr. Fishtrom was greatly disturbed when it was discovered that someone looked “at pornographic material ... in the church, on a church-owned computer.”

The Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC) found Davis not guilty on charge 1, and guilty on charges 2 and 3. Following a censure hearing, on July 9, 2007, the PPJC imposed rebuke with supervised rehabilitation. The censure invited Davis to make voluntary restitution to the Broadmoor Church to replace the computer hard drive and express remorse to the Session of the Broadmoor Church. Davis was also required to enter a therapy program.

Both Davis and the Presbytery appealed the PPJC decision to the SPJC. By a vote of 4 to 3, and without receiving any evidence or hearing any testimony, the SPJC reversed the judgment of the PPJC on charge 1 and found Davis guilty. The SPJC upheld the PPJC judgment of guilt on charges 2 and 3, also by a vote of 4 to 3. The SPJC affirmed the censure, but made the restitution and expression of remorse mandatory.

On October 23, 2008, Davis filed a Notice of Appeal with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly alleging ten specifications of error. Davis and the Presbytery presented oral argument to this Commission on August 7, 2009.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1. The SPJC did not have a two-thirds vote of its members when it found Davis guilty of charge 1. This was contrary to D-11.0403b and was, therefore, an error in constitutional interpretation, an irregularity in the proceedings, and an injustice in the process or decision.

This Specification of Error is sustained.

Specification of Error No. 2. The SPJC found Davis guilty of something with which he was not charged. This was contrary to D-11.0403a and D-13.0404 and was, therefore, an error in constitutional interpretation, an irregularity in the proceedings, and an injustice in the process of the decision.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 3. The SPJC made factual determinations that should not have been made by an appellate body since factual determinations made by a trier of fact are presumed correct. This was contrary to D-13.0102 and was, therefore, an irregularity in the proceedings and injustice in the process or decision.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 4. The SPJC did not interpret the Seventh Commandment correctly. This is an error in constitutional interpretation (D-2.0203b) and injustice in the process or decision.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 5. The SPJC erred when it affirmed the decision of the PPJC with regard to Charge 2. This was error in constitutional interpretation of G-14.0405b (3) and (4) and an injustice in the process or decision.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 6. The SPJC erred when it affirmed the decision of the PPJC with regard to Charge 3. This was error in constitutional interpretation of G-14.0405b(7) and an injustice in the process or decision.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 7. The SPJC and the PPJC did not interpret D-2.0203b correctly. This was an error in constitutional interpretation and injustice in the process or decision.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 8. The SPJC and the PPJC erred when they found no fault with having a (former) sex addict as Chair of the Investigating/Prosecuting Committee. This was an error in constitutional interpretation of D-1.0101 and D-10.0204 and an injustice in the process and decision.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 9. The SPJC and the PPJC erred when they did not recognize a biblical scholar as an expert witness. This was an error in constitutional interpretation of D-14.0301.

This Specification of Error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 10. The SPJC erred when it changed the terms of censure imposed by the PPJC which had conducted a censure hearing under D-11.0403e. This was an error of constitutional interpretation and an irregularity in the proceedings.

This Specification of Error is sustained.

Decision

Reversal of the Not Guilty Judgment (Errors Related to Charge 1)

Specification of Error No. 1 is sustained because the SPJC erred by reversing a judgment of “not guilty” to “guilty” by a vote of 4 to 3. In 2004, the Rules of Discipline were amended to permit a governing body to appeal a judgment of “not guilty” (D-13.0102). D-11.0403b provides that “No judgment of guilt may be found on a charge unless at least two-thirds of the members of the session or permanent judicial commission eligible to vote agree on the judgment.” The amendment to the Rules of Discipline to allow appeals by either party created the potential for an appellate body to re-examine the issue of guilt. In making that re-examination, if it determines that a guilty judgment is the correct result, the appellate body would become the first court to make that judgment. Davis correctly observed that D-13.0102 is a contradiction of all previous ecclesiastical and secular law. Further, the revision stands alone, and other related provisions of the *Book of Order* have not been revised. Thus, prosecuting bodies have a right to appeal, but there are no corresponding procedures to guide how such appeals should be handled and what this appellate right means in terms of the authority of a permanent judicial commission acting as an appellate court to reverse a judgment of not guilty to guilty. This Commission finds no basis in the *Book of Order* to permit an appellate body to determine guilt by a simple majority vote. It would be grossly unfair to require a two-thirds majority vote by the trier of fact and then permit a simple majority to reverse that judgment based solely on an appellate record and oral argument. Therefore, this Commission finds that any judgment of guilt requires a two-thirds majority vote.

The logical implication of permitting a prosecuting committee to appeal a judgment of not guilty is the prospect that the determination of not guilty will be reversed. D-13.0102 grants a right of appeal, but says nothing about whether there shall be a second trial (which raises concerns about double jeopardy) or where and how such a trial would be held. It is inconceivable that D-13.0102 was intended to permit an appellate body to determine guilt without hearing any evidence, judging the credibility of the witnesses, and deciding whether the burden of proof has been met beyond a reasonable doubt. None of these due process safeguards was provided to Davis, and therefore this Commission sustains Error 1.

Accordingly, Specification of Error No. 1 is sustained and the PPJC’s judgment of “not guilty” on charge 1 is reinstated. Because Davis is not guilty of charge 1, this Commission need not reach the issues raised by Specifications of Error Nos. 2, 3, and 4.

Violations of Ordination Vows (Errors Related to Charge 2)

The SPJC affirmed the PPJC judgment of guilt with regard to Charge 2, stating that charges 1 and 2 were inextricably linked and the judgments had to be consistent. This Commission does not agree that the two charges are so linked. This Commission sustains the SPJC’s decision, but for other reasons.

Ordination questions 3 and 4 (W-4.4003 c and d) read as follows:

c. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

d. Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?

The charge that Davis violated these ordination vows should not be determined in a legalistic way. For good reason, the church has been reluctant to list “essentials” of the Reformed faith or to create a legal code. This does not mean, however, that the church has no standards by which to judge alleged violations of ordination vows.

The *Book of Order* states at G-6.0106a that church officers’ “manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world.” G-6.0106b states, “Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church.”

The *Book of Order* and *The Book of Confessions* make it clear that church officers are to conduct themselves within certain limits. While there are few specific church-wide standards of proscribed conduct, (e.g., G-6.0106b), there are many aspirational statements in the church constitution for how church officers should behave. Notwithstanding the church’s prefe-

rence to avoid a code of forbidden conduct, the church expects that the life and character of its officers be marked by adherence to Biblical and confessional principles.

Biblical principles include the understanding that God created male and female equally in God's own image (Gen. 1:27), and that God covenants with God's people and they with one another. The story of the Fall reminds the Church that when humans disobey God, they are alienated from God (Gen. 3). Scripture contains admonitions against sexual exploitation and violence against one another (*e.g.*, Ex. 20, 2 Sam. 11–12). Exploitation and violence transgress God's intention that the human community live in health, wholeness, unity and peace. See *Pornography: Far from the Song of Songs*, 200th GA, 1988, p. 7. Jesus' ministry was one of love, inclusion, compassion, and hospitality, welcoming both women and men as followers. He condemned exploitation and oppression.

Confessional principles relevant to this case can be found throughout *The Book of Confessions*. Specifically, the most recent confessional statement, The Brief Statement of Faith, states that among humanity's acts of rebellion against God are that "we violate the image of God in others and ourselves . . . and exploit neighbor and nature. . ." (*The Book of Confessions*, 10.3). The Confession of 1967 speaks of "anarchy" and "moral confusion" in sexual relationships as symptoms of human alienation from God, neighbor and self. Human confusion about "the meaning of sex has been aggravated in our day" by several factors associated with modern life (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.47).

The 200th General Assembly (1988) study paper on pornography states "pornography is a powerful symptom of injustice and alienation in human society. Through words and images, pornography debases God's intended gifts of love and dignity in human sexuality. Although humankind was created male and female, equally in the image of God, the history of humanity reveals a fundamental pattern of dominance and subjugation . . ." (*Pornography: Far from the Song of Songs*, 200th GA, 1988, pp. 6–8). Pornography is a striking sign of human brokenness and alienation from God and from one another. The paper calls the church to give serious attention to this issue.

This Commission finds that a session or presbytery may determine whether one of its members acted or failed to act in a particular manner that "is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" (D-2.0203b). Pornography does not build up the body of Christ, nor demonstrate a Christly manner of life to the world. The question before this Commission is this: "Was Davis' use of pornography on a church computer a *constitutional* offense?" The governing body of membership first determines whether a church officer has departed from biblical and constitutional standards (G-6.0108b) and whether to impose a censure (G-11.0103n and r). The PPJC did make such determinations about Davis' use of pornography. The SPJC affirmed that decision and this Commission concurs.

Furthering the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church (Errors Related to Charge 3)

The PPJC found Davis guilty of Charge 3. The SPJC sustained this decision. There is overwhelming evidence showing Davis' use of a church computer to view pornographic internet sites even on church premises during customary business hours. Davis used the church computer in his church office numerous times to view internet sites showing degrading and dehumanizing scenes of a most heinous kind. After Davis moved to another state, some of these graphic pornographic images remained on the church computer and were inadvertently viewed by Davis' successor, a seminary intern. The intern promptly sought help from, and showed the images to, other church personnel. As the session and an increasing number of church members learned of this situation, waves of shock and distress rocked the church.

Charge 3 alleged that Davis' use of the church computer to view pornography did not further the peace, unity, and purity of the Broadmoor Church in violation of his ordination vow. Davis' actions had other ripple effects beyond those who saw the images on the church computer. Davis did not further the peace, unity, and purity of the Broadmoor Church or the larger church by using a church computer to view pornography regularly and frequently and by leaving some of those images on the church computer. This was a breach of Davis' ordination vows (W-4.4003g) and scriptural and constitutional principles for acceptable conduct of church officers. The PPJC's judgment of guilt on Charge 3 was properly sustained by the SPJC.

Investigating Committee Bias (Error No. 8)

The Chair of the Investigating Committee and the Prosecuting Committee was an admitted sex addict in recovery. He raised this issue with Presbytery officials and was advised he need not recuse himself. Davis learned of this at the trial. Because the Chair's personal background was not disclosed to Davis during the investigative process, Davis was unable to raise his concerns as provided for in D-10.0204 (Petition to Review Procedures). This Commission finds that any error in this regard was not prejudicial to Davis. There is no evidence of bias by any member of the PPJC or the SPJC.

Expert Witnesses (Error No. 9)

At oral argument, both parties addressed the lack of standards for admission of testimony by an expert witness. Chapter XIV of the Rules of Discipline addresses "Evidence in Remedial or Disciplinary Cases," and at D-14.0301 contemplates the use of expert witnesses. D-14.0201 allows any party to challenge the "competence" of any witness. D-14.0205 defines "Credibility" as "the degree of belief that may be given to the testimony of a witness." Both of these provisions presumably apply

to all witnesses in judicial process, including expert witnesses. D-14.0205 further provides “The session or permanent judicial commission may consider, in determining the credibility of a witness, any matter that bears on the accuracy or truthfulness of the testimony of the witnesses.” In the case of expert witnesses, this would presumably include information about the qualifications of the expert and matters pertaining to the relevance of the expert’s proposed testimony.

D-14.0201 and D-14.0205 are the only guidance on expert testimony within the *Book of Order* available to assist sessions, permanent judicial commissions and parties to judicial process. In this case, the PPJC allowed an expert on ancient Hebrew law to testify, but did not admit the curriculum vitae of the expert. The expert was not allowed to remain in the hearing room during the testimony of other witnesses contrary to D-14.0301, which permits an expert witness to be present throughout the hearing. In this case, this Commission does not sustain Specification of Error No. 9 because the treatment of Davis’ expert was not prejudicial to Davis.

Monetary Censure (Error No. 10)

The SPJC erred when it imposed a monetary censure that required Davis to pay for a new hard drive for the church computer. See *Hennigan v. Presbytery of Charlotte, Minutes, 2001, Part I, p. 575, paragraph 12.1004.*

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Pacific is hereby reversed in part and affirmed in part.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the judgment of the Synod of the Pacific finding Davis guilty on charge 1 is reversed, and the Presbytery of San Francisco’s judgment of not guilty on charge 1 is reinstated.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Synod of the Pacific’s affirmation of the Presbytery of San Francisco’s judgment of guilt on charges 2 and 3 is affirmed for the reasons stated in this Decision and Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the additional censure imposed by the Synod of the Pacific is removed, and the original censure imposed by the Presbytery of San Francisco is reinstated.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Francisco report this decision to the Presbytery of San Francisco at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of San Francisco enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Pacific report this decision to the Synod of the Pacific at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Pacific enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-participants

Commissioner Angel Casaus-Urrutia was absent. Commissioners Bradley Copeland and Clifford Looney did not participate in this case.

Concurring Opinion

We concur with the majority in an affirmation of Davis’ guilt on Charge 2, with additional reflections on the contemporary interpretation of the Confessions.

A central element in the trial and appellate record of this case is the issue of the appropriate understanding of the Confessions in the life and experience of the Church. This record illustrates a significant misunderstanding about the nature and authority of the Confessions, especially regarding catechetical texts, e.g., the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms and the Heidelberg Catechism, as statutory norms.

The interpretive process regarding the Confessions requires historical analysis of context and meaning in its own time and a judgment about the contemporary understanding of similar or related behavior, involving a dual interpretive process across divergent ages and extensive linguistic development. This is an arduous and complex process, especially in a non-catechetical culture. “Duties” and “sins,” for example, shift widely in meaning as the age and culture change. What constitutes “immodest apparel,” a “wanton look,” or “lascivious” display four centuries ago and how such a standard is understood now can vary greatly between cultures and within a particular culture. One could go through catechetical lists and, except for a few items that have obvious statutory relevance today, realize easily that these are texts that scream for interpretive exercise. To raise such confessional-catechetical lists to equality with the imperative nature of the Decalogue is hermeneutically untenable and legally inappropriate. In our tradition, a catechism is not intended to function as a legally precise rule book and

it is perilous to treat it as such. To open up the Confessions in general as a statutory reservoir for judicial judgment would be an interpretive circus and invite legal anarchy.

It is not necessary, however, to enter this arena, since the consistent policy of the General Assembly on the nature of the Confessions is clear. The wisdom of our ordination vows and the wider policy of the church understand the Confessions in terms of guidance rather than rule. This decision reaffirms such a normative view of the nature and authority of the Confessions.

Michael B. Lukens
 Yun J. Kim
 Judy L. Woods

Dissenting Opinion

While I agree with the rationale expressed in the concurring opinion of Commissioners Lukens, Yun, and Wood, I respectfully dissent from the majority’s decision on Charges 2 and 3.

Both the Presbytery PJC and the Synod PJC committed errors in constitutional interpretation and injustice in process or decision. That is D-1.0101 (“In all respects, all participants are to be accorded procedural safeguards and due process....”) and D-10.0204 (During the course of the investigation, the person against whom an allegation has been made may petition the commission to review procedures of the investigating committee.) The procedural injustice occurred when a self-acknowledging sexual addict to hard-core pornography in recovery served on and chaired the investigating committee.

The individual testified before the Presbytery PJC that he believed it was “ironic” that he was asked to serve on this particular investigative committee since he had just finished “up a 26 week course on sexual addiction recovery” after wrestling with sexual addiction for 35 years . He testified that he waged “an ongoing, daily choice, a daily battle” against pornography. While the Chair twice inquired of Presbytery officials whether he should recuse himself from the investigative committee, he received the advice, which in my opinion was incorrect, that he need not do so. The Chair shared his personal struggles of his addiction to hard-core pornography with the other three members of the investigative committee so “they were all aware of who I was and who I am.” However, no one informed either Davis or his counsel. They only found out when the Chair testified at trial. One other member of the investigative committee testified that he and another committee member believed that a charge of a violation of the Seventh Commandment “was a little bit more harsh than we needed to do.” Nevertheless, such a charge was filed. It appears from the testimony before the Presbytery PJC that had the Chair not served as Chair of this four person investigative committee, the decision of the investigative committee to bring the particular charges filed would have been different.

Because the Chair brought to his service on the investigative committee his biased feelings regarding hard core pornography and those who regularly view it, the Chair should have recused himself from the committee or been excused from his service on the committee. The failure to do so constituted a violation of due process and fundamental fairness. In addition, the failure to inform Davis and his counsel of the bias of the Chair during the investigative process was a violation of due process and fundamental fairness. Since I believe any charges presented by the investigative committee were tainted by the bias of the Chair, the Presbytery PJC should have dismissed the committee’s charges and sent the matter back to be examined by a new investigative committee. Contrary to the view of the majority of the GAPJC, I do not believe the subsequent judicial process after the charges were filed could serve to cure these inherent violations of due process and fundamental fairness.

A. Bates Butler III

Dated this the 10th Day of August, 2009

k. Remedial Case 219-10

Andrew McDonald and Jimmy Shelbourn,)	
Appellants (Complainants),)	
	)	ORDER FOR DISMISSAL
v.)	
	)	Remedial Case 219-10
Presbytery of Homestead,)	
Appellee (Respondent).)	

This remedial case came before this Commission on an appeal filed by Appellants, Andrew McDonald, minister, and Jimmy Shelbourn, minister, from a Preliminary Order by the officers of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (SPJC) dated November 21, 2008. The Executive Committee (EC) of the General Assembly Permanent

Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) found that while Appellants had standing to file and the Appeal stated one or more of the Grounds for Appeal specified in D-8.0105 (d), the Appeal was not properly filed, and this Commission does not have jurisdiction.

The determination of the EC was challenged by the Appellants, and the matter was considered by the full Commission at its meeting in August, 2009 on the basis of briefs submitted by the parties. The GAPJC determined that a hearing in the presence of the parties was necessary, and the case was therefore accepted for hearing.

On December 14, 2009, however, the Stated Clerk received a communication from the Appellants requesting dismissal of the Appeal and the accompanying Stay of Enforcement.

The request of the Appellants is hereby granted, and the case is dismissed.

Dated the 28th day of February, 2010.

1. *Remedial Case 219-11*

Mary Holder Naegeli, J. Mark Stryker, and)	
Margaret H. Gelini,)	
Appellants (Complainants),	)	DECISION AND ORDER
)	
v.	)	Remedial Case 219-11
)	
Presbytery of San Francisco,)	
Appellee (Respondent).)	

Headnotes

1. *Consideration of departure.* The proper time to determine whether a candidate has expressed a departure from the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity is at the time of a presbytery’s examination of the candidate for ordination.
2. *Removal of a candidate.* A presbytery has discretion whether to maintain or remove the name of a candidate from its roll of candidates for minister of the Word and Sacrament.
3. *Consideration of a departure requires full examination.* A governing body responsible for examination and ordination of officers may grant a departure only when the departure is one that it finds in the context of the entire examination is not a “serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church” (G-6.0108a).
4. *Confidential materials.* Judicial commissions should establish appropriate procedures for consideration and handling of confidential information.

Arrival Statement

This remedial case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by Appellants, Mary Holder Naegeli, J. Mark Stryker, and Margaret H. Gelini (collectively, Naegeli), from a Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Pacific (SPJC) on March 20, 2009.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, the Appellants have standing to file the Appeal, the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Mary Holder Naegeli appeared in person and by her counsel, Bruce McIntosh. Mr. McIntosh appeared for J. Mark Stryker and Margaret H. Gelini. Doug Nave and Pamela Byers appeared for the Presbytery of San Francisco.

History

This case concerns the Presbytery’s actions surrounding a candidate for the office of minister of the Word and Sacrament. The Candidate was first under care of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, and since April 1997 has been under care of the Presbytery of San Francisco Presbytery). In April 2004, the Candidate affirmed to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) that she was then in a same-sex relationship and was not in compliance with G-6.0106b. In 2004, the CPM did not complete a Final Assessment or certify that the Candidate was ready for examination for ordination pending a call.

On December 5, 2007, the CPM conducted a Final Assessment of the Candidate. At that time, the Candidate presented a Statement of Departure from G-6.0106b, stating: "By my conscience, faith and theology, I cannot and will not accept the terms of this standard." There was no evidence that the Candidate acknowledged she was living in violation of G-6.0106b. The CPM voted 12-9 to report to the Presbytery that the Candidate was ready for examination for ordination pending a call with a departure.

Before the January stated meeting of Presbytery, a packet containing the Candidate's Statement of Departure and a December 15, 2007, letter from CPM were distributed. The CPM letter identified and explained two motions (a majority report and a minority report) that would be presented at the Presbytery meeting:

1. That the Presbytery accept the recommendation of the CPM and certify the Candidate as ready for examination effective January 15, 2008, with a departure (majority report).
2. That the Presbytery remove the Candidate from the roll of candidates effective January 15, 2008 (minority report).

Both the majority and minority reports were presented at the Presbytery meeting on January 15, 2008. Following presentation and discussion of both motions, Presbytery held a lengthy debate to substitute the minority report for the main motion (majority report). By a vote of 151-168, the Presbytery declined to substitute the minority report for the main motion, and then by a vote of 167-151, the Presbytery approved the original motion (majority report) to certify the candidate as ready for examination with a departure. The Candidate was not present at the January 15, 2008, Presbytery meeting.

The Presbytery's decision that the Candidate was ready for examination with a departure was stayed by the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Pacific on February 29, 2008. Naegeli filed a remedial complaint that was tried before the SPJC. On March 20, 2009, the SPJC granted the request to rescind the Presbytery's certification that the Candidate is "ready for examination." The SPJC declined to rule that the Candidate's departure constitutes a failure to adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity under G-6.0108a because it found the examination of the Candidate had not yet taken place. The SPJC did not order the Presbytery to remove the Candidate from its roll of candidates. On October 30, 2009, this Commission heard oral argument on Naegeli's Appeal of the SPJC decision.

Specifications of Error

The Specifications of Error have been grouped, renumbered, reordered and restated as follows:

Errors Relating to the Actions of the Presbytery

Specification of Error No. 1. The SPJC erred when it mandated that the examination for ordination is the proper time for a presbytery to determine whether a candidate's departure constitutes a failure to adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity.

This Specification of Error is Not Sustained.

Specification of Error No. 2. The SPJC erred when it failed to instruct the Presbytery to remove the Candidate from the roll of candidates.

This Specification of Error is Not Sustained.

Errors Relating to Constitutional Interpretation of G-6.0106b

Specification of Error No. 3. The SPJC erred when it failed to rule that G-6.0106b is a churchwide mandatory ordination standard that cannot be waived by any ordaining body.

This Specification of Error is Sustained in Part and Not Sustained in Part.

Specification of Error No. 4. The SPJC erred when it declined to instruct the Presbytery to find that the Candidate's departure constitutes a failure to adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity under G-6.0108 of the Book of Order, thus barring the Candidate from ordination.

This Specification of Error is Not Sustained.

Errors Relating to the Actions by the CPM

Specification of Error No. 5. The SPJC erred when it determined it had no jurisdiction to review the actions taken by a Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

This Specification of Error is Sustained in Part and Not Sustained in Part.

Specification of Error No. 6. The CPM acted improperly (a) in the manner in which it counseled the Candidate regarding mandatory churchwide ordination standards, (b) by failing to remove the Candidate who remained opposed to the sexual ethic provision of G-6.0106b, and (c) in the manner in which it communicated with the Presbytery when presenting the Candidate's Statement of Departure to the Presbytery.

This Specification of Error is Not Sustained.

Errors Relating to the Procedures of the SPJC

Specification of Error No. 7. The SPJC erred in the handling of certain documents referred to as "Envelope B" when it refused to permit Appellants to view these documents, refused to admit them into the record at trial and refused to permit trial testimony regarding these documents and CPM's handling of them.

This Specification of Error is Sustained.

Specification of Error No. 8. The SPJC erred when it refused to admit the minutes and records of the CPM into the record at trial and refused to permit trial testimony regarding the minutes and related actions by the CPM.

This Specification of Error is Sustained.

Specification of Error No. 9. The SPJC erred when it ruled that a reporter was not required at a pretrial conference.

This Specification of Error is Not Sustained.

Decision

Errors Relating to Actions of the Presbytery

Naegeli contends the SPJC erred when it concluded that the proper time to determine whether a candidate has expressed a departure from the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity as expressed in *The Book of Confessions* and the Form of Government (G-6.0108a) is at the time of a presbytery's examination of the candidate. This Commission disagrees with Naegeli and sustains the SPJC on this point. Candidates for ordination to the office of minister of the Word and Sacrament must appear before presbytery to be examined (G-14.0482). The examining presbytery (ordinarily the presbytery placing the call to the candidate (G-14.0481)) shall receive the report of its CPM (or other appropriate committee) and the report shall include a summary of any waivers or exceptions to ordination requirements granted to the candidate (G-14.0482). Departures from ordination requirements are addressed in G-6.0108 and are not the same as exemptions, exceptions or waivers addressed in G-14.0450 and G-14.0470 through G-14.0474.

Examination and ordination of a candidate for ordained office are responsibilities of the governing body in which the officer will serve, which is a presbytery in the instance of candidates for ministry (G-14.0120; G-14.0482). Individual presbyteries may adopt procedures that lodge certain responsibilities with a CPM or similar committee, but under G-14.0482, the candidate must appear before the presbytery to present a statement of personal faith and commitment to ministry. At this time, the presbytery may conduct such further examination of the candidate as it deems necessary, including a consideration of any departures from standards for ordination (G-14.0482; G-6.0108a).

In this case, a report of the CPM was presented to the Presbytery on January 15, 2007, but the Candidate was not present, did not present a brief statement of faith and was not examined by the Presbytery at that meeting. Although a report about the Candidate was made to the Presbytery, including a statement about the Candidate's intended departure from G-6.0106b, the Candidate has not yet been examined, and the Presbytery has not yet determined whether the Candidate should proceed to ordination and installation, with or without a departure being granted.

The SPJC rescinded the Presbytery's certification that the Candidate was ready for examination because the language in the motion before the Presbytery was that the Candidate was "ready for examination ... with a departure." The readiness of the Candidate for examination was properly before the Presbytery at the January 15, 2008, meeting. G-14.0450 states that a CPM "shall report to the presbytery when it has certified a candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call." This Presbytery has elected to take the additional, but unnecessary, step of voting on a candidate's readiness.¹⁰ The *Book of Order* does not require a statement of the candidate's assent to the constitutional ordination questions as a prerequisite to certification of readiness for examination. In this case, it would not be necessary for the Presbytery to reconsider the certification of the Candidate's readiness to be examined at some future date to be determined by the Presbytery. However, all questions regarding the Candidate's stated departure from G-6.0106b are yet to be determined by the Presbytery and must be considered when the Candidate is examined.

This Commission further notes its instruction in *McKittrick v. Session of West End Presbyterian Church of Albany, NY*, Remedial Case No. 215-05, *Minutes*, 2003, Part I, pp. 272–274:

[When] an installation occurs immediately following the examination process, there may be no practical opportunity for a protesting or dissenting party to seek a stay of enforcement of the decision to install. The Presbyterian custom of conducting business “decently and in order” should not be converted into a race in which the swift prevail. We undermine our system of mutual accountability when the proceedings, such as ordination or installation, are rushed with the consequence (whether intended or otherwise) that certain remedies become unavailable. Therefore, we encourage governing bodies to permit sufficient time between the examination and installation or ordination of a candidate so that there can be no intimation that any governing body intended to shield its action from scrutiny.

Naegeli alleges that it was an error for the SPJC not to order the Presbytery to remove the Candidate from the roll of candidates. A presbytery has discretion whether to maintain or remove the name of a candidate from its roll of candidates for minister of the Word and Sacrament. *Le Tourneau v. Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area*, Remedial Case 205-4, *Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 163 (a presbytery has discretion to maintain a candidate on the roll even when the candidate is not ready for examination for ordination). G-14.0463 states in relevant part that “A Presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove an individual’s name from the roll of inquirers or candidates” The decision to remove a candidate is within the discretion of the presbytery, and there is no requirement in the *Book of Order* that would require a presbytery to terminate its relationship with a candidate and remove the candidate from the roll of candidates.¹¹ There are minimum, but not maximum, time requirements for candidacy stated in G-14.0403 and G-14.0473, and it was not an error not to remove the Candidate from the roll of candidates in this case.

Errors Relating to Constitutional Interpretation of G-6.0106b

Specifications of Error Nos. 3 and 4 address ordination standards, and specifically requirements found in G-6.0106b. As discussed above, the Candidate has not yet been examined by the Presbytery, and the Presbytery has not yet considered whether the Candidate has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity as set forth in G-6.0108b. The Presbytery must go through the process required in G-6.0108b to determine whether the Candidate has expressed an interpretation of Scripture that represents a serious departure from essentials of Reformed faith and polity, and if it determines that she has, it must then decide whether the departure infringes on the rights and views of others or obstructs the constitutional governance of the church. Freedom of conscience for officers of the church is bounded by standards of the church. A governing body responsible for examination and ordination of officers may grant a departure only when the departure is one that it finds in the context of the entire examination is not a “serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church” (G-6.0108b).

This Commission declines to instruct the Presbytery as requested by Naegeli because all examinations of candidates for ordained office must be conducted on an individual basis.

It would be an obstruction of constitutional governance to permit examining bodies to ignore or waive a specific standard that has been adopted by the whole church, such as the ‘fidelity and chastity’ portion of G-6.0106b, or any other similarly specific provision. On the other hand, the broad reference in G-6.0106b to ‘any practice which the confessions call sin’ puts the responsibility first on the candidate and then on the examining body to determine whether a departure is a failure to adhere to the essentials of Reformed faith and polity and the remainder of G-6.0108a with respect to freedom of conscience. The ordaining body must examine the candidate individually. The examining body is best suited to make decisions about the candidate’s fitness for office, and factual determinations by examining bodies are entitled to deference by higher governing bodies in the review process (*Bush v. Presbytery of Pittsburgh*, Remedial Case 218-10, *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 319. See also *Buescher et al. v. Presbytery of Olympia*, Remedial Case 218-09, *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p.316 (discussing 1927 Report of the Special Commission of 1925 (“Swearingen Commission Report”), *Minutes*, PCUSA, 1927, Part I, pp. 78–79; see also *Wier v. Session, Second Presbyterian Church of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida*, Remedial Case 214-05, *Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 339).

Errors Relating to the Actions by the CPM

“A higher governing body shall have the right of review and control over a lower one and shall have [the] power to determine matters of controversy upon reference, complaint, or appeal” (G-4.0301f). Governing bodies beyond the session delegate particular aspects of their tasks to councils, commissions and committees (G-9.0901). The actions of any presbytery or its council, committees or commissions are subject to review. In this case, the SPJC found it “lacked jurisdiction” to review the actions of the CPM. However, this misapprehends the nature of Naegeli’s Complaint, which alleged errors of the Presbytery acting through its CPM.

All of the errors alleged based on the CPM’s purported “misrepresentations” to the Presbytery are not sustained. The CPM’s presentation to the Presbytery was not as clear as it could have been. However, the record does not support any finding that the CPM “misrepresented” anything to the Presbytery. Nevertheless, because a presbytery is not required to vote on the CPM’s certification that a candidate is ready to be examined, and because no examination of the Candidate has yet occurred, any alleged errors regarding the CPM’s communications to the Presbytery about the Candidate’s departure are deemed to be harmless error and not a basis on which to reverse the SPJC Decision.

Errors Relating to the Procedures of the SPJC

The SPJC erred when it did not include in the trial record the minutes of the CPM and all of the documents and records of the CPM concerning the Candidate's certification of readiness for examination, including those documents referred to as "Envelope B." "While a CPM has discretion to use and rely on confidential documents in order to perform its gatekeeping function, 'secrecy' is inimical to the candor and trust inherent in a covenant relationship" (*Hope, et al. v. Presbytery of San Francisco*, Remedial Case No. 216-06, *Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 363; see also *Bedford-Central Presbyterian Church v. Presbytery of New York City*, Remedial Case 199-1, 11.0752, *Minutes*, 1987, Part I, p. 119).

The record in a remedial case consists of those items listed in D-7.0601d, and includes items offered into evidence even if they were not accepted as admissible evidence. D-7.0601b. Thus, all of the papers and records of the CPM and the Presbytery with regard to the certification of the Candidate and her readiness for examination should have been included in the SPJC record. The SPJC may have, in its discretion, determined that the contents of "Envelope B" (or other documents or testimony) contained confidential material that required special handling.¹² However, even confidential material may still be part of a trial record.

When there is a question about the admission of proposed evidence that is confidential, a session or permanent judicial commission that is to try the case must review the proposed evidence (whether in the form of documents or testimony) in order to determine whether the proposed evidence should be admitted at the trial. This review should be conducted by the entire session or permanent judicial commission in a closed meeting. If the session or permanent judicial commission decides the proposed evidentiary material should be admitted, then that material must be disclosed to the parties, except that the session or permanent judicial commission may decide in its discretion to communicate the substance of any confidential material without providing the text of the document or testimony or the source of the material, so long as it communicates sufficiently detailed information to permit the affected party to respond to or rebut the material. See discussion of CPM's treatment of confidential material in *Hope, et al. v. Presbytery of San Francisco, Remedial Case No. 216-06, Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 363. A session or permanent judicial commission may insist that confidential information not be disclosed to the public in order to protect reasonable privacy or similar interests of third parties.

If the session or permanent judicial commission determines the proposed evidence should not be admitted, the material should be kept in a sealed envelope or similar container. If there is a subsequent appeal of the admissibility of the disputed material, the sealed material is a part of the record to be reviewed by the appellate permanent judicial commission. A permanent judicial commission considering an appeal concerning the admissibility of the disputed material may decide the material should have been admitted and disclose it to the parties in the manner described above, or it may decide that the material should remain sealed. Other appropriate procedures for handling confidential material may be adopted by a session or permanent judicial commission to fit particular circumstances.

The minutes of the CPM should have been admitted into the record and made a part of it. "The authenticated written records of a governing body or permanent judicial commission shall be admissible in evidence in any proceeding" D-14.0401.

Permanent judicial commissions are required to arrange a verbatim recording "of all testimony and oral proceedings" D-7.0601a. A verbatim recording of all trials is clearly required, but it is unclear whether this provision would require a verbatim record to be made of pretrial proceedings when no oral testimony is taken. In highly controversial matters, where subsequent appeals or other proceedings are likely to occur, it would be a wise practice to make a verbatim record of all pretrial proceedings.

In light of the rulings on Specifications of Error Nos. 1 and 2 above, any error in regard to the trial record or the making of a verbatim record of the pretrial proceedings in this case are deemed to be harmless error and therefore this error is not sustained.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Pacific is AFFIRMED in part and NOT AFFIRMED in part.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Francisco report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Pacific report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Participants

Angel Casaus-Urrutia, Yun Jin Kim, and Rebecca New were not present and took no part in this case.

Dated this 2nd day of November, 2009.

m. Remedial Case 219-12

-----)	
Isaiah D. Phinisee,)	
Appellant (Complainant),)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER
v.)	
	)	Remedial Case 219-12
Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic,)	
Appellee (Respondent).)	
-----)	

Arrival Statement

This remedial case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by Isaiah D. Phinisee (Phinisee), Appellant (Complainant), from a Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the South Atlantic (SPJC) dated March 20, 2009.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, Phinisee has standing to file the Appeal, the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Isaiah D. Phinisee was present and represented by David Belding. The Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic (Presbytery), Appellee (Respondent), was represented by James A. Stuckey.

History

This remedial case arises out of a congregation in conflict, St. Luke Presbyterian Church (SLPC), where Phinisee served as the installed pastor. As recommended by the Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry (COM), in May 2006, the congregation entered into a relationship with a Bridgebuilder consultant, to help find resolution to conflict in the church. A report of Bridgebuilders, which assessed numerous conflicts within the congregation, was delivered at a congregational meeting on December 12, 2006. This report suggested an approach for reconciling the conflicts. Concerned officers and members of SLPC as well as Phinisee requested the appointment of an Administrative Commission to resolve the conflicts at SLPC, but this request was not granted because the COM intended to handle the matter itself.

The documentary record of the COM, members of the Session, and Phinisee between December 5 and December 12, 2006, reflects a chaotic interchange concerning a desire of three elders for the Session to meet on December 12 and whether the subsequent gathering of session members on that date was an appropriately called and moderated session meeting. However, there is no dispute that on December 8, 2006, three elders requested in writing that Phinisee call a session meeting for December 12, 2006, and Phinisee did not call that meeting. No other constitutional process for calling this meeting was followed.

Immediately following the December 12, 2006, congregational meeting, a meeting of elders called by COM was held and was moderated by a representative of COM. Phinisee was present for a brief period, protested that the meeting was irregular and left. The elders decided to call a congregational meeting for December 31, 2006, for the purpose of dissolving the pastoral relationship as of December 31, 2006. At the congregational meeting on December 31, 2006, the congregation voted to dissolve the pastoral relationship between SLPC and Phinisee.

Phinisee filed a complaint against the Presbytery on January 4, 2007, and amended the complaint on January 10, 2007. Phinisee’s request to stay enforcement of the dissolution was not granted.

In a letter to Phinisee, on January 15, 2007, the moderator of the COM informed him that the COM had taken action on behalf of the Presbytery to concur with the request from the congregation of SLPC to dissolve the pastoral relationship effective December 31, 2006. He was instructed to cease all contact with the Session and congregation. According to the minutes of the Presbytery’s stated meeting on February 3, 2007, the COM recommended that the Presbytery dissolve the pastoral relationship between SLPC and Phinisee effective December 31, 2006, with three months severance pay ending March 31, 2007. Further, these minutes state,

05 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY

Prior to the vote, Phinisee asked to speak to the issue. After Phinisee had spoken for about one minute, the stated clerk called a point of order saying 'that the minister does not have the right to be heard without those in opposition being given the same privilege. Phinisee has not made request of Session nor of the COM for such a hearing.' A call for the question carried as did the motion to dissolve the pastoral relationship. Phinisee filed a protest at that time.

Because the SPJC had failed to act within 90 days from the date of his complaints, Phinisee requested that the GAPJC assume jurisdiction. On October 22, 2007, the GAPJC ordered that the SPJC proceed within 90 days.

On January 28, 2008, Phinisee again requested that the GAPJC assume jurisdiction for failure of the SPJC to act upon the order of the GAPJC within 90 days. The GAPJC responded with a letter on February 19, 2008, denying the request because the SPJC had begun procedures for processing the Remedial Case on January 3, 2008.

After further preliminary proceedings, a pre-trial hearing was held on December 4, 2008, to seek agreement on a statement of facts, share documents and other evidence and set the date for trial as March 19, 2009.

On January 20, 2009, Phinisee filed an additional Complaint against the Presbytery alleging an irregularity or delinquency at a meeting on December 18, 2008. The Presbytery responded to that Complaint on February 5, 2009.

On March 2, 2009, Phinisee filed a motion to continue the trial of the case for forty-five days, citing the death of his lead counsel. On March 6, 2009, the SPJC denied the request for continuance, consolidated the proceedings for the two complaints, reset the date for Phinisee's trial brief to be submitted and set out stipulations for the trial. The trial was held March 19-20, 2009. The SPJC issued a decision on March 20, 2009 not to sustain the complaints.

Phinisee filed a Notice of Appeal to this Commission on May 2, 2009. This Commission held oral argument on the Appeal on October 30, 2009.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1. The SPJC erred in upholding the Presbytery's refusal to appoint an administrative commission prior to the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between Phinisee and SLPC.

This specification of error is not sustained.

The decision to appoint an administrative commission by a presbytery is a discretionary function that resides solely with the presbytery (G-11.0103s).

Specification of Error No. 2. The SPJC erred in finding that the December 12, 2006, session and December 31, 2006, congregational meetings were properly called meetings.

This specification of error is sustained. See Decision below.

Specification of Error No. 3. The SPJC erred by not entering Phinisee's request for Stay of Enforcement of the action taken at the December 31, 2006, congregational meeting of the Church.

This specification of error is not sustained.

The grant of a stay of enforcement is a discretionary function and the *Book of Order* provides no basis for compelling any stay (D-6.0103).

Specification of Error No. 4. The SPJC erred by failing to grant Phinisee's motion for continuance following the death of his lead counsel.

This specification of error is not sustained. The SPJC appropriately responded to the motion, which was made some 60 days after the discovery of the death. The SPJC has the discretion to determine whether a continuance is needed. That discretion was not abused.

Specification of Error No. 5. The SPJC erred in finding that the Presbytery's counsel was properly appointed and could appropriately act in these proceedings.

This specification of error is not sustained.

This Commission agrees with the SPJC that Stuckey's service on other Presbytery committees dealing with aspects of the conflict at SLPC does not disqualify his service as the Presbytery's counsel in this case. There is no demonstration in the record that the appointment of counsel for the Presbytery should be re-examined or was improper in any regard.

Specification of Error No. 6. The SPJC erred in not affording Phinisee the relief requested after Presbytery agreed not to contest the appeal.

This specification of error is not sustained.

While counsel for Phinisee listed this specification of error in his brief, it was not in the Notice of Appeal, was a mischaracterization of the Presbytery's response, and was not properly before this Commission (*Congregation for Reconciliation v. Presbytery of Miami*, Minutes, 2000, Part I, p. 580, 12.071).

Decision

The *Book of Order* establishes three ways that a special session meeting may be called: (1) by the moderator, when he or she judges it necessary; (2) by the moderator when requested in writing by any two members of the session; or (3) when directed to do so by presbytery (G-10.0201). Three elders requested in writing that a special session meeting be called for December 12, 2006. Phinisee refused to call a meeting for December 12. Nevertheless, members of the session did meet on December 12 with a COM representative present, who moderated the meeting.

The designated responsibilities of a COM under G-11.0502 do not include the power to call a special session meeting. While this responsibility may be directed by a presbytery and delegated to a COM, nowhere in the record is it reflected that this Presbytery delegated this authority to its COM in this particular matter. At oral argument, Presbytery's counsel conceded that the Presbytery had not given this authority to the COM. The COM was not empowered to call or conduct a session meeting of SLPC for December 12. Thus, actions taken at this December 12, 2006, meeting to call a congregational meeting for December 31, 2006, for the purpose of recommending that the Presbytery dissolve the pastoral relationship as of December 31, 2006, were irregular, as were the actions taken at that December 31, 2006, congregational meeting.

Phinisee did not fulfill his constitutional mandate to call a meeting in conformity with G-10.0201. Although his conduct was a factor in aggravating the circumstances, it was not dispositive of the issues here. In their haste to correct the difficulties between SLPC and Phinisee, the Presbytery, and particularly the COM, acted with serious disregard for the *Book of Order*.

This case demonstrates the consequences of failing to follow the *Book of Order* for calling meetings and dissolving pastoral relationships. The flaws of the COM procedure were exacerbated by the failure of the Synod to respond in a timely manner to Phinisee's grievances. Justice delayed was an impediment to the process and a fair proceeding throughout the course of this matter. Governing bodies are reminded that "all participants are to be accorded procedural safeguards and due process" (D-1.0101).

The pastoral relationship between SLPC and Phinisee was dissolved in an irregular manner. However, in light of the Presbytery's judgment that the pastoral relationship was broken and due to the passage of time, restoration of this relationship is not feasible. Therefore, the Presbytery's action to dissolve the pastoral relationship is allowed to stand.

The *Book of Order*, at G-9.0408, provides that a higher governing body that learns of irregularities or delinquencies by a lower governing body may take appropriate actions to rectify the problems. Accordingly, this Commission directs the actions described below.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission's decision be affirmed in part and modified in part in conformity with this decision.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the pastoral dissolution effected by the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic on February 2, 2007, shall stand.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic establish an administrative commission to review the policies, procedural options, and strategies for dealing with churches and pastors in conflict, that this administrative commission submit a report of its conclusions to the Presbytery by its October, 2010 stated meeting and enter the report in the Presbytery Minutes. The report is to be submitted to the Synod of South Atlantic for its review as part of its annual review of presbytery records (G-9.0407). A copy of the report is to be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This review shall, at a minimum, identify and develop:

1. a plan to utilize denominational resources available for education, support and assistance in matters of polity and conflict;
2. the Presbytery's policies and process in relation to churches and pastors in conflict;
3. internal policies to insure compliance with the relevant *Book of Order* provisions;

4. a manual to guide presbytery committees on procedures relevant to their respective functions (or review any existing manual); and

5. a plan to train the Committee on Ministry on *Book of Order* provisions related to the rights and responsibilities of pastors and sessions, and provisions related to the role of the Committee on Ministry and presbytery in situations of congregational or pastoral conflict.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of South Atlantic report this decision to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic report this decision at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Participants

Angel Casaus-Urrutia, Yun Jin Kim, and Rebecca New were not present and took no part in this case. William Scheu was recused and did not participate in this case.

Dated this 2nd day of November, 2009.

n. Remedial Case 219-13

-----)	
Janet E. Wolfe,)	
Appellant (Complainant),)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER
v.)	
	)	Remedial Case 219-13
Presbytery of Winnebago,)	
Appellee (Respondent).)	

Headnotes

1. Authority of Presbytery: A presbytery has the authority to address the work of a minister of Word and Sacrament through administrative means.
2. Notice and Opportunity to be Heard: When a minister of Word and Sacrament is faced with an administrative proceeding in which the severity of the outcome has the potential to approximate the results of a disciplinary case, the minister shall be furnished fair notice and a reasonable opportunity to be heard on the matter at issue.

Arrival Statement

This remedial case came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on an appeal filed by the Appellant Janet E. Wolfe (Wolfe) from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (SPJC) dated January 14, 2009.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Wolfe has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal in D-8.0105.

Appearances

Wolfe was present and represented by Archibald Wallace, III. The Appellee, Presbytery of Winnebago (Presbytery), was represented by Margaret Zedan.

History

Wolfe, a minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbytery, was honorably retired, effective July 31, 2005. Subsequently, she expressed a desire to seek a call and with the encouragement of the Committee on Ministry (COM) began circulating her Personal Information Form (PIF). After her retirement, Wolfe engaged in various ministerial activities. In an October 20, 2006, letter from the Presbytery's Executive Presbyter, Wolfe was directed to discontinue circulating her PIF and was encouraged to find secular employment. On April 19, 2007, the COM limited the ways in which, and the frequency with

which, Wolfe could perform certain ministerial functions and tasks. On August 27, 2007, following Wolfe's requests to have the limits removed, the COM modified those limits.

On October 12, 2007, Wolfe filed a Complaint with the Synod of Lakes and Prairies in which she alleged that the COM had made the equivalent of a disciplinary finding of wrongdoing and improperly restricted her from fully exercising the office of minister of the Word and Sacrament without a hearing or affording her due process. On December 8, 2007, the officers of the SPJC issued a Preliminary Order dismissing the Complaint because the Complaint did not state a claim upon which relief could be granted (D-6.0305d). On January 15, 2008, Wolfe challenged the Preliminary Order under D-6.0306a. On March 14, 2008, via a conference call, a hearing was held before the SPJC to consider Wolfe's challenge. The SPJC affirmed the Preliminary Order dismissing her Complaint.

Wolfe appealed the dismissal of her Complaint to the GAPJC. In its Decision dated July 25, 2008, the GAPJC reversed the SPJC Decision, and ordered that the case be remanded to the SPJC for pre-trial and trial proceedings consistent with the *Book of Order*. Additionally, the SPJC was encouraged to explore alternative means of dispute resolution with Wolfe and the Presbytery.

A trial on the original Complaint was scheduled by the SPJC to be held on January 14, 2009. On October 1, 2008, the Presbytery Stated Clerk notified Wolfe of a "special hearing" which was scheduled for November 15, 2008, during a stated Presbytery meeting to "receive the report of the Committee on Ministry on its recommendations regarding the extent and scope of your pastoral ministry." The report and recommendations of the COM were not included in that notification to Wolfe. At that "special hearing," COM's report and recommendations restricting Wolfe's ability to fully exercise the office of minister of the Word and Sacrament were presented and received. However, counsel for the Appellee acknowledged during oral argument that the COM's recommended restrictions were incorrectly communicated to the Presbytery, which resulted in additional restrictions on Wolfe.

In its Decision and Order following the January 14, 2009, trial, the SPJC found in favor of the Presbytery, relying in part upon the special Presbytery hearing of November 15, 2008.

Specifications of Error

This Commission has considered all of the Specifications of Error as presented by the Appellant, but has restated them as follows:

The SJPC erred:

1. *In finding that the Presbytery, through its COM, could properly restrict or limit Appellant's functions as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in an administrative proceeding.*

This specification of error is not sustained.

2. *In finding that there was "fundamental fairness" in the proceedings conducted by the Presbytery and its COM.*

This specification of error is sustained.

3. *In considering evidence that occurred subsequent to the actions that were the subject of Appellant's complaint herein.*

This specification of error is sustained.

Decision

Specification of Error No. 1: A presbytery has the authority to address the work of a minister of Word and Sacrament through administrative means. *Rice v. Presbytery of Philadelphia, Minutes, 1996, Part I, p. 172*, states: "In light of G-6.0201, G-11.0103k, G-11.0103n, G-11.0103p, G-11.0502b, a presbytery clearly has the right and responsibility to approve or disapprove of the ministerial tasks undertaken by its members, including serving as temporary supply. This power should not be exercised arbitrarily."

Ministers of Word and Sacrament are members of presbyteries, which "shall designate them to such work as may be helpful to the church in mission, in the performance of which they shall be accountable to the presbytery. They shall be responsible for participation in the larger ministry of the church in addition to the duties to which they are called and designated by the presbytery. ..." (*Book of Order, G-6.0201*).

Wolfe is accountable to the Presbytery for the performance of her work. Presbytery has the authority to determine how she can be helpful to the mission of the church.

Specification of Error No. 2: The Synod erred in finding that the proceedings of the COM and the November, 2008 hearing conducted by the Presbytery were fundamentally fair. In a letter dated October 1, 2008 Wolfe was informed of a special hearing scheduled for November 15, 2008, at which recommendations would be made “regarding the extent and scope of your pastoral ministry.” At minimum, notice in this case should have included a copy of the COM’s report and recommendations.

Gaba v. Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, Minutes, 2003, Part I, p. 269, while concerning the work of an administrative commission which did not have the authority to dissolve a pastoral relationship, is instructive in this case. Wolfe, like Gaba, faced an administrative proceeding by a presbytery in which the severity of the outcome had the potential to approximate the results of a disciplinary case. *Gaba*, at page 271, states:

the specific allegations being made were intentionally withheld from both the pastor and the congregation until the day of the presbytery meeting, thereby depriving them of the opportunity to prepare a reasoned response to the motion to dissolve. While Presbytery was not obligated to provide a full hearing under G-9.0505d at the meeting, it was obligated to provide the interested parties fair notice and a reasonable opportunity to be heard on the matters at issue.

Like Gaba, Wolfe did not have fair notice because she did not receive the specific recommendations being made about her (in this case by the COM) until the day of the Presbytery meeting.¹³ In addition, because her counsel was unable to attend the November, 2008 Presbytery meeting, Wolfe had requested that the hearing be deferred, but that request was refused. That refusal abridged her right to a fair hearing.

Specification of Error No. 3: Prior to the SPJC trial, the Presbytery attempted to cure the deficiencies alleged in the original Complaint by holding a hearing at its November, 2008 meeting. In rendering its Decision, the SPJC improperly considered actions taken by the Presbytery at its November, 2008, meeting which were not the subject of the original Complaint.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that this case be remanded to the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies with instructions to enter an order directing the Presbytery of Winnebago to commence proceedings at a Presbytery meeting no later than December 31, 2009, to determine the restrictions on Wolfe, if any. The Presbytery shall provide Wolfe reasonable, adequate, and timely notice of the meeting, including the proposed restrictions and their rationale, and an opportunity to be heard at the meeting.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Winnebago report this decision to the Presbytery of Winnebago at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Winnebago enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies report this decision to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-participants

Commissioner Angel Casaus-Urrutia was absent and did not participate in this case. Commissioner Michael Lukens was recused and did not participate in this case.

Dated this 10th day of August, 2009.

o. Remedial Case 219-14

Frederick Nash Westbrook, III)	
Appellant (Complainant),)	
v.	)	DECISION AND ORDER
Presbytery of New Hope,	)	Remedial Case 219-14
Appellee (Respondent).)	

Headnotes

1. *Discretionary authority of presbyteries to validate ministries.* Every presbytery has discretionary authority to determine who shall be its ministers and to approve the call of every minister laboring within its bounds. Every presbytery has discretionary authority to validate ministries in accordance with G-11.0403.

2. *Accountability in validated ministries.* While there is no particular form of employment or entity that is required for validation, a validated ministry must be in a setting where the minister is accountable to some entity other than him- or herself.

3. *All calls to ministry must be validated.* A call to ministry in the Presbyterian church must be confirmed by the calling community and validated by the presbytery. A call to ministry is never self-validating.

4. *Decisions of a permanent judicial commission.* Permanent judicial commissions must complete the full written decision and order while in session, and a final decision and order must signed be by the moderator and clerk. D-7.0402c. Permanent judicial commissions should not distribute preliminary notes or drafts of decisions, and all final decisions should be dated.

Arrival Statement and Appearances

This remedial case comes to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) on appeal by Reverend Frederick N. Westbrook, III, from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (SPJC) dated September 2, 2009. This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that the Appellant has standing to appeal, that the appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the appeal states one or more grounds for appeal under D-8.0105. The Appellant was present in person and was represented by Archibald Wallace, III. Ann H. Barnhill appeared for the Appellee, the Presbytery of New Hope (Presbytery).

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, Westbrook has standing to appeal, the appeal was timely and properly filed, and the Notice of Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal in D-8.0105.

History

Westbrook, a member at large of the Presbytery, sought to have his work as an independent media consultant validated as a ministry of the Presbytery. Westbrook provided independent media consulting services to educational institutions and other clients through his solely-owned, for-profit corporation. Westbrook's application for a validated ministry was considered by the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry on February 14, 2007, and initially approved, but reversed a few days later. The Committee on Ministry did not have authority to validate Westbrook's ministry and did not make a recommendation to Presbytery as required by G-11.0502b. The Presbytery took no action on the validation of Westbrook's ministry. On May 24, 2007, Westbrook filed his initial complaint regarding the failure of Presbytery to validate his ministry. His contentions were heard by the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic on July 8, 2008. The SPJC found that the Presbytery had erred by not voting on the Committee on Ministry recommendation, remanded the matter to the Presbytery and directed it to comply with the *Book of Order* to give Westbrook an opportunity to have his application for a validated ministry heard by the Presbytery.

The Presbytery's Committee on Ministry reconsidered Westbrook's application for a validated ministry. The Committee on Ministry recommended that the Presbytery deny Westbrook's request for a validated ministry. The Presbytery considered Westbrook's request at its regularly scheduled October 18, 2008, meeting. Westbrook had an opportunity to speak at the Presbytery meeting, and after a debate, the Presbytery voted by written ballot 50 to 26 to disapprove Westbrook's application for a validated ministry. Westbrook filed a second remedial complaint with the SPJC on or about December 19, 2008. The SPJC heard the second complaint on September 2 or 3, 2009.¹⁴ The SPJC provided handwritten notes of its decision to the parties following the hearing, and issued a typed, decision dated September 3, 2009, on September 22, 2009. Westbrook's notice of appeal was filed on October 15, 2009. This Commission heard oral arguments on February 26, 2010.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: *The Synod failed to find irregularities in the actions of the Presbytery of New Hope leading up to and in the denial of the Application of Rev. Westbrook for Validated Ministry Status at its October 18, 2008 meeting of the Presbytery.*

This Specification of Error Is Not Sustained for the reasons discussed in the Decision below.

Specification of Error No. 2: *The Synod failed to find irregularities in the actions of the Presbytery of New Hope in denying Rev. Westbrook fundamental fairness in the handling of Rev. Westbrook's re-evaluation for Validated Ministry Status in the events leading up to and in the meeting of Presbytery on October 18, 2008.*

This Specification of Error Is Not Sustained for the reasons discussed in the Decision below.

Specification of Error No. 3: *The Synod failed to correct the irregularity in the actions of New Hope Presbytery in incorrectly determining the meaning and application of the term “accountability” in G-11.0403.*

This Specification of Error Is Not Sustained for the reasons discussed in the Decision below.

Specification of Error No. 4: *The Synod committed its own irregularity in failing to comply with D-7.0402c in the manner in which it attempted to render its decision.*

This Specification of Error Is Not Sustained. D-7.0402c states “A written decision shall be prepared while in session, and shall become the final decision when a copy of the written decision is signed by the moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission. A copy of the written decision shall immediately be delivered to the parties to the case by personal service or by certified delivery.” In this case, the SPJC provided the parties with a copy of handwritten notes of the SPJC’s decision immediately following the hearing of the case. These notes were not dated and were not signed by the moderator and clerk of SPJC and could not have been a final decision under D-7.0402c. A signed, written decision was issued by the SPJC about three weeks after the hearing. Issuing undated, unsigned notes of a decision does not comply with the requirements of D-7.0402c. D-7.0402c requires permanent judicial commissions to complete the full written decision and order while in session, and requires a final decision and order to be signed by the moderator and clerk. D-7.0402 also requires permanent judicial commission to deliberate in private. Permanent judicial commissions should not distribute preliminary notes or drafts of decisions, and all final decisions should be dated. The parties, however, agreed that any procedural error by the SPJC in rendering its decision did not have any effect on the substantive issues in this case and any error is not sustained because it is moot.

Decision

Citing *Williamson v. Presbytery of Western North Carolina, Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 475 (GAPJC Remedial Case 217-7) (2005), Westbrook argued that the Presbytery did not develop additional written criteria for validation of ministries within its bounds and thus violated G-11.0403.¹⁵ The record of this case clearly negates such a contention. Both the February 2006 and May 2006 versions of the Presbytery’s Validated Ministry Handbook (Handbook) contain sufficient written criteria for determining whether to validate the ministry of a member at large. In addition to the expository language in the Handbook describing the Presbytery’s criteria for validating ministries, the Handbook contains additional references to the mission of the Presbytery and its expectations that any validated ministry will support that mission, Scriptural citations, and references to other portions of the *Book of Order* and *The Book of Confessions*.

Further, the Handbook includes two application forms: one to be completed by the minister and one to be completed by the entity which the minister would serve.¹⁶ These forms contain specific and detailed questions that give any applicant clear notice of the information the Committee on Ministry would seek and consider in determining whether to recommend to the Presbytery that it validate the ministry. Several of the questions on these forms are preceded by further explanatory material describing the criteria for validating ministries, such as the following material in the “Application Form For Agencies/Organizations”:

Ministers in the Presbyterian Church are required to be accountable to the Presbytery and to the organization or agency which employs^[17] the minister. This accountability of ministers to your organization and to the Presbytery is for both work and personal conduct and character.

6.) What formal supervisory structures does your organization use to encourage and monitor the professional development and oversight of this ministry?

7.) What tools or methods will be used to conduct works and character evaluations in your organization?

8.) After receiving written authorization from the minister, will you share performance reviews, disciplinary actions and formal complaints with the Presbytery? How will you do this?

This Commission concludes that the Presbytery’s Handbook, with its explanations, additional criteria and forms, complies with G-11.0403. There is no evidence to sustain any error that the Presbytery lacked sufficient, written criteria for validating ministries.

Westbrook also contended that he was not treated fairly by the Presbytery in its handling of his application for a validated ministry and that he was denied due process by the Presbytery because he did not have notice of the criteria, nor an adequate opportunity to be heard. Any error in the initial process was addressed when the Presbytery started over and reconsidered Westbrook’s application. After a second hearing by the Presbytery, Westbrook again complained to the Synod, but the second time, the SPJC found the Presbytery’s process, although flawed, was minimally sufficient.¹⁸

Westbrook completed the forms in the Presbytery Handbook and thus had full notice of the criteria the Presbytery used during the validation process. The Presbytery gave Westbrook an ample opportunity to demonstrate that he had been called to a ministry that meets the criteria of G-11.0403 and specifically the accountability provisions of G-11.0403d. The Presbytery considered all of the material Westbrook submitted, including the Handbook forms as completed by Westbrook in his capacity as minister and as the employing entity. Although Westbrook contended that he wanted to submit additional materials,

there is no evidence to show that he had any additional materials that he could or would have submitted to cause the Presbytery to reach a different conclusion about the nature of Westbrook's ministry and the accountability issues surrounding it.

Westbrook had an opportunity to present his case to the Committee on Ministry and on the floor of Presbytery. There is no evidence to show the process was unfair to Westbrook or that he was denied due process.¹⁹

Westbrook also complained that the Presbytery's process for validating his ministry lacked specificity. The Presbytery's criteria are set forth in the Handbook and its accompanying forms. The criteria, particularly the application and evaluation forms in the Handbook, are specific and unambiguous. For the reasons discussed above, this Commission finds that Presbytery has adequate, specific written criteria for validating ministries.

Additionally, Westbrook argued that the Presbytery's criteria for validating ministries are too subjective. This assertion conflates the purported subjectivity of the criteria with the Presbytery's discretionary authority to apply the criteria. Every presbytery has discretionary authority to determine who shall be its ministers and to approve the call of every minister laboring within its bounds (G-11.0402). There is no evidence to show the Presbytery acted arbitrarily, capriciously or abused its discretionary authority in applying the Presbytery's written criteria to the materials submitted by Westbrook.

Westbrook's third specification of error addresses his contention that Presbytery misapplied the concept of "accountability" found in G-11.0403. The Presbytery declined to validate Westbrook's ministry because it found Westbrook could not meet the standard in G-11.0403d that a validated ministry must be "carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery and to organizations, agencies, and institutions." This provision was amended in 1987 by the 199th General Assembly (1987), which added the phrase "and institutions" and removed the words "where appropriate" in order to clarify that ministries of those who were self-employed or acting independently and were not answerable to some other entity for the character and conduct of the ministry should not be validated (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, pp. 610, 611).

The Presbytery declined to validate Westbrook's ministry as a self-employed media consultant working in his one-person, for-profit corporation, where he was accountable for his ministry to no one but himself. The Presbytery's decision rested upon the principle that a validated ministry must be in a setting where the minister is accountable to an entity other than him- or herself.²⁰ There is no particular form of employment or entity that is required for validation, and a ministry in a for-profit entity, or an independent, self-employed consultant, could be validated where the minister demonstrates that he or she is accountable for the ministry to some entity other than him- or herself and the other criteria for validation are met. Westbrook proposed an advisory board, but the Presbytery concluded the proposed board would not have had sufficient oversight functions for Westbrook's ministry. Accountability does not exist where the minister would supervise and evaluate him- or herself.

In validated ministries, the Committee on Ministry acts in a manner similar to that of the local church when a minister of Word and Sacrament is called to pastoral service. Whenever a minister is called to any ministry, whether in a particular congregation of the church, in a governing body of the church, as a chaplain, teacher or missionary, or in an organization, entity or agency in which the church has no official participation, the call must be confirmed by the calling community and validated by the presbytery. A call to ministry in the Presbyterian church always involves responsibility for participating in the ministry of the church at large. See G-6.0201. A call to ministry is never self-validating. Westbrook admitted that he "called" himself to work in his own corporation and is answerable to no one but himself.

Therefore, the Presbytery did not err in its decision not to validate Westbrook's proposed ministry as an independent media consultant. The SPJC did not err in refusing to reverse the decision of the Presbytery.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic is sustained.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that after receiving this Decision and Order, the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic shall report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its next regularly scheduled meeting, that the Synod enter this Decision and order in its entirety in the Synod's minutes and that an excerpt from the Synod minutes showing entry of this Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that after receiving this Decision and Order, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New Hope shall report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its next regularly scheduled meeting, that the Presbytery enter this Decision and order in its entirety in the Presbytery's minutes and that an excerpt from the Presbytery minutes showing entry of this Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of General Assembly.

Absences and Non Participants

Commissioner Angel Casaus-Urrutia and Commission Bradley C. Copeland were not present and took no part in the hearing, deliberations or decision of the Commission in this case. Commissioner Yun Jin Kim recused himself and took no part in the hearing, deliberations or decision of the Commission in this case.

Dated this 28th day of February, 2010 at Louisville, Kentucky

p. Remedial Case 219-15

Session of Caledonia Presbyterian Church, Appellant (Complainant),)	
)	
	)	CONSENT ORDER
v.)	
	)	Remedial Case 219-15
Presbytery of John Knox, Appellee (Respondent).)	

This remedial case came before this Commission on an appeal filed by Appellant, Session of Caledonia Presbyterian Church, from a Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies on September 11, 2009.

Appellant and Appellee having agreed to dismissal of the current action upon their mutual stipulation to certain facts and conditions,

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the following agreement of the Parties is made the Consent Order of this Commission:

1. This case shall be and hereby is dismissed, and the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies dated September 11, 2009, here on appeal, shall be and hereby is vacated, all without prejudice to the rights of either party.

2. The Stay of Enforcement issued herein on October 29, 2009, shall be and hereby is dissolved.

3. Action taken by Respondent-Appellee to date with respect to the candidacy of Mr. Scott Anderson does not constitute approval of any departure from church standards that he might declare in examination for ordination at any time in the future. Insofar as Mr. Anderson may declare one or more departures from church standards during examination, either on his own initiative or in response to questions posed during examination, Appellee will expressly record the substance of those declarations and actions taken with respect thereto.

4. Appellee will conduct any ordination examination of Mr. Anderson at a regularly called meeting in which the examination is duly docketed and noticed in advance to its members and church contact persons, as is customary, or will provide written notice to its members and church contact persons not less than twenty-one (21) days prior to any meeting that is specially called for the purpose of such examination. In either case, Appellee will include with such notice a copy of all written statements, reports and other documents to be submitted by it, any of its committees, and/or Mr. Anderson, to its members and church contact persons in connection with that examination.

5. Appellee will provide an opportunity for a full and complete examination of Mr. Anderson, consistent with the procedures set forth by the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly in Remedial Case 219-11, *Naegeli v. Presbytery of San Francisco* (November 2, 2009).

6. Appellee, through its Stated Clerk or her designee, will ensure that it is prepared to make a verbatim recording of the examination of Mr. Anderson and any debate thereon. If the will of the body at the meeting in which the examination is held is to make such a recording, Appellee will ensure that that recording is preserved for inclusion in the record to be filed in connection with any judicial review of that examination and debate. Appellee's Committee of Counsel will not oppose the making of such a recording in this case.

7. If Appellee approves Mr. Anderson for ordination, it will not proceed to ordain Mr. Anderson until not less than forty-five (45) days have elapsed from the date of such approval, to provide the Appellant and any other proper parties an opportunity to file a remedial case in accordance with the spirit of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly in Remedial Case 215-5, *McKittrick v. West End Presbyterian Church* (March 3, 2003).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of Caledonia Presbyterian Church report this Consent Order to the Session at its first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Consent Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Consent Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of John Knox Presbytery.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of John Knox Presbytery report this Consent Order to the members and elder-commissioners of John Knox Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that John Knox Presbytery enter the full Consent Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Consent Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

Dated the 28th day of February, 2010.

Endnotes

1. In this case, the parties agreed the challenge is to the Resolution itself and not to the AC's exercise of the powers granted in the Resolution.

2. Presbyteries are cautioned that the use of ambiguous language which implies that Constitutional safeguards have been omitted or replaced is not helpful.
3. *Essinger-Hileman v. Presbytery of Miami (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 307)*, clarifies that G-9.0505b applies to provide additional procedural safeguards when administrative commissions act to dissolve a pastoral relationship.
4. *See also Bush et al. v. Presbytery of Pittsburgh (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 319)* (discussing differences between faith and polity, belief and behavior, in the context of G-6.0106b and G-6.0108b).
5. If the Administrative Commission violated the rights of ministers or members under G-6.0108, a remedial action could be brought to address any such infringement.
6. Presbyteries may delegate to their Committees on Ministry the authority to appoint administrative commissions to ordain ministers of Word and Sacrament (Interpretation of G-11.0502h Regarding Committee on Ministry's Authority to Approve Commissions for Ordination, *Minutes, 2006, Part I, Item 05-26, p. 441*).
7. The AC, acting as a session under G-10.0302b(4), had the power to delete from the rolls of the church the name of a member who has renounced jurisdiction of the church, but the issue in this case is not the management of the church's membership rolls, but rather the authority to presume renunciation under G-6.0702.
8. This Commission issued its decision in *Bush, et al. v. Presbytery of Pittsburgh, GAPJC (218-10)*, on February 11, 2008. The 2008 Authoritative Interpretation was adopted by the 218th General Assembly in June, 2008.
9. The question of whether the type of examination contemplated by G-11.0402 is required for restoration has not been raised in this case, is not before this Commission, and need not be addressed by the SPJC on remand.
10. Chapter 14 of the *Book of Order* underwent substantial revision in 2006 by the 217th General Assembly, and hence the Presbytery may have believed that it was still required to vote on the Candidate's certification of readiness for examination.
11. A presbytery that finds that a candidate is not in compliance with the *Book of Order* should consider whether to remove the candidate from the roll of candidates, but is not required to do so. *Sheldon, et al. v. Presbytery of West Jersey, Minutes, 2000, Part I, p. 589*; see also *Stewart v. Mission Presbytery, Remedial Case 218-04, Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 305*.
12. The treatment of confidential material as discussed in *Presbytery of Elizabeth v. Finn, Disciplinary Case No. 213-09, Minutes, 2001, Part I, p. 584*, is instructive in this remedial case.
13. This conclusion is consistent with the Authoritative Interpretation on G-9.0505b issued by the 215th General Assembly (2003) (*Minutes, p. 234*).
14. The record in this case contained undated documents, and the SPJC Decision recites conflicting dates. Counsel for the parties sent undated correspondence. Thus, this Commission is left with a confusing record of the procedural history of this case.
15. In this case, we need not decide whether a presbytery that relies only on the criteria set forth in G-11.0403 is acting within constitutional bounds.
16. Two annual reporting forms are also included in the presbytery's Handbook and both must be completed annually by the minister and the entity which the minister serves once a ministry has been validated.
17. The Presbytery explained that any reference to an "employing" agency or organization could encompass various forms of affiliation between a minister and the agency, organization or other entity the minister would serve in a validated ministry and is not intended to be limited to narrow secular understandings of the term "employment" relevant to various labor or tax laws.
18. To the extent that any of Westbrook's due process arguments are based on a purported failure by the Presbytery to adhere to its own Handbook, such an error would not rise to the level of a Constitutional violation.
19. The SPJC Decision made an unexplained distinction between the spirit and letter of the law with respect to "fundamental fairness." This Commission has previously distinguished the principles of "due process" relevant in disciplinary cases from the principles of "fundamental fairness" relevant in remedial cases. See, e.g., *Lewis v. Presbytery of New York, (Minutes, 1995, Part I, p. 133, paragraph 11.066)*. Although due process may require more, both due process and fundamental fairness require notice, an opportunity to be heard, and a fair, unbiased consideration of the issues.
20. A presbytery could provide the necessary oversight functions through its Committee on Ministry or another group within the presbytery. While it is not likely to be feasible or reasonable to expect presbyteries to accept such responsibilities for every minister who seeks a validated ministry, presbyteries could provide such a service if they elected to do so. In so doing, the presbytery would be accepting responsibilities beyond those set forth in G-11.0403.

B. Governing Bodies Statements of Compliance with General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions

Section IV.B.2.d. of the *Organization for Mission* requires that when a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission contains an order directed to another governing body, the Stated Clerk report to the General Assembly a statement of the governing body's compliance. Below is a report of the statements of compliance received by the Stated

Clerk from the governing bodies for cases decided by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission during the year 2004-2006.

1. *218-15 Session of First Presbyterian Church of Washington, 1793, Session of First Presbyterian Church of Charle-roi, Jeffrey A. Kisner, Frances Lane-Lawrence, D. Jay Losher, Robert Miller, Kenneth E. Nolin, Charles Puff, John Rankin, Susan Vande Kappelle, Robert Vande Kappelle, Betty Voigt, Robert Randolph, and Linda Mankey, Complainant-Appellee, v. Presbytery of Washington*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Trinity is hereby affirmed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Washington report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Trinity report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of the Trinity stated meeting on February 20, 2008, and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Washington on March 11, 2008.

2. *218-21 Robert E. Leech, as President and CEO of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Complainants, v. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Respondent*

The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission dismisses the complaint in the above-captioned matter on the grounds that the complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Case dismissed. No compliance required.

3. *219-01 (Formerly 218-16) Sharon Moody, Sandra Hillquist, Tracey Carper, and Mary Williams, Complainants v. Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, Respondent*

By letter dated January 9, 2009 from complainants' counsel, this commission has been advised that the matter has been settled. Therefore, at the request of complainants, the case is hereby dismissed with prejudice on March 2, 2009.

Case dismissed. No compliance required.

4. *219-02 (formerly 218-17) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, Complainant/Appellee v. Veronica L. Ransom, Respondent/Appellant*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the South Atlantic is hereby affirmed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the South Atlantic report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of the South Atlantic stated meeting on May 5, 2009, and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic on February 21, 2009.

5. *219-03 (formerly 218-17) Robert Sundquist, Mark Hawke, Elise Hawke, Charles Lupton and Di Lupton, Appellants (Complainants), v. Heartland Presbytery, Appellee (Respondent)*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Mid-America is hereby sustained.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Heartland report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Mid-America report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of Mid-America stated meeting on April 24, 2009, and the stated meeting of Heartland Presbytery on October 30, 2008.

6. *219-04 (formerly 218-19) Janet E. Wolfe, Appellant/Complainant, v. Presbytery of Winnebago, Appellee/Respondent*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Final Order of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies dated March 14, 2008, be reversed and this case is remanded for pre-trial and trial proceedings consistent with the *Book of Order*. The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies is also encouraged to explore with Janet E. Wolfe and the Presbytery of Winnebago alternative means to resolve the dispute prior to trial.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Winnebago report this decision to the Presbytery of Winnebago at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Winnebago enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies report this decision to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of Lakes and Prairies stated meeting on September 27, 2008, and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Winnebago on September 9, 2008.

7. *219-05 (formerly 218-20) Jae G. Lee, Ji Suk Kim, and Hyung Young Choi, Appellants (Complainants), v. Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi, Appellee (Respondent)*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS ORDERED that the portions of the SPJC decision that are before this Commission are set aside and this case is remanded for further proceedings consistent with this Decision.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the SPJC is instructed to conduct a pre-trial conference or other proceeding(s) with the parties to clarify issues with respect to the current status of the parties under G-6.0702 before commencing any further judicial proceedings in this matter. The parties are cautioned that in the event this matter is re-tried, they should take steps to assure that the Record is clear with respect to actions of the parties.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi report this decision to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lincoln Trails report this decision to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of Lincoln Trails stated meeting on January 31, 2009, and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Mid-West Hanmi on December 8, 2008.

8. *219-06 Hyung K. Yun, Yoon Soo Kim, Young Yoon Kim, Kwan Young Lee, Seung G. Ahn, In Bae Chun, Richard Yun, and Kee Ho Lim, Appellants (Complainants), v. The Session of the Korean United Presbyterian Church of New Jersey, Appellee (Respondent)*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Presbytery of Newark Permanent Judicial Commission is reinstated.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Newark report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of the Northeast stated meeting on October 16, 2009, and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Newark on March 21, 2009.

9. *219-07 The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Presbytery of Wyoming, Appellee (Complainant), v. Gordon R. J. King, Appellant (Respondent)*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Rocky Mountains is hereby reversed.

05 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Wyoming report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Rocky Mountains report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of the Rocky Mountains stated meeting on April 25, 2009, and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Wyoming on May 1, 2009.

10. *219-08 David Bierschwale, David Lenz, and Carol Shanholtzer, Appellants (Complainants), v. Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, Appellee (Respondent)*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies is hereby affirmed in part and reversed in part.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this case is remanded to the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission for trial as to Specifications of Error Nos. 4 and 5 consistent with this Decision and Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of Lakes and Prairies stated meeting on April 24, 2009, and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area on November 11, 2009.

11. *219-09 Richard L. Davis Appellant (Accused), v. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Presbytery of San Francisco, Appellee (Complainant)*

The following order was entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Pacific is hereby reversed in part and affirmed in part.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the judgment of the Synod of the Pacific finding Davis guilty on charge 1 is reversed, and the Presbytery of San Francisco's judgment of not guilty on charge 1 is reinstated.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Synod of the Pacific's affirmation of the Presbytery of San Francisco's judgment of guilt on charges 2 and 3 is affirmed for the reasons stated in this Decision and Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the additional censure imposed by the Synod of the Pacific is removed, and the original censure imposed by the Presbytery of San Francisco is reinstated.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Francisco report this decision to the Presbytery of San Francisco at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of San Francisco enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Pacific report this decision to the Synod of the Pacific at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Pacific enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of the Pacific stated meeting on October 8, 2009 and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of San Francisco on September 15, 2009.

12. *219-10 Andrew McDonald and Jimmy Shelbourn, Appellants (Complainants), v. Presbytery of Homestead, Appellee (Respondent)*.

The following order was entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

On December 14, 2009, however, the Stated Clerk received a communication from the appellants requesting dismissal of the appeal and the accompanying Stay of Enforcement. The request of the appellants is hereby granted, and the case is dismissed.

Case dismissed. No compliance required.

13. *219-11 Mary Holder Naegeli, J. Mark Stryker, and Margaret H. Gelini, Appellants (Complainants), v. Presbytery of San Francisco, Appellee (Respondent)*

The following order was entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Pacific is AFFIRMED in part and NOT AFFIRMED in part.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Francisco report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Pacific report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision is scheduled to be reported at the stated meeting of the Synod of the Pacific on May 5, 2010, and was reported at the Presbytery of San Francisco stated meeting on November 10, 2009.

14. *219-12 Isaiah D. Phinisee, Appellant (Complainant), v. Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic, Appellee (Respondent)*

The following order was entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission's decision be affirmed in part and modified in part in conformity with this decision.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the pastoral dissolution effected by the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic on February 2, 2007, shall stand.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic establish an administrative commission to review the policies, procedural options, and strategies for dealing with churches and pastors in conflict, that this administrative commission submit a report of its conclusions to the Presbytery by its October, 2010 stated meeting and enter the report in the Presbytery Minutes. The report is to be submitted to the Synod of South Atlantic for its review as part of its annual review of presbytery records (G-9.0407). A copy of the report is to be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This review shall, at a minimum, identify and develop:

1. a plan to utilize denominational resources available for education, support, and assistance in matters of polity and conflict;
2. the presbytery's policies and process in relation to churches and pastors in conflict;
3. internal policies to ensure compliance with the relevant *Book of Order* provisions;
4. a manual to guide presbytery committees on procedures relevant to their respective functions (or review any existing manual); and
5. a plan to train the Committee on Ministry on *Book of Order* provisions related to the rights and responsibilities of pastors and sessions, and provisions related to the role of the Committee on Ministry and presbytery in situations of congregational or pastoral conflict.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of South Atlantic report this decision to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic report this decision at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of South Atlantic stated meeting on October 15, 2009, and at the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic on December 2, 2009. The presbytery stated clerk also certified that the presbytery has established an administrative commission to review presbytery policies, provide COM training, and report back to the presbytery and synod by October 2010.

15. *219-13 Janet E. Wolfe, Appellant (Complainant), v. Presbytery of Winnebago, Appellee (Respondent)*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that this case be remanded to the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies with instructions to enter an order directing the Presbytery of Winnebago to commence proceedings at a Presbytery meeting no later than December 31, 2009, to determine the restrictions on Wolfe, if any. The Presbytery shall provide Wolfe reasonable, adequate, and timely notice of the meeting, including the proposed restrictions and their rationale, and an opportunity to be heard at the meeting.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Winnebago report this decision to the Presbytery of Winnebago at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Winnebago enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies report this decision to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies enter the full decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of Lakes and Prairies stated meeting on January 17, 2010, and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Winnebago on November 14, 2009.

16. *219-14 Frederick Nash Westbrook, III, Appellant/Complainant, v. Presbytery of New Hope*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic is sustained.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that after receiving this Decision and Order, the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic shall report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its next regularly scheduled meeting, that the Synod enter this Decision and order in its entirety in the Synod's minutes and that an excerpt from the Synod minutes showing entry of this Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that after receiving this Decision and Order, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New Hope shall report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its next regularly scheduled meeting, that the Presbytery enter this Decision and order in its entirety in the Presbytery's minutes and that an excerpt from the Presbytery minutes showing entry of this Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of Mid-Atlantic stated meeting on March 8, 2010, and on the docket to be reported at the July 20, 2010, stated meeting of the Presbytery of New Hope.

C. *Advisory Committee on the Constitution Agency Summary*

1. *Assigned Responsibilities*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) is composed of nine voting members as established by the *Book of Order*, G-13.0112 and G-18.0301. The nine voting members must be former members of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, stated clerks or former stated clerks of synods or presbyteries, or other qualified persons with knowledge of and experience with the Constitution and polity of the church (G-13.0112a). The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is a member ex officio without vote.

With regard to questions requiring an interpretation of the *Book of Order*, the advisory committee's responsibilities are set out in G-13.0112c and d as follows:

c. All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* arising from governing bodies of the church or from individuals shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly.

d. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission. The Advisory Committee shall report its findings to the General Assembly along with its recommendations. Such recommendations may include proposals for constitutional change. The General Assembly shall vote on the recommendations, and may amend or decline to approve them.

With regard to proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the advisory committee's mandated responsibilities are set out in G-18.0301b, as follows:

b. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such proposed amendments to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (G-13.0112), which shall examine the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The advisory committee shall report its findings to the General Assembly along with its recommendations, which may include an amended version of any proposed constitutional changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the committee. The General Assembly shall not consider any amendment until it has considered the report and any recommendation from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

2. *Process and Procedures, Responsibilities and Relationships*

The advisory committee does not interpret the Constitution. The role of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, as its title suggests and as its constitutional mandate clearly establishes, is to advise the General Assembly. The committee's advice has no authority until and unless it is approved by the General Assembly. With respect to proposed amendments to the Constitution, the advisory committee focuses on clarity of proposed language, and consistency of the proposed amendment with the remainder of the Constitution. The advisory committee occasionally finds that the intent of the proposal is already inherent in other provisions of the Constitution or that it could be achieved by slight changes in language, by placing the amendment in a different section, or by different language entirely. The advisory committee sometimes has suggested such changes in order to avoid inconsistencies within the *Book of Order*, and also to make as few changes as possible in existing paragraphs and in section numbering.

With respect to requests for interpretation, as well as comments on overtures, the advisory committee seeks to provide advice that is based on constitutional issues, not on the substance of the issues at hand. In many circumstances, the question has been answered by earlier interpretations and does not require action by the General Assembly. In these cases, the inquirer is notified of the standing interpretation. In order to make clear the questions raised, the advisory committee has modified its past practice of reprinting the entire request received (which in some instances contained material not germane to the question itself), and has focused the presentation of the request on the question presented, together with the advisory committee's findings and recommendations. If the question was not clear from the request received, the advisory committee has sought clarification from the individual transmitting the request.

All overtures and reports containing proposed amendments and all requests for interpretation of the *Book of Order* by the General Assembly must be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly (G-13.0112c). This 120-day time period allows the advisory committee the time to consider and research carefully each proposed amendment and request. Those requests that the advisory committee brings to the General Assembly are those that it believes meet this constitutional criterion.

The advisory committee completed its preparatory work for the General Assembly in two meetings. At a two-day fall meeting, held in conjunction with the OGA Fall Polity Conference, we were able to begin work on our task of preparing for the 219th General Assembly (2010). At its spring five-day meeting, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution concluded its work of preparing responses to constitutional issues to be considered by the 219th General Assembly (2010).

After it has received and considered the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, the General Assembly is free to take whatever action it deems wise on proposed amendments, requests for interpretations, and referrals.

The primary focus for the advisory committee is to fulfill its constitutional function to provide advice to the General Assembly concerning overtures that seek to amend the Constitution, and concerning requests for interpretation of the Constitution.

3. *Consultations*

Since the 218th General Assembly (2008), the Advisory Committee on the Constitution has consulted with a number of General Assembly groups as those groups worked on their areas. The ACC provided feedback to the Sexual Misconduct Review Team on their proposed Updated Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures (Item 03-26).

The ACC also consulted with the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations regarding the Ecumenical Agreement with the Roman Catholic Church "regarding mutual recognition of Baptism from the Catholic/Reformed Bilateral dialogue" (Item 07-05 from the 218th General Assembly (2008)).

The ACC also consulted with the task force on a new proposed Form of Government (Item 07-01) as the task force endeavored to respond to the material referred to it by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and the comments and suggestions from the wider church. Elsewhere in this report (Item 07-01), the ACC makes substantive comments on the final report of the task force.

Finally, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution has consulted with the Office of the General Assembly regarding the process to be utilized if the new proposed Form of Government is approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010) and proposals to approve the current Form of Government are also approved. Commissioners will note the committee's analysis of the effect such proposed change to the current Form of Government would have on the new Proposed Form of Government as italicized language at the close of each item of business proposing a change to the current Form of Government.

4. *Editorial Corrections*

The *Organization for Mission* provides, at IV.B.2.c., that the Stated Clerk shall prepare editorial changes in the *Book of Order*, which should be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, provided the changes do not alter the substance of the text approved by the presbyteries. The following changes have been made by the Stated Clerk and approved by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution:

Editorial Change 001 from Valerie Small, the Assistant Stated Clerk, manager, GA Nominations, has asked the ACC to authorize an editorial correction to G-13.0111a.

Small asked whether an editorial correction should be made in G-13.0111a. in the third sentence from the end of the paragraph: "These appointments shall be in consultation with the synod through its regular nominating process and shall reflect the commitment of the inclusive policies of the General Assembly." She suggested that it was the intent that both nominations to the GANC and appointments for other vacancies "shall be in consultation with the synod..." She asked whether the addition of the words "nominations or" be added before "appointments." The sentence would then read "These *nominations or* appointments shall be in consultation with the synod through its regular nominating process and shall reflect the commitment of the inclusive policies of the General Assembly." With respect to the question presented on the editorial cor-

rection, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the suggested editorial correction changes the meaning of the text. “Appointments” pertains only to mid-term appointments to vacancies during the year caused by death, resignation, or inability to act and does not apply to nominations made for the regular election cycle.

With respect to the comment that the word “appoint” should be “nominate” in the fourth sentence, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that preceding editions of the *Book of Order* use the word “nominate” and the amendment that was approved in 2002 intended that the appointment process be replaced with a nomination and election process. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution approves the correction proposed by Small and directs the correction be made by the Stated Clerk in future editions.

Editorial Change 002 from Samuel Marshall III, general presbyter, Presbytery of Salem, asking if the Advisory Committee on the Constitution could editorially change the wording at G-14.0550.

The ACC’s discussion of this request centered on the various meanings of the word “call”. In that discussion they noted the following quote from the 1992 report from the Call System Task Force:

The term ‘call’ is used in three ways in this proposal:

1. The call of God to be a Christian, a call that is made to all people. The sign and seal of this call and our response to it is our Baptism.
2. The call to service in the church that comes to each Christian and is distinctive to each. For those baptized as a child, this call is recognized in confirmation and commissioning; a person baptized upon profession of faith has this call at baptism. For some people this call is directed to a “church vocation.”
3. The call to a particular place of service or employment at a particular time. This third sense of call is used in the naming of the call system. (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 984)

The ACC believes that in G-14.0550 the words relating to “call” refer to the second and third meanings, the call of a pastor to a particular place of service or employment. They do not believe that this “call” refers only to installed positions for pastors; thus, its use in G-14.0550 about temporary pastoral positions is still appropriate and correct.

Using “terms of call” only for installed positions is a practice a presbytery could choose to do; that would make it easier for all concerned to distinguish between temporary and installed positions. The ACC believes the use in this paragraph is not incorrect and does not require a change.

5. *Special Thanks*

On behalf of the 218th General Assembly (2008), the Advisory Committee on the Constitution expresses its thanks and appreciation to the Elders Alyson Janke and James Wilson for their dedicated service to the church through membership on the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. Each of them has brought profound gifts, and deep dedication, to the work of the committee.

The advisory committee is grateful for the staff assistance of the Reverend Mark Tammen, Associate Stated Clerk and director for the Department of Constitutional Services, and Joanne Green, administrative assistant for the Department of Constitutional Services.

Finally, the advisory committee is deeply grateful for the insightful leadership Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, who serves as an ex officio member of the advisory committee. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve with him.

D. *Advisory Committee on Litigation*

I. Narrative

Assigned Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee on Litigation (ACL) is composed of six Presbyterian attorneys. Each year the General Assembly elects one member to a six-year term. Each member is eligible for reelection to an additional term, but in no case may a member serve for a period exceeding twelve consecutive years of service. The General Assembly Nominating Committee nominates persons for the ACL who fit the criteria for eligibility. The Advisory Committee on Litigation was established by the 200th General Assembly (1988) to advise the Stated Clerk on matters relating to litigation.

The consultations typically take place via telephone conference calls after committee members have been provided copies of all pertinent pleadings, orders, and information. The committee ordinarily meets face-to-face at least once each year. It is normally consulted whenever the Stated Clerk is asked to participate in litigation involving matters of civil and religious liberty, church and state relations, and other matters related to the mission and interests of the church.

II. Disposition of Cases Reported in 2008

In Support of Rodi Alvarado Pena

Appeal before the Attorney General

On January 2004, Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick joined an amicus curiae brief to Attorney General John Ashcroft in support of asylum seeker Rodi Alvarado Pena. The brief requested that the attorney general affirm the decision of the immigration judge granting her application for political asylum based on an undisputed record reflecting years of severe domestic violence and the failure of the government of Guatemala to respond to Alvarado's repeated efforts to obtain protection from the abuse. The brief was consistent with PC(USA) policies on immigration and domestic violence. The brief was limited to the finalization of a Standing Rule interpreting asylum based on membership of a particular social group. This brief addressed only the question of Alvarado's eligibility for asylum based on her membership in a particular social group defined by her gender, her marital status, and her status as a victim of domestic violence.

On December 16, 2009—fourteen years after fleeing her home country of Guatemala, where she suffered a decade of brutal domestic violence—Rodi Alvarado's legal battle finally concluded when an immigration judge granted her asylum.

III. Cases Joined (2006–08)

A. *People of the State of New York v. John Taylor*

New York Court of Appeals

New York Court of Appeals Decision October 23, 2007

On November 2, 2006, Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk, joined a variety of religious leaders on an amicus brief against the use of capital punishment. In this case, the defendant was convicted of six counts of first-degree murder and sentenced to the death penalty. In his appeal of the sentence, the defendant asserted that there were procedural errors in the sentencing phase of his trial.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long held positions against capital punishment and joined the amicus brief on that basis.

On October 23, 2007, the New York State Court of Appeals ordered that the death sentence be vacated and returned the case to the New York State Supreme Court for re-sentencing. New York has since repealed its use of capital punishment and Taylor was sentenced to life in prison.

B. *The Presbyterian Church of Sudan et al., v. Talisman Energy Inc, and the Republic of Sudan*

U. S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit

On March 7, 2007, the Stated Clerk joined scholars and former prosecutors with the international criminal for the former Yugoslavia and the Special Court for Sierra Leone submitting to the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit an amicus brief arguing that Talisman Energy could be held liable for its participation in international law violations under either federal common law or international law. The brief argued that a judicial dismissal for failure to prove that the defendants had direct knowledge that their actions aided and abetted the genocide committed by the Sudanese government failed to allow the complainant ample opportunity to present evidence to that issue.

The plaintiffs, who are current and former residents of Southern Sudan, allege that they were victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, and other violations of international law as a result of acts perpetrated by the Canadian energy company, Talisman Energy, Inc., and the government of Sudan.

In September of 2009, the 2nd Circuit issued an opinion affirming the trial court's summary dismissal on the complaint for failure to show proof that the defendants had direct knowledge that their actions aided and abetted the genocide committed by the Sudanese government.

The complainants have filed a Petition for Certiorari with the 2nd Circuit for appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court and are awaiting notice of Certiorari.

C. *Town of Foxfield, Colorado, v. The Archdiocese of Denver*

State of Colorado Supreme Court

Colorado State Court Decision May 1, 2007

On March 15, 2007, the Stated Clerk joined sixteen other religious and civil rights organizations submitting to the Colorado Supreme Court an amicus brief supporting the constitutionality of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). The Board of Trustees of the Town of Foxfield adopted an ordinance ("Ordinance No. 3") on March 22,

2001, which made it unlawful to park more than five motor vehicles for more than fifteen minutes within 1,000 feet of a private residential property on more than two occasions during any thirty day period.

After receiving complaints concerning a catholic parish church's parking, the town filed a lawsuit asking the Arapahoe County District Court to issue a permanent injunction and a declaratory judgment against the Archdiocese of Denver. On August 1, 2002, the Archdiocese of Denver filed a motion arguing that Ordinance No. 3 violates the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 ("RLUIPA"), Colorado's "Freedom to Gather for Worship Act," and the U.S. and Colorado constitutions and was thus void and unenforceable. The town filed a cross motion arguing, among other things, that RLUIPA is unconstitutional.

The trial court rejected the archdiocese's RLUIPA defense. In August 2006, the Colorado Court of Appeals' decision handed the archdiocese a major victory by allowing the church's RLUIPA claims to go forward, noting that "Ordinance No. 3" was not "neutral and generally applicable" and remanded the case back to the trial court. In May 2007 the Court of Appeals' ruling was upheld when the Supreme Court of Colorado denied the Town of Foxfield's petition for Writ of Certiorari.

D. *Shafiq Rasul et al., v. Donald Rumsfeld et al.*

U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

U. S. Court of Appeals Decision January 11, 2008

On March 16, 2007, the Stated Clerk joined other religious organizations submitting to the U.S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia an amicus brief in supporting the plaintiffs (Rasul) in their suit against the U.S. government. The plaintiffs were being held in a detention center in Guantanamo and asserted that the U.S. was in violation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) by acts that inhibited the prisoners' religious faith. The defendants (U.S. government and its agents) assert that RFRA is applicable to areas within the United States territory, but outside its sovereignty that, in this case, is the military base at Guantanamo Bay.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long history of support of religious freedom including participation in drafting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

In their decision on January 11, 2008, the Court of Appeals affirmed the district court's decision that the plaintiffs rights under RFRA were not violated stating "We believe that RFRA's use of 'person' should be interpreted consistently with the Supreme Court's interpretation of 'person' in the Fifth Amendment and 'people' in the Fourth Amendment to exclude non-resident aliens. Because the plaintiffs are aliens and were located outside sovereign United States territory at the time their alleged RFRA claim arose, they do not fall with the definition of 'person.'" In April 2009, the Court of Appeals on remand from the U.S. Supreme Court again held that plaintiffs were not among the protected "person[s]" for whom RFRA, 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb-1(a)-(b), creates a private right of action to remedy unjustifiable government burdens on the exercise of religion. The Court of Appeals interpreted that the U.S. Supreme court decision in *Boumediene v. Bush*, 128 S. Ct. 2229 (2008), limited any extraterritorial reach to the Suspension Clause of the U.S. Constitution and not to any other constitutional provision including any interpretation of the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment that, by extension, would help interpret the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). In short, the U.S. Court of Appeals refused to apply RFRA to persons who are nonresident aliens detained in Guantanamo because they are not considered "persons" or "people" under the U.S. Constitution.

E. *The District of Columbia and Adrian Fenty, Mayor, v. Dick Anthony Heller*

U. S. Supreme Court Case No. 07-290

On January 11, 2008, the Stated Clerk joined other religious organizations in submitting to the United States Supreme Court an amicus brief affirming the constitutional right of the District of Columbia to regulate handguns. For decades, many *amici* have supported meaningful handgun regulations that *amici* believe are critical to protecting life, liberty, and property. *Amici* thus have a particular interest in the manner in which the decision below struck down the District of Columbia's handgun law, because it threatens their ability to seek and obtain effective protection through firearm regulation at the state and local level.

The PC(USA) has a long history of supporting federal and state regulation of handguns.

On June 26, 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court held that 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects an individual's right to possess a firearm for private use in federal enclaves such as the District of Columbia.

F. *Episcopal Church Cases*

California Supreme Court

On May 4, 2008, the Stated Clerk joined in an amicus brief with other denominational partners to the California Supreme Court regarding a schism and property dispute with several cases involving the Episcopal Church. These cases were com-

bined and appealed to the California Supreme Court to clarify the standards for determining which faction in a church property dispute had legal property interest.

The appellants appealed to the California Supreme Court arguing that California should follow “neutral principles of law” and only look at secular documents to determine which faction has the legal property interest. The amicus brief filed by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) argued that Federal constitutional jurisprudence allowing states to apply “neutral principles of law” does not abrogate the right of states to apply a “principle of [church] government” approach to resolve disputes over church property. The brief argued that the California courts may, under the U.S. Constitution, apply its traditional “principle of government” approach to resolving disputes over church property or it may apply a “neutral principles of law” approach. If the California Supreme Court applied the “neutral principles of law” approach, it is not limited to an analysis of only secular legal documents such as deeds or corporate charters alone but has been explicitly instructed by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Jones v. Wolf* (1979) 443 U.S. 595, 602 to take into account an express trust within the denomination’s own constitution.

On January 5, 2009, the California Supreme Court issued an opinion that stated when the court applies neutral principles of law to resolve a property dispute without reference to church doctrine, the court should consider sources such as the deeds to the property in dispute, the local church’s articles of incorporation, the general church’s constitution, canons, and rules, and relevant statutes, including statutes specifically concerning religious property, such as California Corporations Code [which provides that the governing instruments of a general church may impress a trust on property of a local church].

IV. Cases Joined (2008–10)

A. *Episcopal Church Cases*

Virginia Supreme Court

On December 21, 2009, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with a variety of denominational religious partners to the Virginia Supreme Court challenging an old Virginia statute on U.S. Constitution 1st Amendment issues. The 1867 Virginia statute that was challenged delineates a process by which a congregation may determine which branch of a denomination to which it will belong or how an independent congregation will organize itself to own and hold property.

The amici argued that the Virginia state statute violated the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in that it displaced a church’s own rules of self governance in determining property ownership and voting rights, it required civil courts to conduct an extensive inquiry into fundamentally religious questions, and it was neither “generally applicable,” “neutral,” nor was it the least restrictive means to serve a compelling state interest.

The Virginia Supreme Court has not yet issued a decision in this case.

B. *People of the State of Michigan v. Edward Pinkney*

On March 18, 2009, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with several partners on behalf of defendant Rev. Pinkney in *People of the State of Michigan v. Edward Pinkney*. According to the Court of Appeals: “following a jury trial, Rev. Pinkney was convicted of giving valuable consideration to influence the manner of voting by a person, MCL 168.931(1)(a), influencing a person voting an absent voter ballot, MCL 168.932(h), and three counts of possessing, returning, or soliciting to return an absent voter ballot, MCL 168.932(f). The trial court sentenced defendant to five years’ probation with a delayed jail sentence of 365 days. Subsequently, after finding that defendant violated the terms of his probation, the trial court revoked defendant’s probation and sentenced him to 3 to 10 years’ imprisonment. In Docket No. 282144, defendant appeals as of right his convictions. In Docket No. 286992, defendant appeals the trial court’s order revoking his probation.”

One of the reasons Rev. Pinkney’s probation was revoked according to the trial court was that the trial court found that Rev. Pinkney “threatened” the trial court judge in a paragraph published in an opinion column in a newspaper. The amici argued that this paragraph was political and religious speech at the very core of the First Amendment, and not within any exception to constitutional protection. Political speech is central to the First Amendment because of its importance to self-governance. Religious speech is protected by both the Free Speech Clause and the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.

On July 16, 2009, the Court of Appeals of Michigan affirmed the defendant’s convictions, but reversed the order revoking his probation on the grounds that the prohibition to not engage in defaming or demeaning behavior as a condition of parole was not directly related to defendant’s rehabilitation or to the protection of the public and thus an improper condition of parole.

C. *Navaho Nation v. United States Forest Service*

On February 6, 2009, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons joined in an amicus brief with a number of religious entities as partners to Petition for Certiorari to Ninth Circuit requesting that the U.S. Supreme Court resolve a split in the U.S. Courts of Appeals regarding the interpretation of federal and state statutory balance of free exercise of religion with state interests.

The *amici*, both as religious organizations and as organizations concerned with the free exercise of religion, argued that the right of individuals to exercise a wide variety of religious belief is a central aspect of our nation's protection of fundamental rights. Federal and state laws that protect the free exercise of religion are therefore of great and immediate significance to them.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb *et seq.*, and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, 42 U.S.C. § 2000cc *et seq.*, both provide a well-established mechanism to balance the important interests of religious exercise with the interests of the state. However, that balancing takes place only after the religious practitioner establishes that the governmental action in question will “substantially burden” its religious practice. The Ninth Circuit panel held that a substantial burden is one that “prevent[s] the plaintiff from engaging in [religious] conduct or having a religious experience,... Under RFRA, a ‘substantial burden’ is imposed only when individuals are forced to choose between following the tenets of their religion and receiving a governmental benefit (*Sherbert*) or coerced to act contrary to their religious beliefs by the threat of criminal or civil sanctions (*Yoder*).” As such, the Ninth Circuit panel shifted the issue of what constitutes a substantial burden under RFRA from a case-by-case inquiry into the impact on the religious practice at issue to the very different question of the *nature of the governmental action* that creates the burden, limiting it to the deprivation of governmental benefits or criminal or civil coercion. The amici argued that such an interpretation of the term prevented consideration of the competing interests and thereby inappropriately limited the application of the statutes to a narrower scope than mandated by their text and by Congress’ purpose in enacting them. This narrower scope had the effect of finding that the Navaho Tribe in this case was not substantially burdened by the desecration of a holy site by the creation of artificial snow. The Stated Clerk reiterated in his statement of interest that an area of abiding concern for Presbyterians is that Native Americans have full freedom to practice their religion.

The U.S. Supreme Court denied the Petition on June 8, 2009.

E. Votes of Presbyteries

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE 219th GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2010)				
(Amendments require 87 votes to pass)				
		Yes	No	
		Affirm.	Neg. Action	
08-A.	Vows of Membership: On Amending G-5.0200 (Item 04-02)	110	61	
08-B.	Ordained Officers: On Amending G-6.0106b, G-14.0240, and G-14.0450 (Item 05-09)	78	94	
08-C.	Replacing the Word “Sympathy” with the Word “Compassion” - On Amending G-6.0202b and G-6.0401 (Item 04-01)	152	19	
08-D.	General Assembly Mission Council Name Change: On Amending Throughout the <i>Book of Order</i> (Item 08-05)	160	11	
08-E.	Non-Geographic Presbyteries: On Amending G-11.0102 and G-12.0102k (Item 03-07)	153	18	
08-F.	Presbytery Membership of Certified Christian Educators: On Amending G-11.0407 and G-14.0730 (Item 04-23)	111	59	1
08-G.	Synod Membership on Permanent Committees: On Amending G-13.0107, G-13.0108, and G-13.0202a (Item 04-18)	151	20	
08-H.	Five Ordination Examinations: On Amending G-14.0431 (Item 14-01)	152	18	1
08-I.	Certified Christian Educators: On Amending G-14.0730 (Item 04-17)	98	72	1
08-J.	Alternative Forms of Resolution: On Amending D-2.0103 and D-10.0202h (Item 04-15)	164	7	

08-K.	Ecumenical Statement with the Roman Catholic Church: On Ratifying a Common Agreement on Baptism (Item 07-08)	169	2	
08-L.	Ecumenical Statement with the Episcopal Church: On Adopting an Agreement (Item 07-11)	160	11	
08-M.	Ecumenical Statement with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America - On Adopting a Covenant Relationship Agreement (Item 07-04)	170	1	
08-N.	Ecumenical Statement with the Moravian Church: On Adopting a Covenant Partnership Agreement (Item 07-10)	167	3	1

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	Amendment 08-A.			Amendment 08-B.			Amendment 08-C.			Amendment 08-D.			Amendment 08-E.			Amendment 08-F.			Amendment 08-G.			Amendment 08-H.			Amendment 08-I.			Amendment 08-J.			Amendment 08-K.			Amendment 08-L.			Amendment 08-M.			Amendment 08-N.		
	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA
Abingdon	N			N			N			A			A			N			N			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Alaska	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Albany		N		A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Arkansas		N		A			A			A			N			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Atlantic Korean-Amer		N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Baltimore	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Beaver Butler	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			N			A			N					
Blackhawk		N		N			A			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Boise		N		N			A			A			A			N			N			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Boston		N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Carlisle	A			N			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Cascades		N		A			A			A			N			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Cayuga-Syracuse	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Central Florida	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Central Nebraska	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Central Washington	A			N			N			N			A			A			A			A			A			N			N			N			A			N		
Charleston-Atlantic	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Charlotte		N		A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Cherokee	A			N			A			A			A			N			N			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Chicago		N		A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Cimarron	A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Cincinnati		N		N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Coastal Carolina		N		N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Dakota				N																																						
de Cristo	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Denver	A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Des Moines		N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Detroit	A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Donegal	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
East Iowa	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
East Tennessee	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Eastern Korean		N		N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Eastern Oklahoma	A			N			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Eastern Oregon	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Eastern Virginia	A			N			A			A			A			A			N			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Eastminster		N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					

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	Amendment 08-A.			Amendment 08-B.			Amendment 08-C.			Amendment 08-D.			Amendment 08-E.			Amendment 08-F.			Amendment 08-G.			Amendment 08-H.			Amendment 08-I.			Amendment 08-J.			Amendment 08-K.			Amendment 08-L.			Amendment 08-M.			Amendment 08-N.				
	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA		
Elizabeth	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A							
Flint River	A				N		A			A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A							
Florida		N			N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A							
Foothills		N			N			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			N		A			A			A			A						
Genesee Valley		N		A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			N		A			A			A			A						
Geneva	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A					
Giddings-Lovejoy	A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Glacier	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Grace		N		A			A			A			A			N		A			N		A			N		A			A			A			A			A				
Grand Canyon	A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			
Greater Atlanta	A			A			A			A			A			N		N		A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A				
Great Rivers	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Hanmi	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			N			N/A		N		A			N		A			N			N/A				
Heartland		N		A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			
Holston		N			N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Homestead	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Hudson River	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Huntingdon		N			N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A		
Indian Nations	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Inland Northwest		N			N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
James	A				N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			
John Calvin	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
John Knox	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Kendall	A				N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			
Kiskiminetas	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Lackawanna	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Lake Erie	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Lake Huron	A			A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Lake Michigan	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Lehigh	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A		
Long Island		N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A		
Los Ranchos	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Mackinac	A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			
Maumee Valley	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Mid-South		N			N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A		
Miami	A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			
Middle Tennessee		N			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			
Mid-Kentucky	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A		
Midwest Hanmi																																												
Milwaukee	A			A			A			A			A			A			N		A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			
Minnesota Valleys		N		A				N		A			A			N		A			A			A			N		A			A			A			A			A			

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	Amendment 08-A.			Amendment 08-B.			Amendment 08-C.			Amendment 08-D.			Amendment 08-E.			Amendment 08-F.			Amendment 08-G.			Amendment 08-H.			Amendment 08-I.			Amendment 08-J.			Amendment 08-K.			Amendment 08-L.			Amendment 08-M.			Amendment 08-N.		
	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA
Mission	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Mississippi		N			N		A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			N			A			N					
Missouri River Valley	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Missouri Union	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Monmouth	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Muskingum Valley	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
National Capital	A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Nevada	A			N			A			N			A			N			A			N			N			N			N			A			A					
New Brunswick		N		A			A			A			N			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
New Castle	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A					
New Covenant	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
New Harmony	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
New Hope		N		A			N			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
New York City	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Newark	A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Newton		N		A			A			A			N			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
North Alabama		N		N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
North Central Iowa	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
North Puget Sound	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Northeast Georgia		N		N			A			A			N			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Northern Kansas	A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A					
Northern New Eng.	A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Northern New York		N		A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Northern Plains		N		N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Northern Waters	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Northumberland	A			N			A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Northwest PR	A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Ohio Valley		N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Olympia	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Pacific	A			A			N			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A					
Palisades		N		A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Palo Duro	A			N			A			A			N			A			A			N			N			A			A			A			A					
Peace River	A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Peaks		N		N			N			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Philadelphia	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Pines		N		N			A			A			N			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Pittsburgh	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Plains and Peaks	A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Prospect Hill		N		N			A			A			A			A			A			A			N			N			A			A			A					
Providence	A			N			N			A			N			A			A			N			N			A			A			A			A					

219th GA (2010)

PRESBYTERY	219th GA (2010)																																									
	Amendment 08-A.			Amendment 08-B.			Amendment 08-C.			Amendment 08-D.			Amendment 08-E.			Amendment 08-F.			Amendment 08-G.			Amendment 08-H.			Amendment 08-I.			Amendment 08-J.			Amendment 08-K.			Amendment 08-L.			Amendment 08-M.			Amendment 08-N.		
	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA
Pueblo	A			N			A			A			A			N			N			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Redstone	A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Redwoods	A				A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Riverside	A			N			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Sacramento	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
St. Andrew		N			N		A			N			N			N			A			N			N			A			A			A			A					
St. Augustine		N			N		A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Salem	A				A			A			A			A			NA			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
San Diego	A			N			A			A			N			A			N			A			N			A				N			A			A				
San Fernando		N			N		N			N			A			N			N			N			A			A				N			A			A				
San Francisco	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
San Gabriel		N			N		N			A			N			A			N			A			N			A			A			A			A					
San Joaquin	A			N			A			N			A			A			N			A			N			A				N			A			A				
San Jose	A				A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
San Juan		N			N		N			N			A			N			A			A			NA			A				N			A			A				
Santa Barbara	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Santa Fe	A				A			A			N		N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Savannah	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Scioto Valley	A				A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Seattle	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Shenango		N			N		N			N			A			N			A			N			N			A			A			A			A					
Shenandoah		N			N		N			N			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Sheppards/Lapsley	A				A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N		A			A			A			A					
Sierra Blanca	A			N			A			A			A			N			A			N			N			A			A			A			A					
South Alabama		N			N		A			A			N			N			A			N			A			A			A			A			A					
South Dakota	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
South Louisiana		N			N		A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Southeastern Illinois		N				A				A			N			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Southern Kansas	A			N			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Southern New Eng.	A				A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A				
Stockton		N			N		A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Suroeste	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				N			A			A				
Susquehanna Valley	A				A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				
Tampa Bay	A			N			A			A			A			N			N			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Transylvania		N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A				
Tres Rios		N				A				N			N			N			N			N			N			A			A			A			A					
Trinity		N			N		A			A			A			N			N			A			N			A			A			A			A					
Tropical Florida	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A					
Twin Cities Area		N			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			N			A			A			A			A				
Upper Ohio Valley	A			N			A			A			A			A			N			A			N			A			A			A			A					

PRESBYTERY	219th GA (2010)																																									
	Amendment 08-A.			Amendment 08-B.			Amendment 08-C.			Amendment 08-D.			Amendment 08-E.			Amendment 08-F.			Amendment 08-G.			Amendment 08-H.			Amendment 08-I.			Amendment 08-J.			Amendment 08-K.			Amendment 08-L.			Amendment 08-M.			Amendment 08-N.		
	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA
Utah	A			A			A			A			A			A			A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A		
Utica		N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Wabash Valley		N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Washington	A				N		A				N		A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A		
West Jersey	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
West Virginia		N		A			A			A			A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Western Colorado	A				N		A			A			A				N		A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A		
Western Kentucky		N			N		A			A			A			A			A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A		
Western New York	A			A			A			A			A				N		A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A		
Western NC		N		A			A			A			A				N		A			A			N			A			A			A			A			A		
Western Reserve		N		A			A			A				N		A				N		N			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Whitewater Valley	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Winnebago	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A				N		A			A			A			A			A		
Wyoming	A				N		A			A				N		A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Yellowstone	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Yukon	A				N		A			A			A			A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
	110	61		78	94		152	19		160	11		153	18		111	59	1	151	20		152	18	1	98	72	1	164	7		169	2		160	11		170	1		167	3	1

Item 06-01

[The assembly approved Item 06-01 with amendment. See pp. 33, 47.]

On Amending G-11.0407 and G-14.0730 to Affirm the Role of Certified Christian Educators—From the Presbytery of Mission.

The Presbytery of Mission overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to affirm the role of Certified Christian Educators in the life of our denomination and to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to *The Book of Order* to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall G-11.0407 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The stated clerk shall maintain ~~[five]~~ **[four]** rolls, one listing the names of all the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are active members, one listing the names of all the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are members-at-large, one listing the names of all the ministers of Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are inactive members, one listing all Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice *only*, [and, in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote,] [at all presbytery meetings, during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery,] ~~[and, in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote,]~~ and a fifth roll listing those who have been deleted from the other rolls. On or before December 31 of each year, the presbytery shall determine the category of membership of each continuing member in accordance with the relevant sections of this chapter and cause appropriate record of such determination to be made.”

2. Shall G-14.0730b be amended as follows: (Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.)

“b. provide the following support to the [e][C]ertified Christian [e][E]ducators: service of recognition that shall include the constitutional questions at W-4.4003 (G-11.0103n); establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits (G-11.0103n); and access to the committee on ministry (G-11.0503). ~~The presbytery may grant the privilege of the floor to the Certified Christian Educator at all its meetings with voice only, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote under the provisions of G-11.0101b, during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery. (G-11.0407)~~ *In accordance with G-11.0407, [e][C]ertified Christian [e][E]ducators are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote [during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery].*”

Rationale

When Chapter 14 of *The Book of Order* was re-written and approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006), it created an inconsistency between G-11.0407 and G-14.0730b of the *Book of Order*. This overture seeks to bring the two references concerning the privileges granted to Certified Christian Educators into consistency.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) amended these two portions of the *Book of Order* with language that limits these privileges to only those certified Christian educators who are serving in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, there are certified Christian educators who have faithfully served the church in other educational ministries not under the jurisdiction of the presbytery (synods, church-related colleges, other institutions, etc).

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, who are honorably retired, continue to serve the church in many forms of ministry and remain on the active roll of the presbytery. Certified Christian Educators, who have retired, also continue to serve the church in many forms of ministry and should remain on the presbytery’s roll with the privilege of voice and vote (when an elder).

Concurrence to Item 06-01 from the Presbyteries of Lake Michigan, New Hope, and Western New York.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-01

Advice on Item 06-01—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 06-01.

Rationale

The proposed amendments would remove from G-11.0407 and G-14.0730b the phrase adopted by the church at the recommendation of the 218th General Assembly (2008) limiting the privilege of voice (and, in certain cases, vote) to the period of service under presbytery's jurisdiction.

A foundational principle of our polity is that “[t]his church shall be governed by presbyters (elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament, traditionally called ruling and teaching elders)” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0301b). The adoption of this amendment would appear to compromise this principle. In those cases where an educator is not an elder and is also not engaged in a work under the supervision of the presbytery, the proposed amendment would have the effect of entitling a person who is neither an elder nor in service under its supervision to participate in the presbytery's deliberations. If the educator is not a member of the PC(USA), the effect of this amendment would be to invite persons who are not members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) to take part in its governance.

By its adoption of the amendments to G-11.0407 and G-14.0730b in 2008, the church placed limits on the tenure of the participation of educators in the deliberations of the presbytery. In its comment on this proposal, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution noted that

... certification itself is contingent upon having employment as a Christian educator in a Presbyterian church [PC(USA)]. However, once the certification is conferred, the presbytery is required to enroll the certified Christian educator with voice, or, if an elder, with voice and vote under the provisions of G-11.0101b, whether or not the educator remains employed. Once established, the relationship to the presbytery is not contingent upon service or employment in a Presbyterian church. Further, the certified Christian educator could move his or her church membership to a particular church in a different presbytery and that presbytery would be required to enroll the certified Christian educator regardless of employment status and without any right to determine suitability for membership in the presbytery. Conversely, the first presbytery has no authority or warrant for dismissing or removing a departed Christian educator from its roll of certified Christian educators, required by G-11.0407. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 279)

The rationale offered in support of the overture notes that the language of current G-11.0407 does not provide for keeping a roll of Certified Christian Educators who, by virtue of being elders, are entitled to voice and vote in meetings of presbytery; such privilege is provided in G-14.0730. If the General Assembly wishes to correct this inconsistency without abandoning the limitation of privilege imposed by amendments approved by the 218th General Assembly (2010), this purpose may be served by approving the following action:

That the Stated Clerk be directed to send the following amendments to the *Book of Order* to the presbyteries for their positive or negative votes:

1. Shall G-11.0407 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The stated clerk shall maintain four rolls, one listing the names of all the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are active members, one listing the names of all the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are members-at-large, one listing the names of all the ministers of Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are inactive members, one listing all Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice *only*, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote, at all presbytery meetings during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, and a fifth roll listing those who have been deleted from the other rolls. On or before December 31 of each year, the presbytery shall determine the category of membership of each continuing member in accordance with the relevant sections of this chapter and cause appropriate record of each determination to be made.”

2. Shall G-14.0730b be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“provide the following support to the Certified Christian Educators; service of recognition that shall include the constitutional questions at W-4.4003 (G-11.0103n); establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits (G-11.0103n); and access to the committee on ministry (G-11.0503). ~~The presbytery may grant the privilege of the floor to the Certified Christian Educator at all its meetings with voice only, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote under the provisions of G-11.0101b.~~ *In accordance with G-11.0407 Certified Christian Educators are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ordained elders, voice and vote during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery.*”

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: The proposed Form of Government already provides presbyteries with the authority to grant voice and vote.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

Item 06-01 deals with amending G-11.0407 and G-14.0730 to affirm the role of certified Christian Educators.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

Eighty-five percent of the Certified Christian Educators are women. These women are active in the church, highly educated, motivated, and concerned for our churches and our denomination. To lose this voice and vote where ordained as elder when they are retired or without present call is to lose an extremely valuable resource and needs to be changed. This overture does that, and we recommend its approval.

Item 06-02

[The assembly answered Item 06-02 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 47.]

On Calling for a Moratorium Until 2012 for Requests to Change, Alter, or Remove the Current Standards of Ordination—From the Presbytery of Prospect Hill.

The Presbytery of Prospect Hill overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to call for a moratorium until the 220th General Assembly (2012) on motions and overtures that would change, alter, or remove the current standards of ordination for the offices of deacon, elder, and minister of Word and Sacrament.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-02

Advice on Item 06-02—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 06-02.

If the assembly wishes to accomplish the intent of Item 06-02, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to answer Item 06-02 with an action that takes into account the concern identified in the Rationale below.

Rationale

The Presbytery of Prospect Hill has presented an overture that does not suggest a constitutional amendment to the *Book of Order*. The overture requests that the General Assembly approve a moratorium that would, in effect, preclude any overtures to this body about G-6.0106b of the Constitution until the 220th General Assembly (2012).

The General Assembly, under G-13.0103q, is responsible “to decide controversies brought before it and to give advice and instruction in cases submitted to it, in conformity with the Constitution.” (*Book of Order*, G-13.0103q). The delay of all action until 2012 “on motions and overtures that would change, alter, or remove the current standards of ordination for the offices of deacon, elder, and minister of Word and Sacrament” (Item 06-02) should only be approved if such action will assist the General Assembly to decide controversies brought before it, or to give advice and instruction in cases submitted to it on issues relating to overtures before this body under G-6.0106b.

Overtures before the 219th General Assembly Related to Ordination and Installation of Church Officers

Item 06-02 must be considered in the context of other overtures relating to G-6.0106b that are under consideration at this General Assembly. Currently there are no less than eighteen overtures and twelve concurrences that directly or indirectly address G-6.0106b before the 219th General Assembly (2010). These items generally fall into four categories:

1. Proposals to eliminate or substantially amend G-6.0106b that have the intention of making ordination standards less restrictive.
2. Proposals to reinstitute those authoritative interpretations withdrawn by the 218th General Assembly (2008) regarding ordination and installation that were in place prior to the adoption of G-6.0106b.
3. A proposal to replace the authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108 approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006), as amended by the 218th General Assembly (2008), with language limiting the use of G-6.0108b in ordination and installation decisions.
4. A proposal to amend G-6.0106b in order to clarify and strengthen its prohibitions on the ordination or installation of persons not meeting prescribed standards of sexual ethics, and to expand the responsible governing body's oversight over ordained and installed officers with respect to such standards.

The specific merits of the overtures proposed relating to G-6.106b are discussed independently in advice rendered and/or recommendations provided by this committee for each overture. A substantive discussion on this topic is provided in the advice on Item 06-04—from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. The issue this overture presents, however, is whether or not to defer or suspend for a period of at least two years overtures relating to G-6.0106b submitted for consideration before the 219th General Assembly (2010).

Moratoria

Over the last ten years the General Assembly has considered a number of overtures requesting moratoria relating to the subject of G-6.0106b. The General Assembly has been reluctant to issue moratoria that would discourage or limit discussions on this controversial subject matter despite the divisions on this subject in our denomination. In response to a similar set of overtures (particularly Item 05-08, On Establishing a Moratorium on Discussions Regarding Human Sexuality and Ordination Standards), the 214th General Assembly (2002) approved a recommendation that called “... the church to prayer for a period of one year, with the focus of prayer to be on behalf of, and with those with whom we disagree...” however, “[t]his call for prayer [did] not seek to prevent, or be a substitute for other discussions, dialogue, or actions...” (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 64).

Item 06-02, if successful, would defer consideration for a period of two years for the thirty overtures and concurrences before this General Assembly that request action relating to G-6.0106b. Further, Item 06-02 has not suggested any means of collectively resolving the issues that surround concerns expressed by the presbyteries submitting these overtures. If the purpose of this overture is to delay action because of opposition to the proposed overtures addressing G-6.0106b, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution reminds the assembly that the most effective way to oppose a proposed action is to speak and vote against it, rather than to postpone action with no plan for illuminating the discussion. While the action contemplated in this overture is permissible, it suggests a lack of trust that the Holy Spirit will work by and through the commissioners to the assembly. The Advisory Committee of the Constitution reminds the church that such trust in the working of the Holy Spirit is central to the functioning of our polity.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 06-02 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 06-02 be disapproved.

Items 06-02 and 06-03 are similar, calling for a moratorium or a season of rest and healing until the 220th General Assembly (2012) on motions and overtures that would change, alter, or remove the current standards of ordination.

Rationale

The apparent purpose of these overtures is to defer or suspend from discussion and action the numerous overtures that have been submitted to the 219th General Assembly (2010) related to standards of ordination. First, as difficult as it may be, the General Assembly is the arena of the church that is responsible for deciding on such complex and controversial churchwide issues. The actions the assembly takes should contribute to this decision making. In the Reformed tradition, decision making by ordered bodies has a legislative aspect that is part of the wholeness of the church’s life. Item 06-02 offers no way for moving toward decision making. Item 06-03 offers no means by which rest and healing will be accomplished. In recent years moratoriums have been tried, most recently during the consideration of the Peace, Unity, and Purity Report, without resolving these difficult issues.

In addition, as of this writing, presbyteries have submitted numerous overtures with additional concurrences expressing their concern with and proposals about ordination standards. The serious effort of these presbyteries to discern the will of the Holy Spirit for the church in these matters deserves, in response, our serious attention.

Item 06-03

[The assembly answered Item 06-03 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 47.]

On Declaring a Season of Rest by Taking No Action to Modify or Eliminate G-6.0106b for Not Less Than Two Years—From the Presbytery of the Pines.

The Presbytery of the Pines overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to declare a season of rest and healing for the denomination by taking no action to maintain, modify, or eliminate section G-6.0106b from the *Book of Order* for a period of time of no less than two years.

Rationale

For thirty years the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has debated and voted on ordination standards of non-heterosexual persons. Such debates and votes have become divisive, disillusioning, and disappointing to many on both sides of the issue. The decline in membership of congregations, and the number of congregations seeking to withdraw from the denomination are directly related to this ongoing debate and the energy and money it has taken.

Many believe that the true mission of the church has suffered because of this continuing debate, leaving some to see the denomination as focused only the issues of human sexuality.

This overture will allow the church a respite and the ability to focus its time, energy, and money on the great mission before it.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-03

Advice on Item 06-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 06-03 and refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning the similar Item 06-02.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to take this action, it would have a similar impact on the proposed Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 06-03 be disapproved.

Items 06-02 and 06-03 are very similar and call for a moratorium or a season of rest and healing until the 220th General Assembly (2012) on motions and overtures that would change, alter, or remove the current standards of ordination. Check the ACSWP response to 06-02 for the complete rationale behind this Advice and Counsel.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

Item 06-03 recommends taking a two-year break from taking action, modifying, or eliminating G-6.0106b.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove this item.

Rationale

See ACWC's Rationale for Item 06-09.

Item 06-04

[The assembly answered Item 06-04 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 47.]

On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0106—From the Presbytery of San Diego.

The Presbytery of San Diego Presbytery overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to issue an authoritative interpretation of G-6.0106 as follows: "Restoring to full force and effect the interpretive statements concerning ordained service of homosexual church members by the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and the 191st General Assembly (1979) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and all subsequent affirmations including the *Bush v. Pittsburgh Presbytery* (218-10) General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission decision."

Concurrence to Item 06-04 from the Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, Central Florida, Mid-South, St. Andrews, Upper Ohio Valley, and Washington.

Concurrence to Item 06-04 from the Presbytery of Central Washington (with Additional Rationale)

Declaring the definitive guidances (and later authoritative interpretation) of 1978 [UPCUSA] and 1979 [PCUS] to have "... no further force or effect" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 373), leaves the church without a clear response to the question of whether ordination of self-affirming, practicing homosexual persons remains an act in contradiction to its charter and calling in Scripture and to the will of Christ. While both the Old and New Testaments speak clearly on the matter, and the PC(USA) Constitution in Part I, *The Book of Confessions*, speaks explicitly to this matter, these interpretive statements have been of great benefit and guidance to the church's life and witness.

Further, the definitive guidance addresses many helpful aspects of the church's relationship with persons in homosexual relationships, correctly advising Christians to love and care for their brothers and sisters and giving explicit authoritative counsel on the church's proper pastoral role. The church is poorer for the removal of that guidance.

Concurrence to Item 06-04 from the Presbytery of Cherokee (with Additional Rationale).

The intent of this overture is to reverse the authoritative interpretation (AI) of the 218th General Assembly (2008) that declared these statements and their affirmations to have no further force and effect. The assembly erred and exceeded its authority when it nullified them while G-6.0106b is in the *Book of Order*.

The *Book of Order* requires that a General Assembly comply with *Robert's Rules of Order (RONR)*, except where the Constitution provides otherwise (G-9.0302). *Robert's Rules of Order* asserts the following rule of interpretation:

Each society decides for itself the meaning of its bylaws. When the meaning is clear, however, the society, even by a unanimous vote, cannot change that meaning except by amending its bylaws. An ambiguity must exist before there is any occasion for an interpretation [emphasis in the original] (*RONR*, 10th edition, p. 570, lines 16–20).

The Constitution does not provide otherwise. In fact, it affirms and applies this rule by empowering a General Assembly to provide authoritative interpretation on "questions requiring an interpretation" of the *Book of Order* (G-13.0103r, G-13.0112c).

The 218th General Assembly (2008) violated this rule when it nullified the set of clear, unambiguous, and, because of G-6.0106b, evidently correct interpretations of church law described below:

1. The 1978 interpretative statement was the definitive guidance: "That unrepentant homosexual practice does not accord with the requirements for ordination set forth in Form of Government, Chapter VII, Section 3 (37.03) ..." (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, p. 265).

2. The 1979 interpretative statement supported the one above and added: "For the church to ordain a self-affirming practicing homosexual person to ministry would be to act in contradiction to its charter and calling in scripture ..." (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1979, Part I, pp. 201, 207).

3. The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission affirmed these statements several times. In the *Blasdell* case in 1985, it found that the statements were authoritative interpretations of the two constitutions as they were in 1978 and 1979 and of the PC(USA) Constitution in 1985, and concluded: "Therefore, it is unconstitutional for the Church to ordain any self-affirming, practicing, and unrepentant homosexual as elder, deacon, or minister of the Word" (*Minutes*, 1985, Part I, p. 121).

4. The 205th General Assembly (1993) affirmed the statements with an authoritative interpretation (AI) that declared: (a) That the two statements have been considered by the judicial commissions of the Church and "carry the weight of 'authoritative interpretations'" and (b) "Current constitutional law in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is that self-affirming, practicing homosexual persons may not be ordained as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, elders, or deacons" (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 76–77, 322).

These interpretive statements and their affirmations are evidentially clear and unambiguous interpretations of church law. Any question about their being correct was completely removed in 1997 by the addition to the *Book of Order* of G-6.0106b, which contains the "fidelity and chastity" requirement. By nullifying them, the General Assembly exceeded its authority because there was no real ambiguity and no *bona fide* occasion for interpretation.

A General Assembly may propose changes in church polity by proposing amendments to the *Book of Order* (G-18.0301c). The assembly in 2008, by a small majority, properly exercised this power by proposing an amendment that would remove the fidelity and chastity requirement from G-6.0106b.

But the General Assembly's power to interpret the *Book of Order* is of an entirely different nature (G-13.0103r, G-13.0112). When acting as interpreters, commissioners to a General Assembly, like members of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission and the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, are duty-bound to discern and act objectively on what the *Book of Order* says, not what they believe it should say. The power to interpret is not to be used to change clearly expressed church polity. Thus, it was an abuse of power to approve the AI without making it contingent on the presbyteries' approval of the amendment.

In the same circumstances in 2001, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised that nullification of the interpretive statements should be contingent on the presbyteries' approval of the amendment, and the assembly followed that advice (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 51–52, 405).

Concurrence to Item 06-04 from the Presbytery of Redstone (with Additional Rationale).

The 218th General Assembly (2008), without waiting to see the outcome of the vote of the presbyteries concerning the amendment of G-6.0106, prematurely removed interpretive documents written specifically to explain and support the current, and once again upheld, language concerning the requirements, for ordination as specified in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The 218th General Assembly (2008) issued a series of authoritative interpretations that may be contributing to the erosion of trust in the covenantal relationship that binds our presbyteries and congregations together in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The actions of the 218th General Assembly (2008) mark a change in our covenant life as Presbyterians and has generated uncertainty about the nature and authority of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Concurrence to Item 06-04 from the Presbytery of South Alabama (with Additional Rationale).

The intent of this overture is to reverse the authoritative interpretation (AI) of the 218th General Assembly (2008) that declared these statements and their affirmations to have no further force and effect. The assembly erred and exceeded its authority when it nullified them while G-6.0106b is in the *Book of Order*.

The *Book of Order* requires that a General Assembly comply with *Robert's Rules of Order*, except where the Constitution provides otherwise (G-9.0302). *Robert's Rules* asserts the following principle of interpretation:

“Each *society decides for itself the meaning of its bylaws*. When the meaning is clear, however, the society, even by a unanimous vote, cannot change that meaning except by amending its bylaws. An ambiguity must exist before there is any occasion for an interpretation” [emphasis in the original] (*RONR*, 10th edition, p. 570, lines 16–20).

The *Book of Order* affirms and applies the principle by empowering a General Assembly to provide authoritative interpretation on “questions requiring an interpretation” of the *Book of Order* (G-13.0103r, G-13.0112c).

The 218th General Assembly (2008) violated the principle when it nullified a set of clear, unambiguous, and correct interpretations of church law:

1. The 1978 interpretative statement was the Definitive Guidance, “That unrepentant homosexual practice does not accord with the requirements for ordination set forth in Form of Government, Chapter VII, Section 3 (37.03) ... (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, Part I, 1978, p. 265).

2. The 1979 interpretative statement supported the 1978 statement shown above and added: “For the church to ordain a self-affirming practicing homosexual person to ministry would be to act in contradiction to its character and calling in scripture” (*Minutes*, PCUS, Part I, 1979, pp. 201, 207).

3. There were several affirmations by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GA PJC) of the statements. The first was in the *Blasdell* case in 1985, when the GA PJC found that the 1978 and 1979 statements were authoritative interpretations of the two constitutions as they were then, and of the PC(USA) Constitution in 1985, and concluded: “Therefore, it is unconstitutional for the Church to ordain any self-affirming, practicing, and unrepentant homosexual as elder, deacon, or minister of the Word” (*Minutes*, 1985, Part I, p.121).

4. The 205th General Assembly (1993) affirmed the statements with an authoritative interpretation (AI) that declared: “(a) That the two statements have been considered by the judicial commissions of the church and ‘carry the weight of authoritative interpretation’ and (b) ‘Current constitutional law in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is that self-affirming, practicing homosexual persons may not be ordained as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, elders, or deacons’” (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 76–77, 322).

The interpretive statements and their affirmations are clear and unambiguous. Any question about their being correct was completely removed in 1997 by the addition to the *Book of Order* of G-6.0106b, which contains the “fidelity and chastity” requirement. By nullifying them, the General Assembly violated an important principle of interpretation and exceeded its authority to provide authoritative interpretations when there are *bonafide* needs for them.

Concurrence to Item 06-04 from the Presbytery of Tropical Florida (with Additional Rationale).

[The following rationale, with the exception of the last three paragraphs, is similar to the “Additional Rationale” from the Presbytery of Cherokee.]

The intent of this overture is to reverse the authoritative interpretation (AI) of the 218th General Assembly (2008) that declared these statements and their affirmations to have no further force and effect. The assembly erred and exceeded its authority when it nullified them while the current text of G-6.0106b is in the *Book of Order*.

The *Book of Order* requires that a General Assembly comply with *Robert's Rules of Order*, except where the Constitution provides otherwise (G-9.0302). *Robert's Rules of Order* asserts the following rule of interpretation:

“Each society decides for itself the meaning of its bylaws. When the meaning is clear, however, the society, even by a unanimous vote, cannot change that meaning except by amending its bylaws. An ambiguity must exist before there is any occasion for an interpretation” [Emphasis in the original] (RONR, 10th edition, p. 570, lines 16–20).

The Constitution does not provide otherwise. In fact, it affirms and applies this rule by empowering a General Assembly to provide authoritative interpretation on “questions requiring an interpretation” of the *Book of Order* (G-13.0103r, G-13.0112c).

The 218th General Assembly (2008) violated this rule when it nullified the set of clear, unambiguous, and, because of G-6.0106b, evidently correct interpretations of church law described below:

1. The 1978 interpretative statement was the definitive guidance: “That unrepentant homosexual practice does not accord with the requirements for ordination set forth in Form of Government Chapter VII, Section 3 (37.03) ...” (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, p. 265).

2. The 1979 interpretative statement supported the one above and added: “For the church to ordain a self-affirming practicing homosexual person to ministry would be to act in contradiction to its charter and calling in scripture ...” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1979, Part I, pp. 201, 207).

3. The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission affirmed these statements several times. In the *Blasdell* case in 1985, it found that the statements were authoritative interpretations of the two constitutions as they were in 1978 and 1979 and of the PC(USA) Constitution in 1985, and concluded: “Therefore, it is unconstitutional for the Church to ordain any self-affirming, practicing, and unrepentant homosexual as elder, deacon, or minister of the Word” (*Minutes*, 1985, Part I, p. 121).

4. The 205th General Assembly (1993) affirmed the statements with an AI that declared: (a) That the two statements have been considered by the judicial commissions of the Church and “carry the weight of ‘authoritative interpretation.’” and (b) “Current constitutional law in the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) is that self-affirming, practicing homosexual persons may not be ordained as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, elders, or deacons” (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 76–77, 322).

These interpretive statements and their affirmations are evidentially clear and unambiguous interpretations of church law. Any question about their being correct was completely removed in 1997 by the addition to the *Book of Order* of G-6.0106b, which states: “Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standard of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness.” By nullifying them, the General Assembly exceeded its authority because there was no real ambiguity and no *bona fide* occasion for interpretation.

A General Assembly may propose changes in church polity by proposing amendments to the *Book of Order* (G-18.0301c). The assembly in 2008, by a small majority, properly exercised this power by proposing an amendment that would remove the fidelity and chastity requirement from G-6.0106b.

But the General Assembly’s power to interpret the *Book of Order* is of an entirely different nature (G-13.0103r, G-13.0112). When acting as interpreters, commissioners to a General Assembly, like members of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission and the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, are duty-bound to discern and act objectively on what the *Book of Order* says, not what they believe it should say. The power to interpret is not to be used to change clearly expressed church polity. Thus, it was an abuse of power to approve the authoritative interpretation without making it contingent on the presbyteries’ approval of the amendment.

In the same circumstances in 2001, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised that nullification of the interpretive statements should be contingent on the presbyteries’ approval of the amendment, and the assembly followed that advice (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 51–52, 405).

When G-6.0106b, which contains the “fidelity and chastity” requirement, was added to the *Book of Order* in 1997, it became the clear, definitive provision of church law with respect to the ordination of self-acknowledged, practicing homosexual persons. It reinforced the 1978 and 79 interpretations. The 2006 Peace, Unity, and Purity authoritative interpretation (AI) was believed by some to have permitted the ordination of persons who do not agree to comply with the requirement. That belief was dispelled when the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission ruled in *Bush v. Presbytery of Pittsburgh* that such candidates can not be ordained.

Some may believe that the AI approved in 2008 in response to the John Knox overture has overturned the *Bush* ruling. That is by no means certain and there are strong arguments against it. That will not be determined until the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission decides a relevant case.

In 2001 there was an overture to delete G-6.0106b and to nullify the 1978 and 79 interpretations. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised that both actions were necessary to accomplish the purpose of the overture and that the nullifying action should be “held in abeyance and not take effect” until the presbyteries approved the amendment (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, p. 405). The assembly followed that advice; but the presbyteries rejected the amendment, so the nullification did not take effect. In 2008 the assembly should have followed the 2001 precedent and made the nullification of the interpretations contingent on the approval of the proposed amendment.

Concurrence to Item 06-04 from the Presbytery of Yukon (with Additional Rationale).

Declaring the authoritative interpretation (AI) of 1978 and 1979 to have “no further force or effect” leaves the church without a clear response to the question of whether ordination of self-affirming, practicing homosexual persons remains “an act in contradiction to its charter and calling in Scripture” and “to the will of Christ,” as the wording of the AIs say. While both the Old and New Testaments speak clearly on the matter, and the PC(USA) Constitution in Part I speaks explicitly to this matter, the authoritative interpretation has been of great benefit and guidance to the church’s life and witness.

Further, the authoritative interpretation addresses many helpful aspects of the church’s relationship with persons in homosexual relationships, correctly advising Christians to love and care for their brothers and sisters and giving explicit authoritative counsel on the church’s proper pastoral role. The church is poorer for the removal of that guidance.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-04

Advice on Item 06-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 06-04.

If the assembly wishes to accomplish the intent of Item 06-04, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to answer Item 06-04 with an action that takes into account the concern identified in the Rationale below.

Rationale

Item 06-04 is part of a group of items before the 219th General Assembly (2010) addressing the ordination and/or installation of candidates for office in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). No issue has absorbed as much energy and attention from General Assemblies over the past two decades as this one. For a variety of reasons, the issue is not only one that evokes deep passion, but also one with a complex history. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution strongly believes that a clear understanding of this history and the current interplay of constitutional provisions and authoritative interpretations is an absolute prerequisite for discerning where the Holy Spirit is leading the 219th General Assembly (2010) with respect to the variety of options before it. In order to assist the assembly in understanding this history and interplay of constitutional provisions, this advice therefore sets out: (1) a summary of the items before the 219th General Assembly (2010) related to ordination and/or installation; (2) an explanation of the means by which the *Book of Order* is amended and interpreted; (3) background concerning the approval and interpretation of G-6.0106b prior to the 217th General Assembly (2006); (4) background concerning the 217th General Assembly (2006)’s approval of an authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108b as it applies to the examination of candidates for ordination and/or installation in office, a review of subsequent decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) pertaining to the authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108b, and the action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) in response to those PJC decisions; (5) a review of actions of the 218th General Assembly (2008) withdrawing authoritative interpretations adopted prior to the adoption of G-6.0106b; and (6) a review of the options available to the 219th General Assembly (2010) with respect to these items.

Accordingly, while Item 06-04 itself is relatively short, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) consider it within the broader context of the various items addressing the ordination and/or installation of candidates for office. The last section of this rationale specifically addresses Item 06-04 in light of this broader advice.

1. *Summary*

The 219th General Assembly (2010) has before it a number of items of business related to amendment or interpretation of the ordination standards contained in G-6.0106b. In response to these items:

- it may leave in place the status quo,

- it may propose to the presbyteries that they amend or remove G-6.0106b, or
- it may adopt a new authoritative interpretation of G-6.0106b.

In considering the appropriate response to this business, it is essential that the assembly have an accurate understanding of the context in which these items are proposed.

Book of Order section G-6.0106b contains standards governing the ordination and installation of individuals to all three offices of the church by presbyteries and sessions. Because the 218th General Assembly (2008) withdrew authoritative interpretations that pre-dated G-6.0106b, this section and the authoritative interpretations of it are now the exclusive standards governing ordination. The GAPJC has adopted several authoritative interpretations of G-6.0106b. These authoritative interpretations make it clear that G-6.0106b requires that the conduct complained of be self-acknowledged for it to constitute a basis for challenging a governing body's decision to ordain or install, as opposed to its process for making such a decision. Lack of chastity in singleness or of fidelity in marriage is subject to the same standard of self-acknowledgment as any sinful behavior in order to preclude ordination or installation. "Self-acknowledged" means that by words or actions, the person seeking ordination or installation has made it plain, palpable, and obvious that he or she is engaged in conduct "the confessions call sin" (G-6.0106b).

The authoritative interpretations approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006) and the 218th General Assembly control governing bodies in the process of examining and approving candidates for ordination and installation, and the application of G-6.0108b to determinations of whether a candidate can be ordained and/or installed under G-6.0106b. Section G-6.0108 requires examining bodies to give prayerful and careful consideration, on an individual, case-by-case basis, to any departure from an ordination standard in matters of belief or practice that a candidate may declare during examination. However, the examining body is not required to accept a departure from standards and cannot excuse a candidate's inability to perform the constitutional functions unique to his or her office (such as administration of the sacraments). Whether the examination and the ordination and/or installation decision comply with the Constitution of the PC(USA), and whether the ordaining/installing body has conducted its examination reasonably, responsibly, prayerfully, and deliberately in deciding to ordain a candidate for church office is subject to review by higher governing bodies.

2. *Business Before the 219th General Assembly (2010) Related to Ordination and Installation of Church Officers*

The 219th General Assembly (2010) has before it a variety of items addressing how governing bodies should determine whether a candidate should be ordained and/or installed, and what conduct bars such ordination and/or installation. These items generally fall into four categories, with some overlap between these categories:

- Proposals to eliminate or substantially amend G-6.0106b that have the intention of making ordination standards less restrictive.
- Proposals to reinstitute those authoritative interpretations withdrawn by the 218th General Assembly (2008) regarding ordination and installation that were in place prior to the adoption of G-6.0106b.
- A proposal to replace the authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108 approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006), as amended by the 218th General Assembly (2008), with language limiting the use of G-6.0108b in ordination and installation decisions.
- A proposal to amend G-6.0106b in order to clarify and strengthen its prohibitions on the ordination or installation of persons not meeting prescribed standards of sexual ethics, and to expand the responsible governing body's oversight over ordained and installed officers with respect to such standards.

A variety of responses are possible to these various proposals. Evaluation of those options requires an understanding of the implications of constitutional amendment as opposed to authoritative interpretation, as well as of the history of these issues and the current status of both these constitutional provisions and of the authoritative interpretations governing those provisions.

3. *How the Book of Order Is Amended and Interpreted*

There are three sources of constitutional authority for the PC(USA):

- The Constitution itself and amendments to it. The process of constitutional amendment is carefully defined in the *Book of Order* (Chapter XVIII).
- GAPJC decisions interpreting the Constitution. The GAPJC makes such decisions in the context of hearing the appeal of particular disputes (remedial cases) or of allegations against an individual (disciplinary cases), or, fairly rarely, in an action originating in the GAPJC itself. The GAPJC only interprets the Constitution in the context of such particular cases and appeals.

c. Deliberate General Assembly interpretations approved pursuant to the process described in G-13.0112. The General Assembly approves such interpretations not in the context of particular disputes, but for the broader guidance of the church. Any General Assembly is free to modify or withdraw an authoritative interpretation approved by a previous General Assembly or by a decision of the GAPJC.

Decisions by the GAPJC and General Assembly interpretations under G-13.0112 together are referred to as “authoritative interpretations” (G-13.0103r). The most recent interpretation of a provision of the *Book of Order* is binding.

In this context, the constitutional structure of the church is not modeled on the United States federal system with the GAPJC as a supreme court that has final authority in constitutional matters, because the General Assembly itself also has power to provide authoritative interpretations of the Constitution in accordance with G-13.0103r. The General Assembly is not permitted to overturn the resolution of a particular dispute between the parties to a case before the GAPJC, but it is permitted to overturn a constitutional interpretation adopted by the GAPJC by approving an authoritative interpretation setting forth a different interpretation than the GAPJC used in deciding the particular case before it.

4. *The Adoption and Interpretation of G-6.0106b prior to the 217th General Assembly (2006)*

In 1978, the former UPCUSA adopted a policy statement that came to be called “definitive guidance.” The next year, 1979, the former PCUS adopted a similar statement. Both sought to prohibit the ordination of “self-affirming practicing homosexual persons.” The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) determined in a permanent judicial commission (PJC) decision (*Union Presbyterian Church of Blasdell v. The Presbytery of Western New York, Minutes*, 1985, Part I, p. 118 et seq.) that those earlier statements carried the authority of the present Constitution. Thus, the statement prohibiting ordination of “self-affirming practicing homosexual persons” from the earlier “definitive guidance” became an “authoritative interpretation” prohibiting the ordination of “self-affirming practicing homosexual persons.” Several additional PJC decisions reiterated this authoritative interpretation, such as *Hope Presbyterian Church v Central Presbyterian Church (Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 142); *LeTourneau v Presbytery of Twin Cities (Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 163); *Sallade, et al. v Presbytery of Genesee Valley (Minutes*, 1993, p. 166). Likewise, the 205th General Assembly (1993) affirmed that authoritative interpretation (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 76–77).

In 1996 the General Assembly proposed, and in 1997 the presbyteries adopted, an amendment to the Form of Government found at G-6.0106b, which provides:

Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. (*Book of Order*, G-0106b)

The provisions of G-6.0106b have been interpreted by the GAPJC on several occasions.

In *Wier v Second Presbyterian Church (Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 831) [Wier I], the General Assembly PJC held that G-6.0106b does not authorize the nullification of an ordination that has been completed, even if the ordination might have been contrary to G-6.0106b’s provisions.

In *Benton, et al. v Presbytery of Hudson River (Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 586), the General Assembly PJC limited the application of G-6.0106b, finding: “The Appellants argue that since G-6.0106b is a foundational standard derived from the Confessions, it should be applied to standards for worship as well. This is unpersuasive. The plain language of G-6.0106b speaks only to ordination. The adoption of G-6.0106b did nothing to change the constitutional interpretation concerning worship practices set out in the 1991 Authoritative Interpretation ...” (*Ibid.*, p. 587).

In *Londonderry, et al., v Presbytery of Northern New England (Minutes*, 2001, Part I, p. 577), the General Assembly PJC held that a higher governing body had an obligation to exercise pastoral oversight when an ordaining body (a session) adopted the position that “... ‘we vow to continue welcoming persons living singly or in committed relationships, regardless of sexual orientation, into the life, membership and leadership of this congregation on an equal basis, including eligibility for election and ordination as a ruling elder or deacon’” (*Ibid.*, pp. 577–78). In reaching this conclusion, the PJC noted: “G-6.0106b presents the qualifications established by the corporate judgment of the whole church for ordination to service as minister of the Word and Sacrament, elder, and deacon. The Historic Principles of Church Order are explicit as to the right of the church to make and to enforce these standards ...” (*Ibid.*, p. 579). Further, the PJC noted: “It is not unusual for a document such as our *Constitution*, written at different periods of time and under different circumstances, to exhibit tensions and ambiguities in its provisions. Nevertheless, it is the task of governing bodies and judicial commissions to resolve them in such a way as to give effect to all provisions. ...” (*Ibid.*, p. 578).

In *Wier v Second Presbyterian Church of Ft. Lauderdale (Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 339) [Wier II], the General Assembly PJC held that an allegation that the accused was a “practicing homosexual” was an insufficient allegation of an irregularity against the respondent, and that the complaint must allege that the person purportedly disqualified from ordination or installation must have self-acknowledged the proscribed sin. The PJC further explained: “Self-acknowledgment may come in

many forms. In whatever form it may take, self-acknowledgment must be plain, palpable, and obvious, and details of this must be alleged in the complaint..." (*Ibid.*, p. 341). Finally, the PJC went on to hold that "[s]ince the standard for self-acknowledgment is that it be plain, palpable, and obvious, the ordaining and installing governing body is in the best position to make any such determination based on its knowledge of the life and character of the candidate. ..." (*Ibid.* p. 341).

In *Presbytery of San Joaquin v. Presbytery of the Redwoods* (*Minutes*, 2003, Part I, p. 277), the General Assembly PJC held that "sexual orientation alone would be no more sufficient or reasonable grounds for further questioning than would singleness, obesity or any other categorization. In other words, stereotypical profiling is not a reasonable or valid ground for singling out a candidate for additional questioning. Therefore, if a person does not self-acknowledge a practice that the confessions call sin, then a governing body has a positive obligation to make further inquiry only if it has direct and specific knowledge that said person is in violation of the ordination and installation standards of the Constitution" (*Ibid.* p. 280).

In *McKittrick v Session, West End Presbyterian Church of Albany, New York* (*Minutes*, 2003, Part I, p. 272), the General Assembly PJC held that where an "... elder had admitted during his examination that he was a gay man in a fifteen-year relationship, and that this information had previously been shared with his pastors and the nominating committee of the church..." (*Ibid.*, p. 272), a remedial case could seek a declaration that the installation was irregular. Further, the PJC held that a remedial case could challenge the procedures followed by the installing body, as opposed to the conduct of the individual installed. Finally, the PJC noted that "... when, as in this case, an installation occurs immediately following the examination process, there may be no practical opportunity for a protesting or dissenting party to seek a stay of enforcement of the decision to install. The Presbyterian custom of conducting business 'decently and in order' should not be converted into a race in which the swift prevail. We undermine our system of mutual accountability when the proceedings such as ordination or installation are rushed with the consequence (whether intended or otherwise) that certain remedies become unavailable. Therefore, we encourage governing bodies to permit sufficient time between the examination and installation or ordination of a candidate so that there can be no intimation that any governing body intended to shield its action from scrutiny..." (*Ibid.*, 274).

These cases before the General Assembly PJC thus established the following authoritative interpretations of G-6.0106b:

a. Governing bodies are not free to declare that they will disobey the constitutional standards for ordination and installation established by the whole church, and when faced with such a declaration higher governing bodies must exercise oversight, whether pastoral or administrative over the disobedient governing body.

b. Section G-6.0106b applies to ordination and installation, and does not otherwise set constitutional limitations for governing bodies.

c. Section G-6.0106b requires that the conduct complained of be self-acknowledged for it to constitute a basis for challenging a governing body's decision to ordain or install, as opposed to its process for making such a decision. Self-acknowledged means that by words or actions, the person seeking ordination or installation has made it plain, palpable, and obvious that he or she is engaged in conduct "the confessions call sin." Alleged sexual sin (lack of chastity in singleness or fidelity in marriage) is subject to the same high standard of self-acknowledgment as any sinful behavior in precluding ordination or installation.

d. With respect to a challenge based on an alleged lack of chastity or fidelity, sexual orientation alone is not sufficient ground to require a governing body to make further inquiry into a person's fitness for office.

e. A challenge made to the process by which a governing body makes a decision to ordain or install is subject to review, and presumably to correction of the process by which such decisions are made.

Since G-6.0106b was ratified by the presbyteries in 1997, three General Assemblies have proposed either to strike or substantially to amend this provision. These proposals were defeated by the presbyteries in 1998, 2002 and 2009.

5. *The 217th General Assembly (2006)'s Approval of an Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108 and Its Revision by the 218th General Assembly (2008)*

The 217th General Assembly (2006) approved the following authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108 based on the recommendation of the Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church:

a. *The Book of Confessions* and the Form of Government of the *Book of Order* set forth the scriptural and constitutional standards for ordination and installation.

b. These standards are determined by the whole church, after the careful study of Scripture and theology, solely by the constitutional process of approval by the General Assembly with the approval of the presbyteries. These standards may be interpreted by the General Assembly and its Permanent Judicial Commission.

c. Ordaining and installing bodies, acting as corporate expressions of the church, have the responsibility to determine their membership by applying these standards to those elected to office. These determinations include:

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDERS AND MINISTRY

(1) Whether a candidate being examined for ordination and/or installation as elder, deacon, or minister of Word and Sacrament has departed from scriptural and constitutional standards for fitness for office,

(2) Whether any departure constitutes a failure to adhere to the essentials of Reformed faith and polity under G-6.0108 of the *Book of Order*, thus barring the candidate from ordination and/or installation.

d. Whether the examination and ordination and installation decision comply with the Constitution of the PC(USA), and whether the ordaining/installing body has conducted its examination reasonably, responsibly, prayerfully, and deliberately in deciding to ordain a candidate for church office is subject to review by higher governing bodies.

e. All parties should endeavor to outdo one another in honoring one another's decisions, according the presumption of wisdom to ordaining/installing bodies in examining candidates and to the General Assembly, with presbyteries' approval, in setting standards. (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 515)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 217th General Assembly (2006) that this proposed authoritative interpretation G-6.0108 was a permissible interpretation if the Assembly chose to approve it. Section G-6.0108 provides:

a. It is necessary to the integrity and health of the church that the persons who serve in it as officers shall adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity as expressed in *The Book of Confessions* and the Form of Government. So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained.

b. It is to be recognized, however, that in becoming a candidate or officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) one chooses to exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds. His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek or hold office in that body. The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the governing body in which he or she serves. (*Book of Order*, G-6.0108)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has pointed out that G-6.0108 reflects an important principle of Presbyterian polity—the balance between the individual right of conscience recognized in the Westminster Confession and the necessity of uniformity within our denomination in those things our community has found to be essential. While the principle originated at the time of the Adopting Act in 1729 based on certain ministers' objections to portions of the Westminster Confession relating to the relationship between the church and civil government, over the history of the denomination the view of what is essential and nonessential broadened to other issues.

Prior to the approval of this authoritative interpretation, the relationship between G-6.0108 and G-6.0106b had not been authoritatively interpreted by either previous General Assemblies or the GAPJC. In its advice to the 217th General Assembly (2006), the Advisory Committee on the Constitution discussed the relationship between these two provisions:

By using the phrase “practice which the confessions call sin” rather than delineating practices that bar ordination, G-6.0106b creates an intersection between belief and practice. A person can only repent of conduct he or she genuinely believes to be sinful. If a person does not believe conduct to be sinful, he or she may abstain from that conduct out of concern for the well-being of the community (e.g., 1 Corinthians 8), but he or she cannot be said to repent of that conduct. The authoritative interpretation offered by the task force would allow an ordaining or installing governing body, when faced with a particular practice that is described as sinful at some place in the confessions, that the candidate does not believe to be sinful, to ordain or install the candidate on the basis that the candidate's *belief* that the practice was not sinful does not depart from the essentials of the Reformed faith or polity. (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 529)

During the course of the 217th General Assembly (2006), the proposed authoritative interpretation recommended by the Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church was amended both by the committee and on the floor of the assembly.

Between the 217th and 218th General Assemblies (2006 and 2008), the GAPJC issued three decisions—*Buescher v Presbytery of Olympia* (Remedial Case 218-09, *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 318); *Bush v. the Presbytery of Pittsburgh* (Remedial Case 218-10, *Ibid.*, p. 319); *Session of First Presbyterian Church of Washington v. Presbytery of Washington* (Remedial Case 218-15, *Ibid.*, p. 324)—applying the 217th General Assembly's authoritative guidance to particular controversies. Each of these cases arose from the adoption by presbyteries of resolutions declaring certain “mandatory” provisions of the Form of Government as “essential,” and therefore not provisions from which a candidate for ordination or installation could depart without being barred from ordination or installation. In each case, the PJC determined that the presbytery under the authoritative interpretation was not permitted to determine outside the scope of a particular examination of a particular candidate what was a departure from what was essential:

... [T]he broad reference in G-6.0106b to “any practice which the confessions call sin” puts the responsibility first on the candidate and then on the examining body to determine whether a departure is a failure to adhere to the essentials of Reformed faith and polity and the remainder of G-6.0108(a) with respect to freedom of conscience. The ordaining body must examine the candidate individually. The examining body is best suited to make decisions about the candidate's fitness for office, and factual determinations by examining bodies are entitled to deference by higher governing bodies in any review process. (*Bush v Presbytery of Pittsburgh*, *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 323)

Bush further states that G-6.0108 protects “... freedom of conscience, but *only* with respect to the interpretation of Scripture...” (*Ibid.*, p. 322). However, as the decision goes on to point out, such departures may relate to the Presbyterian system of doctrine, government, or discipline. In other words, Presbyterians may depart from our denomination's doctrine,

government, or discipline if they determine their interpretation of Scripture leads them to such a departure. In the context of an examination of a candidate for office, the governing body must determine, in light of the interpretation of Scripture offered, whether that departure is from something essential to the Reformed doctrine, government or discipline.

In addressing the meaning of the authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108, the GAPJC indicated that the following limitations apply: “It is up to the examining body to determine whether a candidate’s actions and beliefs, including with respect to G-6.0106b, are a serious departure from the essentials of Reformed faith and polity, or are such that they infringe on the rights and views of others, or would obstruct the constitutional governance of the church (G-6.0108a)” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 321).

The Permanent Judicial Commission then went on to address the ability of governing bodies to apply the authoritative interpretation to the provisions of G-6.0106b:

Section G-6.0106b contains a provision where conformity is required by church officers “to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or in chastity in singleness.” The church has decided to single out this particular manner of life standard and require churchwide conformity to it for all ordained church officers. Therefore, the specific “fidelity and chastity” standard in G-6.0106b stands in contrast to the provisions of G-6.0106a, including those concerning faith, discipleship, belief and manner of life in the church and the world, and also the remainder of G-6.0106b. The candidate and examining body must follow G-6.0108 in reaching a determination as to whether the candidate for office has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity, but that determination does not rest on distinguishing “belief” and “behavior,” and does not permit departure from the “fidelity and chastity” requirement found in G-6.0106b. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 321–322)

In response to this portion of the *Bush* decision, the 218th General Assembly (2008) adopted (Item 05-12) a further Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108:

...the requirements of G-6.0108 ... apply equally to all ordination standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Section G-6.0108 requires examining bodies to give prayerful and careful consideration, on an individual, case-by-case basis, to any departure from an ordination standard in matters of belief or practice that a candidate may declare during examination. However, the examining body is not required to accept a departure from standards and cannot excuse a candidate’s inability to perform the constitutional functions unique to his or her office (such as administration of the sacraments). (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 380)

This authoritative interpretation modified the decision in *Bush* to allow a governing body to determine that a candidate’s departure from the second sentence of G-6.0106b, as applied through the third sentence of G-6.0106b, is not a departure from what is essential to Reformed faith and polity. The effect of this action is to remind ordaining bodies that they bear the responsibility for determining whether any particular standard (including those described in G-6.0106b) will be a bar to that particular candidate’s ordination or installation. This Authoritative Interpretation preserves the historic right of sessions and presbyteries to determine their membership. All these decisions, however, continue to be subject to review by a higher governing body.

6. *Action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) Withdrawing Authoritative Interpretations Regarding Ordination Standards Adopted Prior to the Ratification of G-6.0106b*

The 218th General Assembly (2008) adopted, as a part of Item 05-09, a new authoritative interpretation that is now in effect:

Interpretive statements concerning ordained service of homosexual church members by the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the 119th General Assembly (1979) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and all subsequent affirmations thereof, have no further force or effect.

What this means is that this identical wording from those 1978 and 1979 predecessor bodies is no longer in effect: “... For the church to ordain a self-affirming, practicing homosexual person to ministry would be to act in contradiction to its charter and calling in Scripture, setting in motion both within the church and society serious contradictions to the will of Christ” (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, p. 264; *Minutes*, 1979, PCUS, p. 207;).

The subsequent affirmations that are also negated include these words from the 205th General Assembly (1993):

... [w]e concur with the opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution that “the General Assembly statements of 1978, 1979, and subsequent years concerning the ordination of self-affirming, practicing homosexual persons and the related recommendations adopted by the General Assemblies have been considered by the judicial commissions of the church . . . [and] currently carry the weight of ‘authoritative interpretations.’” (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 76).

Authoritative Interpretations relying on the following GAPJC cases (GAPJC) are now no longer in effect:

- *Union Presbyterian Church of Blasdell v Presbytery of Western New York*, (*Minutes*, 1985, Part I, p. 121)
- *LeTourneau v Presbytery of Twin Cities* (*Minutes*, 1993, 163)
- *Sallade, et al. v Presbytery of Genesee Valley* (*Minutes*, 1993, 166)
- *Hope Presbyterian Church v Central Presbyterian Church* (*Minutes*, 1994, 142)

7. *Summary of the Current Status of Ordination Standards*

After the 218th General Assembly (2008):

a. G-6.0106b continues to contain standards governing the ordination and installation of individuals to all three offices of the church by presbyteries and sessions.

b. Earlier holdings of the GAPJC remain in place, including the holdings that G-6.0106b requires that the conduct complained of be self-acknowledged for it to constitute a basis for challenging a governing body's decision to ordain or install, as opposed to its process for making such a decision. Lack of chastity in singleness or of fidelity in marriage is subject to the same standard of self-acknowledgment as any sinful behavior in precluding ordination or installation. Self-acknowledged means that by words or actions, the person seeking ordination or installation has made it plain, palpable, and obvious that he or she is engaged in conduct "the confessions call sin."

c. The authoritative interpretations approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006) and the 218th General Assembly (2008) remain in effect and control governing bodies in the process of examining and approving candidates for ordination and installation. These authoritative interpretations apply to the application of all of G-6.0106b. Governing bodies are not permitted to determine outside the examination of a particular candidate whether a departure is from the essentials of Reformed faith and polity.

8. *Options Available to the 219th General Assembly (2010)*

The 219th General Assembly (2010) may address the various items related to ordination and installation in a number of ways:

a. The General Assembly may take no action, leaving in place G-6.0106b and the authoritative interpretations that govern its application.

b. The General Assembly may submit to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote an amendment to repeal G-6.0106b or replace it (with or without amendment to portions of Chapter 14 of the Form of Government) with a different standard intended to be less restrictive. Items 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17 recommend this course of action.

c. The General Assembly may submit to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote an amendment to replace G-6.0106b with provisions intended to make more restrictive the standards of this section.. Item 06-11 recommends this course of action.

d. The General Assembly may approve an authoritative interpretation related to ordination standards. This item (06-04) and Item 06-18 recommend this course of action.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution's advice as to each of these approaches is set forth in the items suggesting that approach.

9. *Advice Concerning Item 06-04*

Item 06-04 asks the 219th General Assembly (2010) take action to undo the two authoritative interpretations related to ordination standards adopted by the 218th General Assembly (2008). It does not attach a rationale, but a number of presbyteries that have concurred with the overture have attached their own rationales.

The intent of Item 06-04 is first, to reinstate the authoritative interpretations of the current G-6.0106a as precluding the ordination of a self-affirming, practicing homosexual person to the offices of deacon, elder, and Minister of Word and Sacrament; and second, to reinstate the holding in *Bush* that G-6.0108 does not permit departure from the "fidelity and chastity" requirement found in G-6.0106b.

Initially, in light of the rationale contained in several of concurrences with Item 06-04, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that it disagrees with the assertion that either of the actions of the 218th General Assembly (2008) were not within its power to take. First, with respect to the withdrawal of interpretations of G-6.0106a adopted prior to the ratification of G-6.0106b, the issue of authoritative interpretations is discussed in detail in section five above. The 218th General Assembly (2008) was free to adopt an authoritative interpretation of G-6.0106a irrespective of any action by the presbyteries with respect to repeal or amendment of G-6.0106b.

Likewise, with respect to the authoritative interpretation regarding the scope of G-6.0108's application to the second sentence of G-6.0106b, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 218th General Assembly "... that such an authoritative interpretation is within the power of the 218th General Assembly (2008) to approve. The effect of such an action would be to allow governing bodies to examine a candidate regarding his or her understanding of the terms 'fidelity in

marriage’ and ‘chastity in singleness,’ and if the candidate’s understanding of those confessional standards differed from the understanding of the governing body, to determine whether the departure was from an essential of Reformed faith and polity ...” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 381).

Further, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the overture mischaracterizes *Bush* as a “subsequent affirmation” of the authoritative interpretations of G-6.0106a made before the adoption of G-6.0106b. *Bush* dealt with the application of G-6.0108 to G-6.0106b, and did not address those authoritative interpretations.

With respect to both prongs of the suggested authoritative interpretation, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that if it desires to modify any actions of the 218th General Assembly (2008), it should do so in clear and direct language, rather than requiring the church to figure out what has been withdrawn and what that means for the current interpretation of the Constitution. The area of ordination standards is already confused enough, as is demonstrated by the sheer length of this advice. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends disapproval of Item 06-04 as drafted because it would add to, rather than subtract from, the confusion currently facing the church regarding these standards.

With respect to the first prong of the overture, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that if the Assembly desires to further authoritatively interpret current ordination standards as they relate to sexual conduct that it direct its authoritative interpretation to G-6.0106b, which is the constitutional provision that most specifically addresses such conduct, rather than reinstating interpretations of G-6.0106a that were adopted before the specific provisions of G-6.0106b were ratified. Therefore, if the General Assembly wishes to accomplish the apparent intent of Item 06-04, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that it adopt an authoritative interpretation defining in as specific terms as possible what self-acknowledged practices preclude ordination under G-6.0106b.

Likewise, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that if the General Assembly desires to reinstate the holding of the *Bush* decision that was modified by the 218th General Assembly, it authoritatively interpret G-6.0108 as not applying to the second sentence of G-6.0106b.

Implications for the proposed revisions to the proposed revised Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b. To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0108, the identical provision (although not divided into two paragraphs) in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 06-04 be disapproved.

Rationale

Item 06-04 has the effect of superseding and replacing the authoritative interpretations related to ordination standards that were adopted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and the 217th General Assembly (2006) following the study process of the Theological Task for on Peace, Unity, and Purity. One authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108 states:

...the requirements of G-6.0108 ... apply equally to all ordination standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Section G-6.0108 requires examining bodies to give prayerful and careful consideration, on an individual, case-by-case basis, to any departure from an ordination standard in matters of belief or practice that a candidate may declare during examination. However, the examining body is not required to accept a departure from standards... (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 42-43, 380)

The second authoritative interpretation adopted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) determines that the statements by PC(USA)’s predecessor bodies, that ordination of a “self-affirming, practicing homosexual person to ministry” would be contradictory to Scripture and the will of Christ, would “have no further force or effect” (*Minutes*, 2008, pp. 42, 373).

The result of these actions was to allow a governing body to determine that a candidate’s departure from the specific standard in G-6.0106b, fidelity in marriage and chastity in singleness, or any particular standard, is not a departure from the essentials of Reformed faith and polity based on their careful and case-by case consideration of the candidate. These actions attempt to strike a balance between identifying the essentials of faith in the tradition and the individual’s right of conscience. They place the responsibility for determining an individual’s readiness for ordination with sessions and presbyteries, subject to the review of a higher body.

The 2008 General Assembly also sent to the presbyteries for their approval or disapproval an amendment to the *Book of Order* that would have eliminated G-6.0106b from the church’s constitution. Presbyteries disapproved this amendment with

seventy-eight presbyteries voting for the amendment. This was nine less than needed for ratification. The 219th General Assembly (2010), as of this writing, has received numerous overtures and concurrences related to this issue. Many of these would either remove G-6.0106b or replace it with a standard intended to be less focused on sexual behavior. Some, such as Item 6-04, would return the church to a standard that identifies certain sexual behavior as so uniquely contrary to the essentials of faith as to render a candidate unqualified for ordination regardless of the candidate's faith, character, and conscience. Clearly, the church is of several minds on this issue. Good and serious and faithful people disagree.

Central to this disagreement is our diversity about the interpretation of Scripture. Item 6-04 would replace current authoritative interpretations of ordination standards that recognize this diversity among individuals and governing bodies with an authoritative interpretation requiring one interpretation of biblical passages related to same-sex behavior. The church's constitution states:

... So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained. (*Book of Order*, G-6.0108a)

... The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the governing body in which he or she serves. (*Book of Order*, G-6.0108b)

As the church struggles to determine its standards on an issue that so clearly divides good people, ACSWP recommends that the authoritative interpretations adopted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) not be superseded by another authoritative interpretation that would restore a rigid and legalistic standard for ordination based solely on sexual behavior and in so doing disregard the differing perspectives of almost half of the church's presbyteries. Maintaining openness to an on-going process of discernment by individuals and governing bodies should continue as the church strives to understand and do the will of Christ more fully.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

Item 06-04 recommends issuing an authoritative interpretation of G-6.0106b.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that Item 06-04 be disapproved.

Rationale

See Rationale for Item 06-09.

Item 06-05

[The assembly answered Item 06-05 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 47.]

On Homosexual Practice and the Church: An Authoritative Interpretation—From the Presbytery of Shenandoah.

The Presbytery of Shenandoah overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. Approve the following authoritative interpretation:

Introduction

In 1978, the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America adopted a "Policy Statement and Recommendations on Homosexuality" (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, p. 261ff).

In 1979, the 119th General Assembly (1979) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States adopted an essentially identical statement, "Homosexuality and the Church" (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1979, Part I, p. 201ff).

Those statements were reaffirmed by the 198th General Assembly (1986) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (*Minutes*, 1986, Part I, pp. 194–199) and again by the 205th General Assembly (1993) (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 322).

Although the 218th General Assembly (2008) did not remove these statements, it did say:

"Interpretive statements concerning ordained service of homosexual church members by the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and the 119th General Assembly (1979) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and all subsequent affirmations thereof, have no further force or effect" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, Item 05-09, p. 373).

American society has radically changed since the late 1970s, and persons practicing homosexual behavior have moved into the mainstream. Popular media are much more likely to laud homosexual behavior than to condemn it. Many public officials openly proclaim their same-sex attractions. With the Supreme Court's decision in *Lawrence et al v Texas*, handed down in 2003, homosexual practice between consenting adults can no longer be considered illegal. All these things have rendered many points in the 1978 and 1979 documents on homosexuality out of date.

But to clarify its ordination standards as well as to witness to the wider world, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) must speak out concerning same-sex attractions and behavior. It must speak to condemn homophobia, and to urge sensitivity in the examination of candidates. For all these reasons, the 1978 and 1979 statements, properly updated, deserve a fresh hearing. [Note: Text follows "Policy Statement and Recommendations on Homosexuality" from the *Minutes* of the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the UPCUSA. For a better understanding of how this new text differs from the 1978 version, proposed changes to the original text are shown with a strikethrough for deleted text and italic for text that has been added.]

"Homosexual Practice within a Theological Context

"New data and hypotheses in psychology, sociology, endocrinology, and the other secular disciplines cannot in themselves determine a shift in the church's posture on this issue. Very frequently these disciplines shed new light upon our understanding of ~~homosexuality~~ *same-sex attraction* and how the church should respond to it. Frequently the results of scientific inquiry are tentative and inconclusive, neutral in their theological and ethical implications, or even weighted with unspoken values and assumptions that are misleading against the background of biblical faith. Therefore, we must address the task of theologically interpreting these extrabiblical data, while at the same time renewing our understanding of Scripture and tradition in the light of those data in the sciences.

"Medical and psychological theories concerning same-sex attraction and its causes are complex and often contradictory...

"Human sexuality has a dynamic quality. Within the constraints of nature, nurture serves to transform both sexual identity and intersexual preference. Our sexuality is vulnerable to shaping influences from many directions...

"... [T]he Genesis account of the creation of humankind, which speaks of the precious and precarious balance of male and female life together that perpetually needs both our affirmation and God's upholding grace. Genesis offers polemic against deviations from the wise separation of humankind into man and woman. It is this separation that makes union possible. In creation, God separates woman from man so that they are constituted with yearning for each other. Becoming one flesh they portray the glory of his image in the earth.

"To say that God created humankind male and female, called man and woman to join in partnership as one flesh, and commanded them to multiply (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24) is to describe how God intended loving companionship between a man and a woman to be a fundamental pattern of human relationship and the appropriate context for male-female genital sexual expression. ~~However, to say that God created humankind male and female, called man and woman to join in partnership as one flesh and commanded them to multiply~~ *this is not, however, to state that God intended to limit the possibility for meaningful life to heterosexual marriage. Jesus' own celibate lifestyle and his commitment to his own ministry rather than to the biological family (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21) demonstrates the blessing of God upon life lived outside the covenant of marriage.*

"...

"We conclude that ~~homosexuality~~ *homosexual behavior* is not God's wish for humanity. This we affirm, despite the fact that some of its forms may be deeply rooted in an individual's personality structure. ~~This we affirm, despite the fact that some of its forms may be deeply rooted in an individual's personality structure. Some persons are exclusively homosexual in orientation.~~ In many cases ~~homosexuality~~ *same-sex attraction* is more a sign of the brokenness of God's world than of willful rebellion. In other cases homosexual behavior is freely chosen or learned in environments where normal development is thwarted. Even where ~~the~~ *perceived* homosexual orientation has not been consciously sought or chosen, it is neither a gift from God nor a state nor a condition like race; it is a result of our living in a fallen world.

"How are we to find the light and freedom promised to us by our Lord through the Holy Spirit in such a world? Where do we find norms for authentic life, which in truth transcend the conditioning of history and culture, and the power to live by them?

"We dare begin in no other place than with the living Word, Jesus Christ, who in risen power transcends time and space and the limitations of our values, norms, and assumptions to confront, judge, and redeem us. It is here that all theological confession and affirmation must begin—in the light of God as revealed to us in the incarnate and living Word, Jesus Christ. It is his exposure of our sin, his obedient sacrificial love, and his being raised in power to continue his activity of redemption of this world (1 Cor. 15: 20-28) that brings us new light. This same God in Jesus Christ comes

to make us whole, to redeem creation, and to restore it to the goodness proclaimed at creation. Yet the prelude to this redemption is divine judgment.

“To look at ~~the~~ Jesus Christ is to see at once the brokenness of the world in which we live and the brokenness of our own lives. This comes as the supreme crisis in our life.

“Yet, in the moment of this crisis, the Spirit of God brings the confirmation of divine forgiveness, moves us to respond in faith, repentance, and obedience, and initiates the new life in Christ.

“Jesus Christ calls us out of the alienation and isolation of our fallen state into the freedom of new life. This new life redeems us as sexual beings but is impossible without repentance. To claim that God’s love for us removes divine judgment of us is to eliminate the essence of divine love and to exchange grace for romantic sentimentality. There is a necessary judgment in God’s love—else it cannot redeem. It was this Christ who said to the woman in adultery, ‘Go and sin no more’ (John 8:1–12), and to the rich young ruler: ‘One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor... and come, follow me.’ (Luke 18:22 and parallels.)

“Jesus Christ calls us out of the alienation, brokenness, and isolation of our fallen state into the freedom of new life in Christ. We deny that this new life liberates us to license and affirm that it frees and empowers us for lives of obedience whereby all of life becomes subject to his Lordship.

“Scripture and Homosexual Practice

“We have already indicated that we must examine scientific data but must move beyond them in order to understand what our sexuality means and how it should be expressed. We anchor our understanding of homosexual practice in the revelation in Scripture of God’s intention for human sexuality.

“In order to comprehend the biblical view of homosexual *practice*, we cannot simply limit ourselves to those texts that directly address this issue. We must first understand something of what the Scriptures teach about human sexuality in general. As we examine the whole framework of teaching bearing upon our sexuality from Genesis onward, we find that homosexuality is a contradiction of God’s wise and beautiful pattern for human sexual relationships revealed in Scripture and affirmed in God’s ongoing will for our life in the Spirit of Christ. It is a confusion of sexual roles that mirrors the tragic inversion in which men and women worship the creature instead of the Creator. God created us male and female to display in clear diversity and balance the range of qualities in God’s own nature. The opening chapters of Genesis show that sexual union as ‘one flesh’ is established within the context of companionship and the formation of the family. Nature confirms revelation in the functional compatibility of male and female genitalia and the natural process of procreation and family continuity.

“Human sin has deeply affected the processes by which sexual orientation is formed, with the result that none of us, ~~heterosexual or homosexual~~, fulfill perfectly God’s plan for our sexuality. This makes it all the more imperative for revelation to make clear for us how our sexual relationships are to be conducted so as to please God and challenge us to seek God’s will instead of following our own. Though none of us will ever achieve perfect fulfillment of God’s will, all Christians are responsible to view their sins as God views them and to strive against them. To evade this responsibility is to permit the church to model for the world forms of sexual behavior that may seriously injure individuals, families, and the whole fabric of human society. ~~Homosexual p~~Persons who *experience same-sex attractions but who* will strive toward God’s revealed will in this area of their lives, and make use of all the resources of grace, can receive God’s power to transform their desires or arrest their active expression.

“Within the context of general biblical teaching on human sexuality, a number of passages dealing specifically with ~~homosexuality~~ homosexual practice are significant for our response to this issue. These are, of course, complementary to the wider biblical themes of creation, fall, and redemption.

“Three Scriptures specifically address the issue of homosexual behavior between consenting males: Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13, and Romans 1:26–27. Romans 1:26–27 also addresses the issue of homosexual behavior between consenting females. These three passages stand in an integral and complementary relationship. Leviticus 20:13 regards homosexual behavior as an ‘abomination.’

“In the Reformed tradition, the Leviticus passages are considered part of the moral law and thus are different in kind from Levitical proscriptions against certain foods, for instance, which belong to the ritual law. Jesus declared ‘all foods clean’ (Mark 7:19)—one declaration among many that the ritual law of the Old Testament is transcended and fulfilled in him. Moral law in the New Testament is not the means of salvation, for that is Christ alone. Rather, obedience to the moral law is a fruit of grace and salvation.

“Genesis 19:1–29 and Judges 19:16–26 show that homosexual rape is a violation of God’s justice. II Peter 2:6–10 and Jude 7 suggest a wider context of homosexual practice in Sodom, implying that such rape was but one expression of prior homosexual practice in the population.

“Romans 1:26–27 speaks to the problem of homosexual passion, describing it as ‘dishonorable,’ as well as homosexual behavior, which is described as ‘unnatural.’ By ‘unnatural’ the Scripture does not mean contrary to custom, or contrary to the preference of a particular person, but rather contrary to that order of universal human sexual nature that God intended in Genesis 1 and 2.

“We emphasize that Paul here includes homosexual behavior in a larger catalogue of sins, which includes pride, greed, jealousy, disobedience to parents, and deceit. Homosexual behavior is no greater a sin and no less a sin than these.

“Two other texts, I Corinthians 6:9–10 and I Timothy 1:9–10, show further New Testament opposition to homosexual behavior. I Corinthians probably distinguishes between the more passive partners or catamites (*malakoi*) and the more active partners (*arsenokoitai*). Homosexual relationships in the Hellenistic world were widespread. We may safely assume that some were characterized by tenderness, commitment, and altruism. Yet the New Testament declares that all homosexual practice is incompatible with Christian faith and life. No Scriptures speak of homosexuality as granted by God. No Scriptures permit or condone any of the forms of homosexuality. In Matthew 19:1–12, Jesus reaffirms God’s intention for sexual intercourse, enduring marriage between husband and wife, and affirms godly celibacy for those not entering the marriage covenant.

“The biblical revelation to Israel, reaffirmed in the teaching of Jesus and Paul, portrayed in the theology and human creation, specifically reflected in the ethical teachings in both the Old and New Testaments, and confirmed in nature, clearly indicates that genital sexual expression is meant to occur within the covenant of heterosexual marriage. Behavior that is pleasing to God cannot simply be defined as that which pleases others or expresses our own strong needs and identity; it must flow out of faithful and loving obedience to God. Sin cannot simply be defined as behavior that is selfish or lustful. Many unselfish deeds ignore God’s expressed intentions for our lives. Homosexual Christians who fail to recognize God’s revealed intent for sexual behavior and who move outside God’s will in this area of their lives may show many gifts and graces. They may evidence more grace than heterosexual believers who so readily stand in judgment over them. This does not mean that God approves their behavior in the area in which they are failing to be obedient.

“To conclude that the Spirit contradicts in our experience what the Spirit clearly said in Scripture is to set Spirit against Spirit and to cut ourselves loose from any objective test to confirm that we are following God and not the spirits in our culture or our own fallible reason. The church that destroys the balance between Word and Spirit, so carefully constructed by the Reformers to insure that we follow none other than Jesus Christ who is the Word, will soon lose its Christian substance and become indistinguishable from the world. We have been charged to seek “new light from God’s Word,” not “new light” contrary to God’s Word.

“Church Membership

“Persons who manifest homosexual behavior must be treated with the profound respect and pastoral tenderness due all people of God. There can be no place within the Christian faith for the mingled contempt, hatred, and fear that is called homophobia.

~~“Homosexual persons are encompassed by the searching love of Christ. The searching love of Christ reaches many persons who consider themselves to be homosexual. The church must turn from its fear and hatred to move toward the homosexual community in love and to welcome homosexual inquirers from that community into its congregations. It should free them to be candid about their identity and convictions, and it should also share honestly and humbly with them in seeking the vision of God’s intention for the sexual dimensions of their lives.~~

“As persons *who consider themselves to be homosexual* repent and believe, they become members of Christ’s body. The church is not a citadel of the morally perfect; it is a hospital for sinners. It is the fellowship where contrite, needy people rest their hope for salvation on Christ and his righteousness. Here in community they seek and receive forgiveness and new life. The church must become the nurturing community so that all whose lives come short of the glory of God are converted, reoriented, and built up into Christian maturity. It may be only in the context of loving community, appreciation, pastoral care, forgiveness, and nurture that ~~homosexual~~ persons *experiencing same-sex attractions* can come to a clear understanding of God’s pattern for their sexual expression.

“There is room in the church for all who give honest affirmation to the vows required for membership in the church. ~~Homosexual persons~~ *Persons who experience same-sex attractions but who sincerely affirm “Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior” and “I intend to be his disciple, to obey his word, and to show his love”* should not be excluded from membership.

“Ordination

“To be an ordained officer is to be a human instrument touched by divine powers but still an earthen vessel. As portrayed in Scripture, the officers set before the church and community an example of piety, love, service, and moral integrity. Officers are not free from repeated expressions of sin. Neither are members and officers free to adopt a lifestyle

of conscious, continuing, and unresisted sin in any area of their lives. For the church to ordain a self-affirming, practicing homosexual person to ministry would be to act in contradiction to its charter and calling in Scripture, setting in motion both within the church and society serious contradictions to the will of Christ.

~~“The repentant homosexual~~ person *repenting of homosexual practice* who finds the power of Christ redirecting his or her sexual desires toward a married heterosexual commitment, or finds God’s power to control his or her desires and ~~to adopt~~ adopts a celibate lifestyle, can certainly be ordained, all other qualifications being met. Indeed, such candidates must be welcomed and be free to share their full identity. Their experience of hatred and rejection may have given them a unique capacity for love and sensitivity as wounded healers among heterosexual Christians, and they may be incomparably equipped to extend the church’s outreach to the homosexual community.

“We believe that Jesus Christ intends the ordination of officers to be a sign of hope to the church and the world. Therefore ~~our present understanding of~~ *we believe* God’s will precludes the ordination of persons who do not repent of homosexual practice.

“Pluralism and Unity in the Church

~~“We of the 190th General Assembly (1978)~~ realize that not all United Presbyterians can in conscience agree with our conclusions. Some are persuaded that there are forms of homosexual behavior that are not sinful and that persons who practice these forms can legitimately be ordained.

~~“This is wholly in keeping with the diversity of theological viewpoint and the pluralism of opinion that characterize the United Presbyterian Church.~~ We are concerned not to stifle these diverging opinions and to encourage those who hold them to remain within the church. As Paul clearly teaches in Eph. 4:1–16, as members of Christ’s body we desperately need one another. None of us is perfect. No human opinion or decision is irrefutable...

~~“We want this dialogue to continue.~~ Nevertheless, we judge that ~~it~~ *genuine dialogue* cannot effectively be pursued in the uncertainty and insecurity that would be generated by the Assembly’s silence on this matter at this time. On the basis of our understanding that ~~the practice of homosexuality~~ *homosexual practice* is a sin, we are concerned that ~~homosexual~~ believers *who consider themselves to be homosexual* and the observing world should not be left in doubt about the church’s mind on this issue ~~during any further period of study...~~

“Ministry and Mission

“In ministry the church seeks to express and portray the grace and mercy of Christ in worship, nurture, evangelism, and service to those within the covenant community. In mission the church proclaims to all the good news of redemption and reconciliation, calls persons and nations to repentant faith in Christ, and promotes and demonstrates the advance of his rule in history through healing works of mercy and prophetic witness that aim at justice and liberation.

“In its ministry and mission the church must offer both to ~~homosexual persons~~ *those who consider themselves to be homosexual* and to those who fear and hate them God’s gracious provision of redemption and forgiveness. It must call both to repentant faith in Christ, urging both toward loving obedience to God’s will.

“The church’s grappling with the issue of ~~homosexuality~~ *homosexual practice* has already energized its membership in a remarkable awakening of prayer and theological study. ~~Our study should continue with the aim of reaching harmony in our diverging positions on homosexuality and other issues. Our prayer should now be concentrated upon this process of~~ *We should continue to pray for internal reconciliation and also upon the creation of ministry as we continue to create ministries with and for persons experiencing homosexual persons attractions.* Great love and care must be exercised toward such persons already within the church, both those who have affirmed their sexual identity and practice and those who have in conscience chosen not to do so. “We urge candidates committees, ministerial relations committees, personnel committees, nominating committees, and judicatories to conduct their examination of candidates for ordained office with discretion and sensitivity, recognizing that it would be a hindrance to God’s grace to *single out candidates for ordained office and make a specific inquiry into their* the sexual orientation or practice of candidates for ordained office ~~or ordained officers~~ where the person involved has not taken the initiative in declaring his or her sexual orientation.

“The Christian community can neither condone nor participate in ~~the widespread~~ contempt for ~~homosexual~~ persons *who practice homosexual behavior* that prevails in our general culture. Indeed, beyond this, it must do everything in its power to prevent society from continuing to hate, harass, and oppress them. The failure of the church to demonstrate grace in its life has contributed to the forcing of ~~homosexual~~ persons *who identify themselves as homosexuals* into isolated communities. This failure has served to reinforce the homosexual way of life and to heighten alienation from both church and society. The church should be a spiritual and moral vanguard leading *society’s* ~~society in response to~~ view of those who practice homosexual ~~persons~~ behavior.

“Through direct challenge and support the church should encourage the public media—television, film, the arts, and literature—to portray in a wholesome manner ~~robust, fully human~~ life *that expresses* ~~expressing~~ the finer qualities of the human spirit. It should call upon its members and agencies to work to eliminate ~~prejudicial and stereotypical~~ *unrealistic* images of homosexual ~~persons practice~~ in the public media.

~~Decriminalization~~ *Sexuality and Civil Rights*

“... Society does have a legitimate role in regulating some sexual conduct, for criminal law properly functions to preserve public order and decency and to protect citizens from public offense, personal injury, and exploitation. ~~Thus, It is thus proper for~~ criminal law ~~properly prohibits~~ *to address certain matters of sexuality, including the prohibition of homosexual and heterosexual acts that involve rape, coercion, corruption of minors, mercenary exploitation, or public display...*” (*Minutes, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, p. 261–65*).

The church is called to stand firm against the discriminatory enforcement of criminal laws against homosexual persons.

Since marriage was ordained by God as the union of a man and a woman, and since such marriages are the most healthy environment for the rearing of children, society also has an interest in how families are structured. It is thus proper for the state to define marriage as only existing between one man and one woman, and to limit adoption rights in accordance with this definition of marriage.

Conclusions

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) makes the following authoritative interpretation of the Constitution:

That unrepentant homosexual practice does not accord with the requirements for ordination set forth in Form of Government, G-6.0106b:

“Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament” (*Book of Order, G-6.0106b*).

That those engaged in unrepentant homosexual practice or those who affirm their freedom to be so engaged, may not be ordained as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, elders, or deacons.

That in relation to candidates for the offices of minister of the Word and Sacrament, elder, or deacon, all governing bodies shall abide by this authoritative interpretation.

2. Approve this policy statement and direct the Office of the General Assembly to send a paper copy of the policy statement and authoritative interpretation to all congregations, presbyteries, and synods and to post it on the denomination’s website.

3. Urge presbyteries and congregations to develop programs to reach out to communities of persons who consider themselves to be homosexual.

4. Urge candidates committees, personnel committees, nominating committees, and judicatories to conduct their examination of candidates for ordained office with discretion and sensitivity, recognizing that it would be a hindrance to God’s grace to single out candidates for ordained office and make a specific inquiry into their sexual orientation or practice where the person involved has not taken the initiative in declaring his or her sexual orientation.

5. Declare that these actions shall not be used to affect negatively the ordination rights of any Presbyterian deacon, elder, or minister who was ordained in the UPCUSA prior to 1978 or in the PCUS prior to 1979.

6. Call on Presbyterians to reject in their own lives, and challenge in others, the sin of homophobia, which drives persons who consider themselves to be homosexual away from Christ and his church.

7. Call upon the media to end the use of unrealistic stereotypes of homosexual behavior.

8. Encourage persons working in the human sciences and therapies to pursue research that will seek to learn more about the nature and causes of homosexuality.

9. Encourage Christians who experience same-sex attractions to form communities to encourage them in seeking sexual reorientation or meaningful, joyous, and productive celibate lifestyles and the dissemination throughout the church of information about such communities.

10. Call for an end to any discriminatory enforcement of criminal laws against homosexual persons.

11. Call upon those who in conscience have difficulty accepting the decisions of this General Assembly bearing on homosexuality to express that conscience by continued dialogue within the church. (Some recommendations of the 1978 policy statement have been retained in those above, see *Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, p. 265–66.)

Rationale

Declaring the definitive guidances of 1978 in the United Presbyterian Church (USA) and 1979 in the Presbyterian Church U.S., and other interpretive statements to have “... no further force or effect” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 373) leaves the church without a clear response to the question of whether ordination of self-affirming, practicing, homosexual persons remains an act in contradiction to its charter and calling in Scripture and to the will of Christ. While both the Old and New Testaments speak clearly on the matter, and *The Book of Confessions*, Part I of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), speaks explicitly to this matter, the interpretive statements have been of great benefit and guidance to the church’s life and witness.

The authoritative interpretation above addresses many helpful aspects of the church’s relationship with persons in homosexual relationships, correctly advising Christians to love and care for their brothers and sisters and giving explicit authoritative counsel on the church’s proper pastoral role. The church is poorer for the previous removal of that guidance.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-05

Advice on Item 06-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 06-05.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

The intent of Item 06-05 appears to be to reinstate the authoritative interpretations of the current G-6.0106a as precluding the ordination of a self-affirming, practicing homosexual person to the offices of deacon, elder, and Minister of Word and Sacrament that were withdrawn by the 218th General Assembly. However, in form, the authoritative interpretation proposed goes far beyond any authoritative interpretation previously adopted by the denomination, and includes virtually all of the Definitive Guidance adopted by the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and by the 119th General Assembly (1979) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

The Definitive Guidance, as a whole, was not an authoritative interpretation. Rather, as recognized in *Union Presbyterian Church of Bladell v The Presbytery of Western New York* (*Minutes*, 1985, Part I, p. 118 *et seq.*), it was issued under broader authority in the 1978 *Book of Order* for the assembly to use “deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine and the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church; of reproving, warning, or bearing testimony against error in doctrine or immorality in practice in any church, presbytery, or synod ...” (*Book of Order* (UPCUSA) (1978–79), Chapter XIV, Section 10; see also *Book of Church Order* (PCUS) (1978–79) 18-6). These provisions are the counterparts of G-13.0103p, q and r. Only subpart “r” provides the basis for an authoritative interpretation.

Bladell recognized that only the portion of the Definitive Guidance addressing ordination was an authoritative interpretation of the Constitution under the provisions of G-13.0103r:

[I]t is our considered opinion, and we so find, that the “Definitive Guidance” of the 190th General Assembly (1978) of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the “Definitive Guidance” of the 119th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States on the issue of ordination of self-affirming, practicing homosexuals were, in fact and in substance, authoritative interpretations of the Constitutions as they were then and as the Constitution presently exists. (*Minutes*, 1985, Part I, p. 121, emphasis added)

The overture proposes to incorporate extensive language unrelated to the Constitution into an authoritative interpretation by quoting large parts of the Definitive Guidance verbatim, and in other places offering a variation from the language of 1978. To the extent that the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to affirm any portions of this language to the denomination, it should do so not as authoritative interpretation, but pursuant to its authority under G-13.0103p “to warn or bear witness against error in doctrine or immorality in practice in or outside the church” (*Book of Order*, G-13.0103p).

The language appropriate for an authoritative interpretation of the Constitution in this overture is found in the section labeled “Authoritative Interpretation” under “Conclusions.” Consistent with the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution regarding Item 06-04 the proposed authoritative interpretation is of G-6.0106b, which is the constitutional

provision that most specifically addresses such conduct, rather than G-6.0106a, the provision in place at the time of the Definitive Guidance.

However, the proposed authoritative interpretation would go far beyond the Definitive Guidance or authoritative interpretations adopted prior to incorporation of G-6.0106b into the Constitution. Specifically, the interpretation offered would:

1. Replace current interpretations of Section G-6.0106b, based upon its specific language, that require that the conduct complained of be self-acknowledged for it to constitute a basis for challenging a governing body's decision to ordain or install, as opposed to its process for making such a decision. See particularly: *Presbytery of San Joaquin v Presbytery of the Redwoods* (Minutes, 2003, Part I, p. 277) and *Wier v Second Presbyterian Church of Ft. Lauderdale* (Minutes, 2002, Part I, p. 339).
2. Extend the prohibitions on ordination or installation to all individuals who believe it would be appropriate for "those engaged in unrepentant homosexual practice" to be ordained or installed.

The proposed authoritative interpretation goes well beyond and is not supported by the language of G-6.0106b. The language of G-6.0106b on its face does not provide warrant to preclude the ordination or installation of "those who affirm their freedom to be so engaged" in unrepentant homosexual practice, but rather only applies to those who "refus[e] to repent of any self-acknowledged practice..." (*Book of Order*, G-6.0106b). Further, G-6.0106b contains an express requirement of self-acknowledgment. "... [I]f a person does not self-acknowledge a practice that the confessions call sin, then a governing body has a positive obligation to make further inquiry only if it has direct and specific knowledge that said person is in violation of the ordination and installation standards of the Constitution..." (*Presbytery of San Joaquin v Presbytery of the Redwoods*, Minutes, 2003, Part I, p. 280; see also *Wier v Second Presbyterian Church of Ft. Lauderdale*, Minutes, 2002, Part I, p. 339).

Indeed, the prohibition on ordination or installation in G-6.0106b would apply to any candidate who declined to affirm that persons sexually active outside of marriage should be precluded from ordination. Thus, more fundamentally, the proposed authoritative interpretation would not protect the historic principle of freedom of conscience found in the Report of the Special Committee on Historical Principles, Conscience, and Church Government:

The rights of the individual, the minority and absentees are carefully protected rights within the Constitution and by the parliamentary practices of the church. Individuals have every reasonable right to press their case to try to persuade the majority of the church to their point of view and, having failed, they still have the right to enter a formal dissent or protest on the records of the governing body to which they belong. (*Minutes*, 1983, Part I, p.141ff).

Finally, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the interpretation proposed would remove the authoritative interpretation adopted by the 217th General Assembly (2006) in response to the recommendations of the Task Force on Peace, Unity and Purity, as revised by the 218th General Assembly (2008), the details and operation of which are discussed in detail in Section 4 of the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution—concerning Item 06-01. Reinstitution of the 1978 and 1979 Definitive Guidance does not provide a basis for undoing actions that related to the interplay of G-6.0106b and G-6.0108, an issue not before the denomination when it adopted the Definitive Guidance.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to take this action, it would have a similar impact on the proposed Form of Government

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 06-05 be disapproved.

Rationale

Regarding the proposed authoritative interpretation, please refer to ACSWP's Advice and Counsel on Item 06-04.

Item 06-05, in addition, recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve as policy the statement written by the Presbytery of Shenandoah. Much of this statement quotes large segments of the Definitive Guidance adopted by the PC(USA)'s predecessor denominations in 1978 and 1979.

The PC(USA) has a long tradition of developing social witness policy according to very specific procedures set out in *Manual of the General Assembly (2010)*. ACSWP is tasked in the section of Guidelines and Policies on Forming Policy with the responsibility for developing social witness policy as mandated by the General Assembly.

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDERS AND MINISTRY

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy will be responsible for the process of developing and recommending social witness policy to the General Assembly. If any other entity is involved in processes of developing and recommending social witness policy, then appropriate consultation and linkage with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy shall be undertaken. (*Manual of the General Assembly*, p. 65)

This statement reflects the thorough study of ethical discernment in policy formation approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993), “Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness” (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 767–788).

The procedures to be followed require an inclusive and highly consultative process, including the appointment of a diverse task force that develops a plan by which the whole church can participate in its deliberations. The task force is mandated to listen to the voices of the biblical text, the wisdom of theological discourse, the guidance of our Reformed confessions, the insights of sociopolitical disciplines, past policy statements, the advice of church members and governing bodies, the counsel of ecumenical partners, and the insights of people who are poor, victims of existing policies, and those who have not had a voice in church councils.

The Presbytery of Shenandoah is to be commended for the seriousness with which they approached this issue. However, should the 219th General Assembly (2010) want to develop a new policy statement on the issue of sexual orientation, ACSWP advises that it mandate the development of such a policy according to the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Item 06-05 recommends approval of authoritative interpretation on homosexual practice and the church.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove this item.

Rationale

See Rationale for Item 06-09.

Item 06-06

[The assembly answered Item 06-06 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Amending G-6.0106b, G-14.0240, and G-14.0450 Regarding Requirements for Ordained Office—From the Presbytery of Detroit.

The Presbytery of Detroit respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Strike the current text of G-6.0106b and insert new text to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Those who are called to ordained service in the church, by their assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003), pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, as revealed in Holy Scripture, striving to follow where He leads through the authoritative witness of the Scriptures, and to understand the Scriptures through the instruction of the Confessions. In so doing, they declare their fidelity to the standards of the Church. Each governing body charged with examination for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) establishes the candidate’s faithful efforts to adhere to these standards.”~~

2. Amend G-14.0240 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Preparation and Examination for Office

“When persons have been elected to the office of elder or deacon, the session shall confer with them as to their willingness to undertake the office. The session shall provide for a period of study and preparation, after which the session shall examine the officers-elect as to their personal faith; knowledge of the doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the church; ~~and~~ the duties of the office; *and readiness to assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation.* If the examination is approved, the session shall appoint a day for the service of ordination and

installation (see W-4.4000). If the examination is not approved for one or more elected officers, the session shall report its action to the congregation's nominating committee, which shall bring nomination(s) to a meeting of the congregation for any office(s) not filled"

3. Amend G-14.0450 by inserting a new paragraph "b." and by relettering current paragraphs "b." through "d." as "c." through "f." The text shall read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

"Final Assessment of Readiness to Begin Ordained Ministry

"In the final year of theological education or when a candidate has satisfied all of the requirements of this section, and before the candidate has received a call, the committee on preparation for ministry of the candidate's presbytery shall conduct a final assessment of the candidate's readiness to begin ordained ministry. A summary of this assessment shall be reported to the presbytery and shall be transmitted to a calling presbytery when requested. The committee on preparation for ministry shall report to the presbytery when it has certified a candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call. This consultation shall focus on the outcomes of inquiry and candidacy and shall include each of the following requirements of certification:

"a. demonstration of readiness to begin ministry of the Word and Sacrament as required to fulfill the candidacy phase of preparation;

"*b. demonstration of readiness to assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation;*

~~"c.~~ presentation of a transcript showing satisfactory grades at a regionally accredited college or university, together with a diploma;

~~"e.~~ *d.* presentation of a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, the transcript showing satisfactory grades, and presentation of a plan to complete the theological degree including Hebrew and Greek and exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek texts;

~~"d.~~ *e.* presentation of satisfactory grades together with the examination papers in the five areas covered by the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates."

Rationale

The opening paragraphs of the Form of Government are a powerful statement of the fundamental Christian and Reformed affirmation that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. In support of this primary affirmation, Chapter I of the Form of Government calls Christians to attend to the Scriptures, insofar as they set forth "Christ's will for the Church," and Chapter II identifies the church's confessions as its guides, subordinate to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as revealed to us in Scripture alone. Our church thus has bound itself to a hierarchy of authority in which we are to obey Jesus Christ its Head, and, the Scriptures as the authoritative witness to Him, and then the confessions, to the extent that they accurately bear witness to Christ's will. This fundamental hierarchy of authority is accurately and eloquently reflected in the first three of the constitutional questions, the assent to which is required of each candidate for ordination and/or installation.

Although the hierarchy of the church's authority is clear, it is subverted by the current language of G-6.0106b, which substitutes for our obedience to Christ two concepts that are foreign to Reformed understanding: "obedience" to Scripture and "conformity" to the confessions. We do not confess, "Scripture is Lord" nor "the Confessions are Lord." Instead, we boldly confess that "Christ is Lord!" The proposed amendment would substitute new language, which (1) reflects the church's historical understanding of where its authority is to be found, and (2) reaffirms the church's reliance on the examination of candidates by its governing bodies as the principal means by which to ensure the commitment of its ordained officers to the duties of faith. The amendment additionally would insert appropriate language to ensure that each such examination would include discussion of the constitutional questions and the governing body's determination of the candidate's readiness to accept their principles and faithfully live by them to the extent any of us is able.

In order to be able to rely on Jesus Christ as its Head and as its chief guide in all of life, the church must shed any human-made, subordinate source of authority that would bind its ability to follow where our Savior leads.

Concurrence to Item 06-06 from the Presbyteries of Genessee Valley and Santa Fe.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-06

Advice on Item 06-06—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-06 with the following comment.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, Item 06-06 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

The overture would substitute a standard of obedience to Jesus Christ for the current provisions of G-6.0106b, and would amend G-14.0240 and G-14.0450 to incorporate consistent provisions regarding the examination of candidates for office. In other respects, the proposed language is clear and not inconsistent with any other provision of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, however, that the language is virtually identical to the amendment submitted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to the presbyteries and rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to present an amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes with the intention expressed in the rationale for this overture, and the concurrences thereto, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language proposed by Item 06-09 accomplishes that result in a manner more consistent with the historic principles of Presbyterian polity.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed revised Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-06, like 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-07

[The assembly answered Item 06-07 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Deleting G-6.0106b—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-6.0106b be stricken? [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]

~~“b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W 4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.”~~

Rationale

Simply put, G-6.0106b is superfluous. The church’s need to protect the mystery and the integrity of calls to ministry by followers in the Way of Jesus is already well and carefully met in G-6.0106a.

“To those called to exercise special functions in the church—deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament—God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. They must have the approval of God’s people and the concurring judgment of a governing body of the church.”

Section G-6.0106b adds nothing to this careful and loving scrutiny on the behalf of the whole church. Instead it damages the peace and unity of the church, creating an environment of suspicion and mistrust for all candidates for ordination, whether deacons, elders, or ministers, and opens a door to grief and recrimination.

Worse yet, the exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b do violence to Scripture's clear teaching on God's clear intention that everyone is to be welcomed within the gates of the city and no one is to be made to feel unworthy or afraid (Mic. 4:4). As the whole human family is out of the hands of God, so, per force, is the whole human family to be welcomed to the whole life of God's church. There can be no beloved community that imagines, designs, and builds divisions into its life. Such divisions are by definition violent. Who doubts that they break the heart of God?

Section G- 6.0101b has usurped our Reformed tradition. Its effect has been to create a second class membership that is against our faith and our historic principles based on the "priesthood of all believers." The ordination policies of G-6.0106b are in conflict with numerous parts of the *Book of Order* that underscore the church's call to welcome and inclusiveness (G-3.0401, G-4.0100–0403) and the privileges granted to all members (G-5.0102 and G-5.0103, G-6.0107, and G-6.0108). The failure of the church to embody this hospitality "... constitutes a rejection of Christ himself and causes a scandal to the gospel."

In the same way, The Confession of 1967 affirms, in clear and compelling language, the church's vocation to hospitality of God:

... The church is called to bring [women and men] to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. ... Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize [others], however subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess. (*The Book of Confessions*, 9:44)

The Brief Statement of Faith is no less eloquent:

In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community." (*The Book of Confessions*, 10:3, Lines 29–32)

The church is to be a sanctuary but not a hideout. Within the church, all of life, every life, wholeness of life matter. None of the lines that divide the human family in the world apply within the community of believers: not between old and young, male and female, rich and poor, homed and homeless, black and white, gay and straight, physically challenged or not. We are to exhibit another way to live that is beyond all of these and other divisions, a way that is characterized by love, forbearance, the giving and receiving of forgiveness, compassion, and joy.

Concurrence to Item 06-07 from the Presbytery of New York City (with Additional Rationale).

Current denominational policies regarding ordination, particularly as reflected in the provisions of G-6.0106b, require interpretation of ambiguous words and phrases in order to determine who has or has not met the standards for ordination. The battle over interpretation, and in particular, using this amendment in consistent attempts to root out all those with whom we might disagree, has fractured the fellowship and families of our brothers and sisters within the church, offering little hope to those who look to us for witness, as well.

Additionally, this delineation has produced real spiritual and personal harm in designating directly or indirectly that individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) are second-class creations of God, less able to serve because they identify as they were created by God.

Maintaining G-6.0106a and deleting G-6.0106b returns to the presbyteries and sessions the oversight of who is to be ordained to the offices of the church, and returns the entire church to the Reformed understanding that we read the same Scripture but come to different conclusions. The fact that this covenant was ever broken by the addition of G-6.0106b points to a sad choice that has greatly divided our church. It is this amendment that is the cause of the division, not our sisters and brothers against which it is used to discriminate.

Deletion of G-6.0106b returns the church to its historic standards of ordination as stated in G-6.0106a, which provides that the manner of life for all officers of the church "should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world," as follows:

G-6.0106a: To those called to exercise special functions in the church—deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament—God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. They must have the approval of God's people and the concurring judgment of a governing body of the church.

Where these provisions of G-6.0106a adequately state the PC(USA)'s historic, Reformed understanding of the standards for ordination, the provisions of G-6.0106b discriminatorily exclude faithful church members from service in the church.

The provisions of G-6.0106b—and their exclusion of faithful LGBT Christians from the full life of the church—contradict Scripture’s teachings about the freedom of God’s Spirit to engage in surprising, new, and unpredictable activities (John 3). Who of us can say with absolute certainty precisely what is God’s will with regard to the leadership of the church?

For centuries, the church used biblical texts as the basis of opposition to the ordination of women and inclusion of African Americans in our congregations. Now we know that both practices were sinful violations of God’s will. Likewise, A Brief Statement of Faith reminds us that the same Spirit “... calls women and men to all ministries of the Church” (*The Book of Confessions*, 10.4, line 64). Current denominational practices constricted by the exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b deny the truth of God’s freedom to “do a new thing” (Isa. 43:19).

The exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b contradict the value that Scripture places on inclusive welcome (Acts 8:26ff, 10:28 and 11:17). So, too, current ordination policies conflict with numerous parts of the *Book of Order* that underscore the church’s call to openness and inclusiveness (G-3.0401, G-4.0100–.0403) and the rights granted to members (G-5.0102 and G-5.0103, G-6.0107 and G-6.0108).

The exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b contradict the Great Commission of Christ, who instructed his followers to go into all the world, making disciples, baptizing and teaching (Matt. 28:16–20). The Scriptures call the church out of itself and direct us to practice hospitality towards all—even strangers (Hebrews 13), thereby demonstrating the message of grace and welcome that draws people into the community of faith. The Apostle Paul points out that “... God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears [God] and does what is right is acceptable to [God]” (Acts 10:34–35).

The exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b contradict the church’s understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism. The *Book of Order* tells us that in baptism “we die to what separates us from God.” To be consistent with that teaching, we cannot then set up a barrier (ordination) that separates some of the baptized from their unity with God and from God’s calling on their lives. Likewise, we profess that “baptism is [a] sign and symbol of inclusion in God’s grace and covenant ...” (W-2.3004), and that “barriers of race, gender, status, and age are to be transcended. Barriers of nationality, history, and practice are to be overcome” (W-2.3005). We cannot, with any integrity, baptize believers and then set up discriminatory barriers to their full participation and service within the church.

The exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b contradict the basic principle of the church that all men and women who are church members have both the right and responsibility to respond to God’s call to special ministries as elders, deacons, or ministers of Word and Sacrament (G 6.0106a). There is only one status of church membership; one’s sexual orientation should not be regarded when considering service.

Concurrence to Item 06-07 from the Presbytery of the Redwoods (with Additional Rationale).

Current denominational policies regarding ordination, particularly as reflected in the provisions of G-6.0106b, require interpretation of ambiguous words and phrases in order to determine who has or has not met the standards for ordination. The battle over interpretation, and in particular, the attempt to root out all those with whom we disagree, has fractured the fellowship of our brothers and sisters in the church. Deletion of G-6.0106b returns to the presbyteries and sessions the oversight of who is to be ordained to the offices of the church, and returns the entire church to the Reformed understanding that we read the same Scripture but come to different conclusions. Deletion of G-6.0106b returns the church to the historic standards of ordination as stated in G-6.0106a, which provides that the manner of life for all officers of the church “should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world,” as follows:

a. To those called to exercise special functions in the church—deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament—God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. They must have the approval of God’s people and the concurring judgment of a governing body of the church. (*Book of Order*, G-6.0106a)

Where these provisions of G-6.0106a adequately state the PC(USA)’s historic, Reformed understanding of the standards for ordination, the provisions of G-6.0106b discriminatorily exclude faithful church members from service in the church.

The provisions of G-6.0106b—and their exclusion of faithful lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Christians from the full life of the church—contradict Scripture’s teachings about the freedom of God’s Spirit to engage in surprising, new, and unpredictable activities (John 3). Who of us can say with absolute certainty precisely what is God’s will with regard to the leadership of the church? For centuries, the church used biblical texts as the basis of our opposition to the ordination of women and inclusion of African Americans in our congregations. Now we know that both practices were sinful violations of God’s will. Likewise, A Brief Statement of Faith reminds us that the same Spirit “... calls women and men to all ministries of the Church,” (*The Book of Confessions*, 10.4, line 64). Current denominational practices constricted by the exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b deny the truth of God’s freedom to “do a new thing” (Isa., 43:19).

The exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b contradict the value that Scripture places on inclusive welcome (Acts 8:26ff, 10:28 and 11:17). So, too, current ordination policies conflict with numerous parts of the *Book of Order* that underscore the

church's call to openness and inclusiveness (G-3.0401, G-4.0100–.0403) and the rights granted to members (G-5.0102 and G-5.0103, G-6.0107 and G-6.0108).

The exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b contradict the Great Commission of Christ, who instructed his followers to go into all the world, making disciples, baptizing and teaching (Matt. 28:16–20). The Scriptures call the church out of itself and direct us to practice hospitality towards all—even strangers (Hebrews 13), thereby demonstrating the message of grace and welcome that draws people into the community of faith. The Apostle Paul points out that "... God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears [God] and does what is right is acceptable to [God]" (Acts 10:34–35).

The exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b contradict the church's understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism. The *Book of Order* tells us that in baptism "we die to what separates us from God" (*Book of Order*, W-2.3002). To be consistent with that teaching, we cannot then set up a barrier (ordination) that separates some of the baptized from their unity with God and from God's calling on their lives. Likewise, we profess that "baptism is [a] sign and symbol of inclusion in God's grace and covenant" (W-2.3004), and that "barriers of race, gender, status, and age are to be transcended. Barriers of nationality, history, and practice are to be overcome" (W-2.3005). We cannot, with any integrity, baptize believers and then set up discriminatory barriers to their full participation and service within the church.

The exclusionary provisions of G-6.0106b contradict the basic principle of the church that all men and women who are church members have both the right and responsibility to respond to God's call to special ministries as elders, deacons, or ministers of Word and Sacrament (G 6.0106a). There is only one status of church membership; one's sexual orientation should not be regarded when considering service.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-07

Advice on Item 06-07—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-07 with the following comment.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the General Assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Item 06-07 seeks to delete G-6.0106b from the Form of Government. Approval of this overture would accomplish its intent to modify the church's position on ordination standards.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed revised Form of Government before the assembly: to the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-07, like 06-06, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-08

[The assembly answered Item 06-08 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Hudson River respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the current text of G-6.0106b be stricken, and replaced with the following text:

“Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, striving to follow him through the witness of the Scriptures, and through the historic discernment of those Scriptures expressed in the Confessions of the church. Living obediently, we are called to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples, to love neighbor and enemy, and to express the love of Christ in faithful relationships with others. Persons who are ordained and/or installed are nonetheless sinners in need of God’s grace. The governing bodies of the church are called to be communities of support and accountability, as together we labor to be an obedient people, and seek to be disciples of the living Christ.”

Rationale

At the very core of our Reformed identity are these words from Paul, “for by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). We acknowledge that there is nothing we can do to earn God’s grace—nothing we can do to earn God’s calling in our lives—nothing we can do that lifts us above our neighbor in the loving eyes of God which know no partiality.

The present and much debated text of G-6.0106b steps beyond this core understanding. The current language, “persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament,” supposes that ordained persons can manage the task of repentance for all forms of sin in their lives. This is impossible, and the very notion a scandal to the Gospel. If we could live lives utterly free from sin, if we could be wholly repentant, we would not need the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Indeed, Paul would remind us, “You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace” (Gal. 5:4).

And yet, this does not free us to set aside God’s claim upon our lives. God’s gift of grace comes wrapped in the life of faith. With faith comes obedience. Obedience is founded in relationship. God calls—God’s children obey.

The governing bodies of the church are communities of sinners, ever working out this call to obedience, with fear and trembling, with joy and compassion. We look to Scripture, to each other, and to the community of saints whose voices ring in our Confessions, seeking God’s will for each moment of our lives. In faith, we leave God room to be God—humbly acknowledging that we cannot mend our brokenness by ourselves—and that God can speak a new word in a new time if God chooses to do so, through the Living Word, Jesus Christ.

Ordination in the church is not a mark of sinlessness. Ordination is a sign by which the church recognizes a person’s response to the call of God to a particular office despite their sin. It is not their works that have prepared them, nor their works that will sustain them, but the grace of God that is bestowed in baptism that alone is sufficient for their calling.

The present language of G-6.0106b also errs in lifting up one form of supposed sin above the rest. The text, “among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness,” is a thin attempt to avoid the many sins of all our lives by setting apart some as inherently more sinful than others.

This overture invites us to consider the many avoided questions of our sinfulness—Is it a sin when we fail to love our enemies? Is neglect of our environment a sin? Is it sinful to hoard away wealth when God’s children are hungry? Is it a sin when we fail to welcome the alien, the widow, the orphan? Is it a sin that we who sing “I love to tell the story” fail to tell neighbor and stranger of Christ’s presence in our lives?

A catalog of the serial, unrepentant sinfulness of our lives would fill many books. Gratefully, if all of the Grace of Jesus Christ “were written down, ... the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (cf. John 21:25).

Concurrence to Item 06-08 from the Presbyteries of Cayuga-Syracuse and New Hope.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-08

Advice on Item 06-08—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-08 with the following comment.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-06, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, Item 06-08 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

The overture would substitute a standard of obedience to Jesus Christ for the current provisions of G-6.0106b. The overture further substitutes responsibilities to “... proclaim the Gospel to all peoples, to love neighbor and enemy, and to express the love of Christ in faithful relationships with others...” (Item 06-08) for the current standards of G-6.0106b. This sentence, however, is somewhat confused by the substitution of the first person pronoun “we” as the subject of the sentence, rather than continuing to refer to “persons who are called to office.” The overture reframes the role of governing bodies as being “communities of support and accountability,” but does not describe how governing bodies carry out such responsibilities. Presumably, with respect to presbyteries, the provisions in chapter eleven of the Form of Government define those roles, but this intent is unstated. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the language is similar, but not identical, to the amendment adopted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and sent to the presbyteries for their vote. The amendment was rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to present an amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes with the intention expressed in the rationale for this overture and the concurrences thereto, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language proposed by Item 06-09 accomplishes that result in a manner more consistent with the historic principles of Presbyterian polity.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed revised Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-08, like 06-06, 06-07, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-09

[The assembly approved Item 06-09. See pp. 33–34, 47.]

On Amending G-6.0106b—From the Presbytery of the Western Reserve.

The Presbytery of the Western Reserve overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-6.0106b be amended by striking the current text and inserting new text in its place: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Standards for ordained service reflect the church’s desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.0000). The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240; G-14.0450) shall examine each candidate’s calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate’s ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Governing bodies shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.”~~

Rationale

The integrity of the church demands that those who serve in ordained office meet high standards—always seeking to live according to the life and teaching of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we affirm in the words of the Theological Declaration of Barmen: “Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to ... trust and obey in life and in death” (*The Book of Confessions*, 8.11).

And yet no person follows perfectly; each of us is entirely dependent for our salvation, and for our growth in faith and obedience, on the grace of Christ:

For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3:22b–26)

The current text of G-6.0106b was added to the *Book of Order* in an attempt to bring closure to the issue of the ordination of persons in same-sex relationships; instead, it has brought continual contention to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It purports to apply even-handedly to all candidates, but is overwhelmingly used only to exclude gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons—many of whom exhibit abundant gifts and strong calls to ministry. With its reference to any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin, it has rarely or never been honestly applied to any candidate ordained or installed since its adoption.

The PC(USA) has no consensus in the interpretation of Scripture on issues of same-sex practice. When convictions about important issues are so different, and so firmly-held, our long-standing Presbyterian commitment to freedom of conscience and mutual forbearance is vital to maintaining our fellowship:

That, while under the conviction of the above principle we think it necessary to make effectual provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith, we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other. (*Book of Order*, G-1.0305)

The proposed amendment would maintain high standards for ordination and installation by renewed focus on the questions candidates must answer, but without imposing a single, highly contested interpretation of Scripture on the whole church.

Concurrence to Item 06-09 from the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky.

Concurrence to Item 06-09 from the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy (with Additional Rationale).

The integrity of the church demands that those who serve in ordained office meet high standards—always seeking to live according to the life and teaching of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we affirm in the words of the Theological Declaration of Barmen: “Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to . . . trust and obey in life and in death” (*The Book of Confessions*, 8.12)

And yet no person follows perfectly; each of us is entirely dependent for our salvation, and for our growth in faith and obedience, on the grace of Christ:

For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3:22b–26)

The Office of Theology and Worship, in a publication on *Ordination and Authority*, correctly points out that the vows of ordination create a hierarchy of authority: obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, guided by the confessions, governed by the church’s polity, within a collegial ministry. This demands that the ultimate authority in call is Jesus Christ, and we further recognize that a call to ministry is never the result of our perfection but of Christ’s ability to make us useful, even in our imperfection.

The current text of G-6.0106b was added to the *Book of Order* in an attempt to bring closure to the issue of the ordination of persons in same-sex relationships; instead, it has brought continual contention to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It purports to apply even-handedly to all candidates, but is overwhelmingly used only to exclude gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons—many of whom exhibit abundant gifts and strong calls to ministry. With its reference to “any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin,” it has rarely or never been honestly applied to any candidate ordained or installed since its adoption.

The PC(USA) has no consensus in the interpretation of Scripture on issues of same-sex practice. When convictions about important issues are so different, and so firmly-held, our long-standing Presbyterian commitment to freedom of conscience and mutual forbearance is vital to maintaining our fellowship:

That, while under the conviction of the above principle we think it necessary to make effectual provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith, we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other. (*Book of Order*, G-1.0305)

The proposed amendment would maintain high standards for ordination and installation by renewed focus on the questions candidates must answer, but without imposing a single, highly contested interpretation of Scripture on the whole church.

Concurrence to Item 06-09 from the Presbytery of Heartland (with Additional Rationale)

Currently some church members believe that homosexuality is sinful; however, homosexuals are members of the church, a church that is composed entirely of sinners. All church members are subject to the Great Commission, which commands the followers of Christ to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:16–20). The ability to completely fulfill the Great Commission requires the capacity to exercise all of the gifts of the Spirit, including ministry (1 Corinthians 12). Therefore, homosexual church members, if called by God, should be allowed to serve in ordained offices, thereby empowering these church members with the ability to fulfill the Great Commission.

Currently some church members believe that homosexuality was considered sinful by the early church and consequently homosexuals should be prohibited from the current practice of ordination. However, the practices of slavery and the prohibition against women serving in ordained leadership positions in the church appear to have been condoned by the early Church, but these practices and prohibitions have since been recognized as being an obstruction to God's will.

Currently some church members believe the role of the church is to discern God's will primarily through the love and grace of Jesus Christ. To say that the Spirit cannot move the church to revise its stance on the ordination of homosexual church members who are called by God to service and who are gifted with abilities to serve in ordained offices would be to impugn the sovereignty of God.

Currently some church members believe that homosexuality is not a sin, but is a part of God's created order and should be celebrated as such. God testifies to the inherent goodness of creation (Gen. 1:31) and states that all of us are wondrously made; therefore the church should not bring reproach upon God's own creation (Ps. 139:14). God has always known us, God formed us, and God sets us apart for service (Jer. 1:5). Those who abide in God do not face condemnation from God, nor should they be censured by human standards, nor be condemned by the church (Rom. 8:1). Accordingly, any church member who is called by the Spirit should be allowed to serve in ordained ministry.

Currently some church members deny homosexual Christians the opportunity to be ordained to serve in Christ's name, thereby denying Christ's authority (Mt. 28:18b). Such action causes the church to commit the corporate sin of disobedience by blocking paths to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-09

Advice on Item 06-09—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-09 with the following comment.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice on Item 06-04 that sets forth the background the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-06, 06-08, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, Item 06-09 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

This overture seeks to restore the ordination practice and principles affirmed in the Adopting Act of 1729, the paradigm through which the tension between the differing points of view and the unity of the church have been maintained through much of our denomination's history. Examining bodies are required not only to examine "... *each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office,*" but are also required to judge the candidate's "... *ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003)*" (Item 06-09, emphasis added). These questions require that the candidate affirm the authority of scripture, adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as contained in our confessions, and submit to the polity and discipline of the church. Moreover, the overture specifically states, consistent with the Adopting Act, that the examining bodies "... *shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates...*" (Item 06-09, emphasis added).

The proposed language is clear and not inconsistent with any other provision of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, however, that the language has some similarity, and a similar intent, to the amendment submitted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to the presbyteries and rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed revised Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-09—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Items 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, from differing presbyteries, all overture the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries amendments that would delete G-6.0106b (Item 06-07) or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers the following advice and counsel:

Since 1978, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and its predecessors have recognized that ordination issues are justice issues that are linked to a range of cultural changes. The history of the church's struggle to embrace equality in ordination for women and racial/ethnic men is a clear example of this connection. The action of the 217th General Assembly (2006), to approve paragraph five of the Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church report, was intended to provide a way by which we could live together in mutual forbearance and respect our differences regarding ordination of homosexual persons. In response to a decision by the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) in *Bush v Presbytery of Pittsburgh* (Remedial Case 218-10), the 218th General Assembly (2008) approved two authoritative interpretations intended to return to governing bodies the responsibility to determine what is "essential" and to avoid rigid and legalistic standards, particularly ones that highlight certain sexual sins while not naming many other forms and categories of serious sin. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 319–323)

Items 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17 share this intention. All affirm the need for ethical standards shaping the whole of life, for reasonable regulation applied fairly by councils of the church, and that the responsibility for discernment of readiness for ordination lies with the local governing bodies as they examine candidates as individuals in a case-by-case basis. By deleting G-6.0106b and offering replacement language, they intend to remove the narrow focus on sexual sins and to remove the ambiguities of relying on authoritative interpretations rather than amending Part II of the Constitution of the PC(USA). ACSWP agrees with the general intent of these items and finds them to be consistent with the historical practice of the church to strive for balance in articulating its standards and respect for individual conscience and the diversity of perspectives existing within it. As the church's constitution states:

... So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained (*Book of Order*, G-6.0108a).

... The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the governing body in which he or she serves" (*Book of Order*, G-6.0108b).

If the 219th General Assembly (2020) chooses to send an amendment on this issue to the presbyteries for their consideration, ACSWP concurs with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution that Item 06-09 is the preferred language.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

Item 06-09 deals with amending G-6.0106b.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

After reviewing all the overtures on ordination, ACWC chooses to speak on Item 06-09. We believe this overture offers the best possibility of moving us forward as a denomination in this more than thirty-year debate. It calls for high standards for ordination, outlines the process of examination for each candidate—calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for office—while lifting up the importance of the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003) without limiting the examination only to those questions.

We would, however, advise the substitution of the Rationale for Item 06-17 as it is much more comprehensive.

The PC(USA) has no consensus in the interpretation of Scripture on the issue of same-sex practice. When convictions about important issues are so different, and so firmly-held, our long-standing commitment to freedom of conscience and mutual forbearance is vital to maintaining our communal relationship. This proposed amendment would maintain high standards for ordination and installation by renewed focus on the questions candidates must answer, but without imposing a single, highly contested interpretation of Scripture on the whole church.

Item 06-10

[The assembly answered Item 06-10 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text—From the Presbytery of Southern New England.

The Presbytery of Southern New England respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the present paragraph G-6.0106b be stricken and new text inserted in its place as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Jesus, the Head of the Church, has established standards for church officers (G-6.0101). These standards are contained in the Scriptures rightly understood in the light of the Confessions, and expressed in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. The constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003) shall guide those responsible for examination as they discern with an individual that person’s calling, gifts, and preparation and their willingness to adhere to church standards. Those seeking office shall demonstrate their understanding of and affirm their willingness to adhere to church standards.”~~

Rationale

It is appropriate for the *Book of Order* chapter on the church and its officers to discuss the standards for holders of church office. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has considered these standards with care on several occasions and each time has decided in favor of our tradition’s rich complexity rather than a specific list of “standards.” Indeed, the decision to adopt *The Book of Confessions* epitomizes this affirmation of the richness and diversity of our Reformed tradition’s self awareness. It also acknowledges that the times and places where people of faith attempt to articulate their beliefs modify their expression.

The constitutional questions for ordination and installation are not in themselves a standard or a list of standards. They are questions that direct the attention of individuals considering church office and of the governing bodies charged with examining them to the full diversity of belief and practice that is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The questions encourage, and can guide, discernment of the appropriateness of the person to particular church office by the individual, the calling organization, and those responsible for the individual’s preparation and examination.

All would agree that Jesus, the Head of the church, establishes the standards. While this is said in G-6.0101, its absence from G-6.0106b has caused considerable theological controversy. Whatever we may say about standards must be based on Jesus’ leading. Much of our polity, and much of the history of its development, is concerned with learning to listen to Jesus’ leading. That is why we have come to rely on the decisions of the larger bodies of the church in matters of controversy. It is through our connectional effort to discern where Jesus is leading us that we have developed our polity and its practical expression of the way we participate in the true church.

Our standards have never been successfully expressed as a few simple ideas or behaviors. As Calvin understood, Scripture contains the word of God, but it is not the word of God. The result is that we depend on our confessions to inform the way we approach, read, understand, and interpret Scripture. Likewise, Scripture and our polity contain our standards, but are not our standards. We continually engage them as we seek to faithfully apply our standards to particular people and callings.

The diversity that arises from our efforts at understanding and the diversity of individuals and of callings demands careful consideration of each person being considered for ordained church office. Those considerations rightly include the responsibility to apply the standards determined by the whole church to the particular situation. This is challenging work. That is why there is a process for review. That is why our Reformed tradition looks to the wisdom of governing bodies to make these determinations. But it also depends on the willingness of governing bodies to trust the effort and good will of the decisions made on behalf of the whole church by other governing bodies.

Sessions and presbyteries are responsible for both the preparation and examination of people considering service as church officers. These responsibilities are best carried out in a spirit of mutual discernment that is only possible in an atmosphere of trust and love. The language presently in G-6.0106b is an impediment to this work. It creates an unnecessarily adversarial relationship compromised by suspicion. The people who desire to serve the church are conscientious and willing to give generously of their time, talents (especially when it comes to paying for a theological education), and lives. They deserve gratitude and support from their church. Even when the discernment that accompanies the process of preparation directs them to a different understanding of their call, they deserve our thanks and encouragement, not our suspicions.

Presbyteries and their committees on preparation do not need the language of the present G-6.0106b as they carry out their responsibilities. They have other, more gracious and more effective means for recognizing those cases where a call to ministry is inappropriate. Sessions likewise know the people they are preparing for church office and are not helped by the present language.

We need to replace the present paragraph “b.” It has brought much strife and little peace, unity, or purity to our church. We offer this proposed amendment as language that we can all agree to and apply to everyone being considered for church office.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-10

Advice on Item 06-10—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-10 with the following comment.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-06, 06-08, 06-09, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, Item 06-10 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

The overture would substitute a standard based on a candidate’s willingness to adhere to the standards contained in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003) for the current provisions of G-6.0106b. The proposed language is clear and not inconsistent with any other provision of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, however, that the language is similar, but not identical, to the amendment submitted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to the presbyteries and rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to present an amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes with the intention expressed in the rationale for this overture, and the concurrences thereto, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language proposed by Item 06-09 accomplishes that result in a manner more consistent with the historic principles of Presbyterian polity.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed revised Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-10—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-10, like 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-11

[The assembly answered Item 06-11 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Amending G-6.0106b to Give Broader But Specific Scope to the Ordination Standards—From the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler.

The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-6.0106b be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Those called to ordained service in the church, and having given assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003), pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ, Head of the Church. In so doing, those ordained bind themselves, to the best of their ability, with the ever-present help of the Holy Spirit, to live according to the leading and witness of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as mediated through the Confessions. In so doing, they thus declare their fidelity to the Standards of the Church. Foremost among these standards are the New Testament Epistolary ethical requirements for ordained officers of ministry, which include but are not limited to chastity in singleness and fidelity in monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Each governing body charged with examination for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) attests and affirms candidates’ sincere efforts to adhere to these standards and is responsible for the maintenance and administration of routine positive and negative discipline over those ordained.”~~

Rationale

The Church of Jesus Christ in the contemporary Western world finds itself in an increasingly chaotic culture in which even our most basic social, political, philosophical, and theological assumptions are challenged, attacked, ignored, and even openly scorned.

It is a time well-described by the late general of the Army, Omar N. Bradley, who said, “We live in an age of nuclear giants and ethical infants, in a world that has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. We have solved the mystery of the atom and forgotten the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about dying than we know about living.”

Nowhere is such confusion demonstrated more poignantly than in the contemporary search for, subscription to, and application of a compelling system of ethics that can be applied to our individual and corporate lives. In just the last decade we have observed myriad public figures from all disciplines, professions, and walks of life ethically compromise themselves in highly public spectacles that demonstrate either a spectacular moral ignorance or a coarse amorality.

Sadly, much of the blame for such blatant disregard of basic traditional norms can and must be laid at the feet of the Christian churches in Western societies. This moral malaise within the American portion of Christ’s Body was well diagnosed by Reformed theologian H. Richard Niebuhr. The Union Theological Seminary (New York) professor described the theology and preaching of vast swaths of 20th Century Protestantism with this observation, “A God without wrath brought people without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministry of a Christ without the cross.”

Our understanding and practice of distinctly Christian ethics must be derived from a consistent and fixed source that must be inculcated in and demonstrated by the ordained leaders of the church.

Such an understanding does, in fact, exist. It has been revealed to us by the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He has revealed Himself to us repeatedly throughout Covenant History in theophanies (personal appearances of God to people to whom He has chosen to reveal Himself and His will), inspired authoritative writings (the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments), and finally—and most decisively through the Incarnate Word of God, Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, and our Emmanuel.

The opening paragraphs of our Form of Government are a powerful testimony to this fundamental belief and affirmation: Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church.

As the Gospel writer asserts so powerfully in the opening verses of John’s Gospel, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:1–5)

Central to Reformed Theology is our understanding of how Christ’s headship over the Church is exercised and revealed to His Body, the Church. We know that ultimately the Word of God is Christ Jesus, the Incarnate Word by Whom the fullness of God is manifested to human beings. We also understand that, by the work of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the words and testimonies of Scripture’s many authors, Christ the Word inhabits the “Word of God written” in order that it may instruct us in the things of God.

God’s being, character, plan, commands, and dealings with the people whom He has created, chosen, justified, sanctified, and will glorify are mediated to us through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This we understand and accept as our Superior Standard that stands as constant, abiding, and authoritative witness to the Incarnate Word.

Our interpretive framework and lens for discerning what Scripture says, commands, and abjures is provided to us in *The Book of Confessions* and *Book of Order*, which are understood to function as our Subordinate Standards.

Our “hierarchy of authority” within the church is thus solidly established. It descends from Christ as God the Son and Lord over His Church. Next in order of precedence come the Scriptures from which are derived our Confessional corpus that describe our understandings of what Scripture teaches and commands, and, finally, the *Book of Order* as the practical framework by which we Presbyterians implement and exercise our calling as part of the universal Church of Jesus Christ.

All of this is enumerated within the first three chapters of the *Book of Order*, which instructs that

Christ gives to his Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its officers and ordinances. Insofar as Christ’s will for the Church is set forth in Scripture, it is to be obeyed. In the worship and service of God and the government of the church, matters are to be ordered according to the Word by reason and sound judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” (G-1.0100c)

This concept is stated made even more clearly and forcefully in the proposed *FOG*—which, if accepted at the upcoming assembly, could become the law of the land—has simplified and shortened it to say:

Christ gives to the Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its order and discipline. Scripture teaches us of Christ’s will for the Church, which is to be obeyed. In the worship and service of God and the government of the church, matters are to be ordered according to the Word by reason and sound judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (1.0203 Christ Gives the Church Its Life)

Further refining this understanding, Chapter II instructs us that the Confessions explain to and instruct us about what canonical Scriptures teach, that they are statements grounded in the Word written, and that while subject to human error, they are serious statements that must be accorded respect and serious study. So serious are these standards that we are told in G-2.0200, that:

These confessional statements are subordinate standards in the church, subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him. While confessional standards are subordinate to the Scriptures, they are, nonetheless, standards. They are not lightly drawn up or subscribed to, nor may they be ignored or dismissed. The church is prepared to counsel with or even to discipline one ordained who seriously rejects the faith expressed in the confessions.

Finally, our understanding is that it is the mission of the Church to proclaim the truth and abiding standard that God has given to us. Chapter III of the *Book of Order* opens its statement on the mission and work of the church by informing us that, “The mission of the Church is given form by God’s activity in the world as told in the Bible and understood by faith” (G-3.0100).

With the hierarchy of authority understood, we must look to the reasons for this proposed change, and they are principally two: (1) the current standard contained in G-6.0106b flatly ignores the Scriptures as the superior standard and dislocate it solely to the Confessions that are subordinate; and, (2) the current language of G-6.0106b is simultaneously too vague and undefined and too narrowly focused on one particular set of sins.

This overture would effectively answer the problems with Reason #1 because it takes seriously the Hierarchy of Authority and rightly places our primary fealty and obedience under Christ as Incarnate Word and Head of the Church as mediated to us by the Word written and contained within the Scriptures.

Now we must look to the ethical considerations and social context within which this proposed revision of the existing *Book of Order* mandate sits. Core scriptural understandings of sexuality, theology, marital fidelity, and family structure remain as contested ground both within our wider culture and the Church. But traditional Scriptural norms regarding these issues have been and continue to be upheld within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This proposal would maintain those current understandings and would firmly root them in their antecedent scriptural context.

But principled statements regarding only, or largely, sexual ethics and requirements for ordained officers within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are insufficient in a society dominated by the practical ethics of Enron, AIG, and CitiBank. We must remember that our ordained leadership is bifurcated. Well over half of presbyters and all of our deacons are ordained from among the ranks of those that other theological traditions consider as the laity. These officers work daily in the thick of a culture that is in a state of severe ethical rootlessness, relativism, and drift. And yet we expect them to maintain positions of moral leadership and ethical accountability in which they are to be exemplars of the best virtues established and vouchsafed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Some better direction as to precisely what standards are to be maintained and to whose authority they are ultimately responsible must be provided for all of our ordained officers whether they be teaching or ruling elders or deacons. This proposed revision of G-6.0106b would provide that understanding. It particularly references the epistles of the New Testament that establish in several places the qualifications, responsibilities, and expectations of ordained service (e.g., Titus 1:5–2:15 and 1 Tim. 3:1–13).

It is incumbent upon the church to firmly establish and adhere to such standards in order that we provide good direction and oversight to our officers in the exercise of mutual accountability and discipline within the courts of the church. To do less

is akin to sending out the shepherd to the fields with no staff and no club or cudgel with which to fend off wild animals loose among the flock. The shepherd will be severely injured or killed in the course of the fight if not properly equipped.

Finally, this proposed revision takes seriously, and makes explicit the duty for mutual accountability. It reminds us that we are responsible to and for one another in love and mutual burden sharing (Ephesians 4). Too often, discipline is seen purely as a negative and punitive process without regard for the fact that daily exercise is, in itself, a form of discipline. We are continually learning and training ourselves and each other for the life of practical sanctity. This is our call and we cannot escape it.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-11

Advice on Item 06-11—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 06-11.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Item 06-11 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with what is intended to be a clearer standard for ordination and installation. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution commends the overture for seeking to clarify the current standards, and in particular for attempting to find a replacement for the third sentence of the current G-6.0106b.

Nevertheless, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends disapproval of the language proposed. First, elevating standards of sexual conduct above and to the exclusion of all other standards of conduct has neither scriptural nor confessional foundation.

Further, the phrase “New Testament Epistolary ethical requirements for ordained officers of ministry” (Item 06-11) does not sufficiently clarify the standards for ordination and/or installation, and potentially represents a significant restriction on ordination and installation. For example, to the extent this phrase is understood to incorporate the requirements of 1 Tim. 3:2, it could be understood to preclude divorced persons from serving as elders or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

In addition, the proposed language does not solve the current ambiguity in the use of the phrase “chastity in singleness” in light of the variety of confessional understandings of the word “chaste.” [See, for example, The Heidelberg Catechism (C-4.109) and the Westminster Catechism (Larger Catechism) (C-7.249), that list a variety of conduct as unchaste.]

Finally, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the description of the Confessions as “mediating” the Scriptures is inconsistent with other sections of the *Book of Order* (G-2.0100b, W-4.4003d) that describe the confessions as a guide to Scripture.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-11—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-11 from the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries for their action an amendment to G-6.0106b that would replace current language regarding the standards of the church with language naming the “New Testament Epistolary ethical requirements for ordained officers of ministry” as “foremost” among the standards of the church to which those called to ministry bind themselves.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 06-11 be disapproved.

Rationale

While the intent of this overture seems to be to clarify the standards for ordination by reference to biblical criteria contained in the Epistles, this proposal in fact would raise additional questions of biblical interpretation and possibly result in reestablishing classes of people who would be ineligible for ordination and installation.

The overture's rationale refers to Titus 1:5–2:15 and 1 Tim. 3:1–13, in particular. In these verses, elders, and particularly bishops and deacons are described as “the husband of one wife” who keeps his children “submissive and respectful in every way” (1 Tim. 3:2–4) and whose children are believers (Titus 1:6). The most obvious exclusion from these standards is women. However, these standards might also exclude divorced men or even require widowers to remain single. They may exclude single men. They would seem to exclude men whose children do not follow the Christian faith or who are deemed insufficiently submissive to parental authority.

Obviously, the church has faced these issues of interpretation in the past, struggling, as we do in the present, to discern where the Holy Spirit would lead us in understanding the relevance of biblical criteria set in a very different time and culture to our understanding of God's call in people's lives today. The church over time has rejected the elevation of male gender, marital status, and family condition as standards for ordination.

Consequently, Item 06-11 does not yield the clarity it desires. However, it reminds us that the church has historically struggled to interpret the Scriptures and to understand their authority for us—as we continue to do today.

Item 06-12

[The assembly answered Item 06-12 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text—From the Presbytery New York City.

The Presbytery of New York City respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the current text of G-6.0106b be deleted and new text inserted: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, striving to follow him through the witness of the Scriptures, and through the historic discernment of those Scriptures expressed in the Confessions of the church. Living obediently, we are called to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples, to love neighbor and enemy, and to express the love of Christ in authentic, faithful relationships with others. Persons who are ordained and/or installed are nonetheless sinners in need of God's grace. The governing bodies of the church are called to be communities of support and accountability, as together we labor to be an obedient people, and seek to be disciples of the living Christ.”~~

Rationale

At the very core of our Reformed identity are these words from Paul, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...” (Eph. 2:8). We acknowledge that there is nothing we can do to earn God's grace—nothing we can do to earn God's calling in our lives—nothing we can do that lifts us above our neighbor in the loving eyes of God which know no partiality.

The present and much debated text of G-6.0106b steps beyond this core understanding. The current language, “persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament,” supposes that ordained persons can manage the task of repentance for all forms of sin in their lives. This is impossible, and the very notion a scandal to the Gospel. If we could live lives utterly free from sin, if we could be wholly repentant, we would not need the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Indeed, Paul would remind us, “You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace” (Gal. 5:4).

And yet, this does not free us to set aside God's claim upon our lives. God's gift of grace comes wrapped in the life of faith. With faith comes obedience. Obedience is founded in relationship. God calls—God's children obey.

The governing bodies of the church are communities of sinners, ever working out this call to obedience, with fear and trembling, with joy and compassion. We look to Scripture, to each other, and to the community of saints whose voices ring in our Confessions, seeking God's will for each moment of our lives. In faith, we leave God room to be God—humbly acknowledging that we cannot mend our brokenness by ourselves—and that God can speak a new word in a new time if God chooses to do so, through the Living Word, Jesus Christ.

Ordination in the church is not a mark of sinlessness. Ordination is a sign by which the church recognizes a person's response to the call of God to a particular office despite their sin. It is not their works that have prepared them, nor their works that will sustain them, but the grace of God that is bestowed in baptism that alone is sufficient for their calling.

The present language of G-6.0106b also errs in lifting up one form of sin above the rest. The text, "among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness," is a thin attempt to avoid the many sins of all our lives by setting apart some as inherently more sinful than others.

The question has been asked, debated, and argued, "Is homosexuality a sin?" This overture will not seek to resolve the question—many responses are available on both sides of the debate.

Rather, this overture invites us to consider the many avoided questions of our sinfulness—Is it a sin when we fail to love our enemies? Is neglect of our environment a sin? Is it sinful to hoard away wealth when God's children are hungry? Is it a sin when we fail to welcome the alien, the widow, the orphan? Is it a sin that we who sing "I love to tell the story" fail to tell neighbor and stranger of Christ's presence in our lives?

A catalogue of the serial, unrepentant sinfulness of our lives would fill many books. Gratefully, the Grace of Jesus Christ would fill many more; indeed, if all of it were written down, the world could not contain the books that would be written.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-12

Advice on Item 06-12—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-12 with the following comment.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-06, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17; Item 06-12 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

The overture, which is similar to Item 06-08, would substitute a standard of obedience to Jesus Christ for the current provisions of G-6.0106b. The overture further substitutes responsibilities to "... proclaim the Gospel to all peoples, to love neighbor and enemy, and to express the love of Christ in authentic, faithful relationships with others ..." (Item 06-12) for the current standards of G-6.0106b. This sentence, however, is somewhat confused by the substitution of the first person pronoun "we" as the subject of the sentence, rather than continuing to refer to "persons who are called to office." The overture reframes the role of governing bodies as being "communities of support and accountability," but does not describe how governing bodies carry out such responsibilities. Presumably, with respect to presbyteries, the provisions of Chapter XI of the Form of Government define those roles, but the overture does not explicitly clarify that responsibility. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the language is similar, but not identical, to the amendment submitted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to the presbyteries and rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to present an amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes with the intention expressed in the rationale for this overture, and the concurrences thereto, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language proposed by Item 06-09 accomplishes that result in a manner more consistent with the historic principles of Presbyterian polity.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed Form of Government before the General Assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-12—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-12, like 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-13

[The assembly answered Item 06-13 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Amending G-6.0106b—from the Presbytery of Albany.

The Presbytery of Albany overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Strike the current text of G-6.0106b and insert new text as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Those who are called to ordained service in the church, by their assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003), pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, striving to follow where He leads through the witness of the Scriptures and the interpretations of the confessions. In doing so, they declare their fidelity to the standards of the Church. Each governing body charged with examination for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) establishes the candidate’s faithful efforts to adhere to these standards.”~~

Rationale

The current language of G-6.0106b subverts the hierarchy of authority set forth in the opening chapters of the Form of Government: we are to obey Jesus Christ as Head of the Church, the Scriptures as the authoritative witness to Him, and then the confessions, to the extent that they accurately bear witness to Christ’s will. The proposed revision of G-6.0106b reaffirms this hierarchy as necessary and sufficient authority for ordination.

The current categorical exclusion of certain church members from service in ordained office is unjust to the excluded individuals and spiritually damaging to the body of the church. It creates a category of “second-class membership” and fosters the heretical attitude that those assigned to this category are not really deserving of membership at all, i.e., are not Christians. Profession of faith in Jesus Christ is and must be the only requirement for church membership (*Book of Order*, G-5.0103). Any policy that promotes erosion of this principle does damage to the Body of Christ.

According to the *Book of Order*, “a faithful member accepts Christ’s call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of his Church” (G-5.0102), including “participating in the governing responsibilities of the church” (G-5.0102e). The current language of G-6.0106b, which bars an entire class of persons from participating in some of the most important areas of church governance, violates the conditions of membership and sets the *Book of Order* in contradiction with itself.

Ordination is an important qualification for participation in the discernment process that sustains the spiritual life of the church at all judicatory levels. Our goal is not to “make” decisions, but to seek to discern God’s intention for us. It has been a long-standing article of faith in our tradition that discernment requires a democratic inclusion of many voices. To rule out certain voices in advance as ineligible is both undemocratic and unjust. True reconciliation that seeks to restore peace, unity, and purity to the church is possible only between equals who mutually share access to power and who acknowledge that all power, ultimately, comes from God.

When Christians fall into two sides through disagreement, all involved are obliged to think charitably of those on the opposite side. If G-6.0106b is revised as proposed, the “losers” will not have lost their status as full members of the church, eligible to participate in all decisions, including future decisions about ordination on an individual basis. On the other hand, if the current language of G-6.0106b remains, the “losers” will continue to feel that their very humanity has been cast in doubt by a church that condemns what they understand to be their God-given nature. Revision of G-6.0106b will honor everyone as a child of God and will permit the assignment of particular duties on the basis of the particular gifts that God has granted.

Injustice that exists now demands to be remedied now. Many a prophet would have preferred to exercise the call to prophecy at a more opportune time, but God has always made clear that the prophetic call is immediate. To appeal now for relief from the injustice fostered by the current language of G-6.0106b is simply to obey God’s command with humility and love for all those who now serve and for those who earnestly desire to serve God in the future.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-13

Advice on Item 06-13—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-13 with the following comment.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-06, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17; Item 06-13 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

The overture, which insofar as it seeks to amend G-6.0106b is identical to Item 06-06 except with respect to some theological nuance in its second sentence, would substitute a standard of obedience to Jesus Christ for the current provisions of G-6.0106b. In other respects, the proposed language is clear and not inconsistent with any other provision of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, however, that the language is very similar to the amendment submitted by the 218th General Assembly (2010) to the presbyteries and rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to present an amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes with the intention expressed in the rationale for this overture, and the concurrences thereto, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language proposed by Item 06-09 accomplishes that result in a manner more consistent with the historic principles of Presbyterian polity.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-13

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-13—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-13, like 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-14

[The assembly answered Item 06-14 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Replacing G-6.0106b with New Text—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

The Presbytery of Chicago respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the current language of G-6.0106b be stricken and be replaced with the following:

“b. *Standards for ordained service are derived from the church’s desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.0000). Those who are called to ordained service in the church shall give their assent to the Constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003), pledging themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, following where he leads through the witness of the Scriptures, and understanding the Scriptures through the guidance of the Confessions. The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) shall examine each candidate’s calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office, including assessing his or her adherence to the church’s standards.*”

Rationale

Regrettably, the process of communal discernment for decision making on the difficult issue of ordination standards, recommended by the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church and approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006), has been underutilized. Continued recourse to parliamentary procedures and judicial process has undermined decision-making, prolonged resolution, and consumed resources. In light of this experience, change in the language of G-6.0106b provides the way forward on this difficult issue.

The impact of the current language in G-6.0106(b) in its application has been far greater than simply excluding some from ordained office. It has allowed a class distinction to be constitutionally enshrined, creating two classes of baptized Christians—those who are clearly eligible for ordained office in the church, and those who are not. Not since the now-abandoned prohibitions on divorced officers and clergy in our predecessor denominations has one class of members been singled out in a Presbyterian Constitution for automatic disqualification from eligibility for ordained office.

The summary exclusion of any member from meaningful eligibility inexcusably divides the body of Christ. In the first letter to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul reminds us: “For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body ... and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body ... The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you,’” (1 Cor. 12:13–21).

But G-6.0106(b) does precisely that. One class of Christians is effectively being told, “the body has no need of you.” This communicates to those same children of God that in our denomination, they are not part of One Body, but are foreign, to be isolated and treated differently from all others. Such a position invalidates what Scripture says about baptism and what our *Book of Order* says about the meaning of active membership (G-5.0102) and the relationship between membership and ordained office (G-6.0102).

Though its proponents argue that the measure deals only with conduct, in reality, G-6.0106(b) is a statement by one portion of the baptized body of Christ to all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Christians, whether partnered or not, sexually active or not, that in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) their “membership” in the body is at best second-class, and, at worst, neither desired nor honored as equal with all other members. This is a scandal to the gospel of Jesus Christ and has no place in the Constitution of the PC(USA).

This second-class status is unaffected by the recent elimination of older authoritative interpretations and the approval of additional interpretations of Chapter 6 because whether or not a particular session or presbytery is permitted—often after protracted ecclesial litigation involving those interpretations—to call and/or ordain a particular lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender member, that member is constitutionally singled out under the current language of G-6.0106b in ways that straight members are not.

The proposed language takes seriously the responsibilities of those bodies of the church charged with examining, calling, and installing church officers, but places those examinations in the greater context of Presbyterian polity. It also ensures a more consistent approach in the treatment of all members, appropriately acknowledging the weight and importance of authority in our tradition: Christ first, Scripture second, and tradition (Confessions) third. This restores consistency between the provisions of Chapter 6 and the ordination vows (W-4.4003).

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-14
Advice on Item 06-14—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-14 with the following comment.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-06, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, Item 06-14 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

The overture, which is similar to Item 06-09, would substitute a standard of submission to Jesus Christ for the current provisions of G-6.0106b. Under the proposed language, a governing body would focus on the candidate’s “calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office.” The proposed language is clear and not inconsistent with any other provision of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, however, that the language is similar, but not identical, to the amendment submitted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to presbyteries and rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to present an amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes with the intention expressed in the rationale for this overture, and the concurrences thereto, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language proposed by Item 06-09 accomplishes that result in a manner more consistent with the historic principles of Presbyterian polity.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed revised Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-14

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-14—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-14, like 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-15, 06-16, and 06-17, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-15

[The assembly answered Item 06-15 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Amending G-6.0106b of the Book of Order—From the Presbytery of Des Moines.

The Presbytery of Des Moines respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the current text of G-6.0106b be stricken and new text be inserted to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W 4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Persons called to office in the church are to live in faithful obedience to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, according to the authoritative witness of the Scriptures, and guided by the Confessions of the church. Those ordained as deacons, elders, or ministers of Word and Sacrament are sinners in need of God’s grace while striving to fulfill the responsibilities of their office with accountability to the governing bodies of the church, which guide and support them as they seek to follow the living Christ.”~~

Rationale

Accountability to Jesus Christ and the Authority of Scripture

In its opening paragraphs, the Form of Government affirms the fundamental Christian and Reformed affirmation that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. Chapter I calls Christians to attend to the Scriptures, insofar as they set forth “Christ’s will for the Church,” and Chapter II identifies the Confessions as the church’s guides, subordinate to the authority of Jesus Christ and to the witness of Scripture. Thus our church has set forth a hierarchy of authority in which we are to obey Jesus Christ by heeding first the Scriptures and then the Confessions, as we seek to discern Christ’s will.

This fundamental hierarchy of authority is reflected in the first three constitutional questions that candidates for ordination are required to affirm. This understanding is distorted, however, by the current language of G-6.0106b. Failing to acknowledge our obedience to Jesus Christ, G-6.0106b posits “obedience to Scripture” and “conformity to the confessions” as the primary requirements for ordination.

The proposed amendment would remove this paragraph and substitute new language reflecting the church's true sources of authority (Jesus Christ and the witness of Scripture), and affirming our biblical, confessional, and constitutional accountability.

Sinfulness of All People

Summarizing the faith of the Reformed Tradition, Chapter II of the Form of Government draws special attention to only one example of sin, "the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny" (*Book of Order*, G-2.0500a(4)). Yet the current language of G-6.0106b singles out an entirely different category of human behavior—marriage and sexual relationships—as a primary consideration in determining a person's eligibility for ordination.

The proposed amendment would remove this apparent contradiction of our historic understanding of human sinfulness, and substitute new language affirming the church's belief that we are all sinners in need of God's grace.

Concurrence to Item 06-15 from the Presbytery of East Iowa.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-15

Advice on Item 06-15—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-15 with the following comment.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-06, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-16, and 06-17, Item 06-15 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

The overture would substitute a standard of obedience to Jesus Christ for the current provisions of G-6.0106b. The overture reframes the role of governing bodies as being "communities of support and accountability." The proposed language is clear and not inconsistent with any other provision of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, however, notes that the language is similar, but not identical, to the amendment submitted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to the presbyteries and rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to present an amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes with the intention expressed in the rationale for this overture, and the concurrences thereto, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language proposed by Item 06-09 accomplishes that result in a manner more consistent with the historic principles of Presbyterian polity.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed revised Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-15

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-15—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-15, like 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-16, and 06-17, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-16

[The assembly answered Item 06-16 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Amending G-6.0106b and G-14.0450 Regarding Requirements for Ordained Office—From the Presbytery of Heartland.

The Presbytery of Heartland overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Strike the current text of G-6.0106b and insert new text to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Those who are called to ordained service in the church, by their assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003), pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, as revealed in Holy Scripture, striving to follow where He leads through the authoritative witness of the Scriptures, and to understand the Scriptures through the instruction of the Confessions. In so doing, they declare their fidelity to the standards of the church. Each governing body charged with examination for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) establishes the candidate’s faithful efforts to adhere to these standards.”~~

2. Amend G-14.0450 by inserting a new paragraph “b.” and by relettering current paragraphs “b.” through “d.” as “c.” through “e.” The text shall read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Final Assessment of Readiness to Begin Ordained Ministry

“In the final year of theological education or when a candidate has satisfied all of the requirements of this section, and before the candidate has received a call, the committee on preparation for ministry of the candidate’s presbytery shall conduct a final assessment of the candidate’s readiness to begin ordained ministry. A summary of this assessment shall be reported to the presbytery and shall be transmitted to a calling presbytery when requested. The committee on preparation for ministry shall report to the presbytery when it has certified a candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call. This consultation shall focus on the outcomes of inquiry and candidacy and shall include each of the following requirements of certification:

“a. demonstration of readiness to begin ministry of the Word and Sacrament as required to fulfill the candidacy phase of preparation;

“b. demonstration of readiness to assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation;

~~“b. c.~~ presentation of a transcript showing satisfactory grades at a regionally accredited college or university, together with a diploma;

~~“e. d.~~ presentation of a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, the transcript showing satisfactory grades, and presentation of a plan to complete the theological degree including Hebrew and Greek and exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek texts;

~~“d. e.~~ presentation of satisfactory grades together with the examination papers in the five areas covered by the Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates.”

Rationale

The opening paragraphs of the Form of Government are a powerful statement of the fundamental Christian and Reformed affirmation that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. In support of this primary affirmation, Chapter I of the Form of Government calls Christians to attend to the Scriptures, insofar as they set forth “Christ’s will for the Church,” and Chapter II identifies the church’s confessions as its guides, subordinate to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as revealed to us in Scripture alone. Our church thus has bound itself to a hierarchy of authority in which we are to obey Jesus Christ its Head, and, the Scriptures as the authoritative witness to Him, and then the confessions, to the extent that they accurately bear witness to Christ’s will. This fundamental hierarchy of authority is accurately and eloquently reflected in the first three of the constitutional questions, the assent to which is required of each candidate for ordination and/or installation.

Although the hierarchy of the church's authority is clear, it is subverted by the current language of G-6.0106b, which substitutes for our obedience to Christ two concepts that are foreign to Reformed understanding: "obedience" to Scripture and "conformity" to the confessions. We do not confess, "Scripture is Lord" nor "the Confessions are Lord." Instead, we boldly confess that "Christ is Lord!" The proposed amendment would substitute new language, which (1) reflects the church's historical understanding of where its authority is to be found, and (2) reaffirms the church's reliance on the examination of candidates by its governing bodies as the principal means by which to ensure the commitment of its ordained officers to the duties of faith. The amendment additionally would insert appropriate language to ensure that each such examination would include discussion of the constitutional questions and the governing body's determination of the candidate's readiness to accept their principles and faithfully live by them to the extent any of us is able.

In order to be able to rely on Jesus Christ as its Head and as its chief guide in all of life, the church must shed any human-made, subordinate source of authority that would bind its ability to follow where our Savior leads.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-16

Advice on Item 06-16—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-16 with the following comment.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-06, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, and 06-17, Item 06-16 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

This Item 06-16 is identical to Item 06-06, except that it does not seek to amend G-14.0240. The overture would substitute a standard of obedience to Jesus Christ for the current provisions of G-6.0106b, and would amend G-14.0450 to incorporate consistent provisions regarding the examination of candidates for office. In other respects, the proposed language is clear and not inconsistent with any other provision of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, however, that the language is virtually identical to the amendment submitted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to the presbyteries and rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to present an amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes with the intention expressed in the rationale for this overture, and the concurrences thereto, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language proposed by Item 06-09 accomplishes that result in a manner more consistent with the historic principles of Presbyterian polity.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed revised Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-16

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-16—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-16, like 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, and 06-17, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-17

[The assembly answered Item 06-17 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Deleting G-6.0106b and Substituting New Text—From the Presbytery of National Capital.

The Presbytery of National Capital respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strikethrough; text to be added or inserted is shown in italic.]

- a. To delete the current text of G-6.0106b and insert new text in its place:

~~“Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W 4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Members who are called to ordained service in the church (G-5.0302), by their examination and assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (G-14.0240, G-14.0450, and W-4.4003), pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church (G-1.0100), striving to follow where he leads through the witness of scripture (W-4.4003b), and to understand the Scriptures through the instruction of the Confessions (W-4.4003c and d). In so doing, they declare their fidelity to the standards of the church.”~~

Rationale

Our fellowship in Christ includes bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight, and transgendered persons, and, by the grace of God, we are all capable of living honorable, faithful Christian lives filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus we believe it is time to remove categorical barriers constraining lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered church members from ordained service as deacons, elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We believe this because of scripture, not in spite of it; because of our confessions, not in spite of them; because of our polity, not in spite of it; because of who we are, not in spite of who we are, for we are all beloved children of God.

I. YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

[Jesus] said to [the lawyer], “*You shall love the Lord your God* with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets . . .” (Mt. 22:37–40, emphasis added)

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 Jn. 4:7–8, emphasis added)

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, *nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Rom. 8:38–39, emphasis added)

As our most recent confession reminds us,

In sovereign love God *created the world good and makes everyone equally in God’s image*, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. (*The Book of Confessions*, A Brief Statement of Faith, 10.3, emphasis added)

Contrary to the spirit of Scripture and this confessional standard, our current ordination policy is at odds with the foundational principle of Jesus’ teaching—that God is love. From the Genesis account of Abraham and Sara welcoming strangers to dinner (Genesis 18), to the numerous stories of the early New Testament churches creating an environment of hospitality, reconciliation, and generosity (Romans 13 and 14, 1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 2, Colossians 3, Hebrews 13), the story of our faith is the story of God’s love and insistence that people of faith practice that love. In times of controversy, individual passages of Scripture should be interpreted in light of the broader story, and all of Scripture should be interpreted in accord with Jesus’ “two-fold commandment to love God and neighbor . . .” (“Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture,” adopted by 195th General Assembly (1983), *Minutes*, 1983, Part I, p. 615). There are no exceptions to this expectation and yet our ordination policies expressed in and through G-6.0106b do not communicate the message of God’s love and they rest on a few verses whose meaning is the subject of extensive debate.

Thus, through this new language, we invite the church to proclaim *that nothing in our polity shall separate any of us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, nor shall it deny any who are called, gifted and qualified the opportunity to serve as disciples of Christ in ordained office in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*

II. THERE IS ONE BAPTISM

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. (Eph. 4:4–5, emphasis added)

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, *we who are many are one body*, for we all partake of the one bread. (1 Cor. 10:16–17, emphasis added)

As our most recent confession reminds us,

The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and *binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church.* . . . The same Spirit claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and *calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.* (*The Book of Confessions*, A Brief Statement of Faith, 10.4, emphasis added)

Contrary to the spirit of Scripture and this confessional standard, our current ordination policy divides the body of Christ, sets neighbor against neighbor and leads us to violate the image of God in others and in ourselves. Our current ordination

policy is inconsistent with our church's understanding that "Baptism is a sign and symbol of inclusion in God's grace and covenant ..." (W-2.3004) that transcends "... [b]arriers of race, gender, status, and age ..." (W-2.3005) and in which "... we die to what separates us from God ..." (W-2.3002); moreover, in communion "... we manifest the reality of the covenant of grace in reconciling and being reconciled ..." (W-2.4004).

Further, our current policy continues to relegate lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered members of the church to second-class status, dishonoring their relationships and placing on them a burden of celibacy that is not required of other members. By demanding a standard of heterosexual marriage or chastity in singleness, the current policy places all members in the position of "... [boasting] of the merits of [their] own works, or ... in works of supererogation ... [a] damnable idolatry..." (*The Book of Confessions*, The Scots Confession 3.15).

Thus, through this new language, we invite the church to proclaim *that we are bound to one another and to God in the sign and seal of the Sacraments, and that our polity should reflect the truth that is incarnate in Jesus Christ: that all who trust in him are reconciled to God and are part of the ministry of reconciliation according to their gifts and particular calling.*

III. IT IS GOD WHO CALLS

*You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you. But remember the root command: Love one another. (Jn. 15:16–17, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, emphasis added)*

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Mt. 28:19–20, emphasis added)

The Book of Confessions, The Brief Statement of Faith reminds us that the Spirit "... calls women and men to all ministries of the Church" (10.4). And The Confession of 1967 says, "... every church order must be open to such reformation as may be required to make it a more effective instrument of the mission of reconciliation" (Ibid., 9.40).

Contrary to the spirit of Scripture and these confessional standards, our current ordination policy contradicts the basic principle of the church which holds all men and women who are church members responsible for answering God's call to special ministries as elders, deacons, or ministers of Word and Sacrament (G-6.0106a). Current policy contradicts the church's understanding of membership and takes away from some members their entitlement to "... all the rights and privileges of the church, including the right to ... hold office" (G-5.0302). The new language acknowledges Jesus Christ as head of the church (G-1.0100; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:15–20) and acknowledges the responsibility of those called by Christ to be obedient to Him. Embedded in this principle is the understanding that those "... who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world" (G-6.0106a). Current policy discounts the Constitutional questions asked of candidates. These questions focus broadly on the faith and manner of life expected of church officers without prurient concern with human sexuality.

In addition, current policy and practice regarding G-6.0106b limit the right of congregations to elect their own officers (G-6.0107) and limit their freedom of conscience in interpreting Scripture and the call of God (G-6.0108) by focusing inordinate attention on matters about which there remains great disagreement throughout the church.

Thus, contrary to the spirit of Scripture and our confessional standards, our current ordination policy contradicts the Great Commission of Christ (Matthew 28:18–20) and the Great Ends of the Church (G-1.0200) by:

- constraining the church's proclamation of the good news;
- denying nurture and spiritual fellowship to an entire category of God's children;
- placing a stumbling block before many who are gifted and called to lead and preserve divine worship;
- undermining the truth that is incarnate in Jesus Christ, that all who trust in him are reconciled to God and called to be part of the ministry of reconciliation;
- standing in the way of the church's promotion of social righteousness and justice for the marginalized and outcast of our culture; and
- preempting the possibility that God is calling us to exhibit the Kingdom of God in a new way to the world in our time.

The Great Commission and these purposes constitute a rule of our faith and should guide our interpretation of Scripture and the Confessions ("Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture").

Thus, through this new language, we invite the church to proclaim *that church polity exists to serve the Great Commission and the Great Ends of the Church and should reflect that commission and those ends.*

IV. THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, *in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself*, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. (2 Cor. 5:17–19, emphasis added)

The Confession of 1967 says that ... This community, *the church universal, is entrusted with God's message of reconciliation* and shares his labor of healing the enmities which separate men from God and from each other." (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.31, emphasis added)

Contrary to the spirit of Scripture and this confessional standard, our current ordination policy stands as a barrier to reconciliation, contradicts the value Scripture places on inclusive welcome (Acts 8:26–39, 10:28, and 11:17), and conflicts with numerous parts of the *Book of Order* that underscore the church's call to reconciliation, hospitality, openness, and inclusiveness (G-3.0401, G-4.0100 - G-4.0304) and the rights granted to members (G-5.0102 and G-5.0103, G-6.0107 and G-6.0108). In addition, a faithful member accepts Christ's call "... to [participate] in the governing responsibilities of the church" (G-5.0102e), while current ordination policies deny some faithful members the opportunity to serve and thus the opportunity to accept fully the privileges and responsibilities of membership that are "... a commitment to Jesus Christ that binds the individual to fulfillment of the obligations of membership" (G-5.0601).

Current policies have not been a source of peace or unity in the church. They have not kept those who advocated for the policies from schism. They have not silenced those who opposed them. The Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity and Purity of the Church, after earnest study and prayer, was not able to come to a resolution on current policies. For the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which calls us to the ministry of reconciliation, we invite the church into a season of reconciliation and hospitality to those gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons who have felt abused, neglected, and locked out of the fellowship of reconciliation by our current policies. The new language makes clear that all members who are called have the right and responsibility to stand for ordained office.

Thus, through this new language, we invite the church to proclaim *that our polity will reflect a church as welcoming as God's grace, as loving as God's heart, and as reconciling as God's word.*

V. OUR COMMON HUMANITY, OUR COMMON FAITH

... For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:22–23)

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Rom 5:1–5)

A Brief Statement of Faith reminds us that "... we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.... we violate the image of God in others and ourselves... Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation" (*The Book of Confessions*, A Brief Statement of Faith, 10.3). Further, in the Confession of 1967, "The *new life [in Christ] takes shape in a community in which men know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are.* They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no man has any ground on which to stand, except God's grace" (Ibid., The Confession of 1967, 9.22, emphasis added).

Contrary to the spirit of Scripture and these confessional standards, our current ordination policy denies both our common humanity and the freedom of the Holy Spirit to work in new and surprising ways among us for reconciliation, and contradicts the Reformed understanding of God's grace in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul understood our common sinfulness; nevertheless, Paul, in following Jesus, said we are justified by faith. Indeed, Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit to guide us in faith, and promised that the Spirit that will be with us always. We are called to be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit continually doing new things among us. We are charged with interpreting Scripture according to the movement of the Spirit and to what Calvin called the "inner testimony of the Holy Spirit." The founders of our Reformed Tradition and their heirs have continually been open to the moving of the Spirit in leading the church in new directions. As we are reformed and renewed according to the movement of the Spirit, even in our brokenness, Jesus Christ remains our peace, our unity, and our purity. Our peace, unity, and purity come through faith, obedience to Jesus Christ, our willingness to follow him and to respond to his call when we hear it. In times of controversy we recognize that Jesus Christ is the center of Scripture and we interpret it accordingly.

Thus, through this new language, we invite the church to proclaim *that God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of human life, and that the church best participates in this work when its polity reflects the unmerited grace and reconciling love made known to us in Jesus Christ, who calls each of us to this ministry of grace and reconciliation.*

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-17

Advice on Item 06-17—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 06-17 with the following comment.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

Like Items 06-06, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15 and 06-16; Item 06-17 seeks to replace the current language of G-6.0106b with a different standard.

The overture would substitute a requirement of assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003) for the current provisions of G-6.0106b. The language offered could be understood to limit examination of candidates to their assent to those constitutional questions. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the language is similar to the amendment submitted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to presbyteries and rejected by a majority of the presbyteries.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to present an amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote with the intention expressed in the rationale for this overture, and the concurrences thereto, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the language proposed by Item 06-09 accomplishes that result in a manner more consistent with the historic principles of Presbyterian polity.

Implications of the proposed revisions to the proposed Form of Government before the assembly: To the extent the 219th General Assembly (2010) wishes to make amendment to the current G-6.0106b, the identical provision in the proposed Form of Government is found at G-2.0104b.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-17

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-17—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-17, like 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, and 06-16, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries proposed amendments that would either delete G-6.0106b or replace it with language intended to support greater flexibility in discernment by the governing body responsible for approving a candidate for ordination and installation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) offers its advice and counsel on all of these overtures at Item 06-09.

Item 06-18

[The assembly answered Item 06-18 with the action taken on Item 06-09 of this report. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Behavioral Standards for Ordained Office—From the Presbytery of Central Washington.

The Presbytery of Central Washington overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to:

1. Declare that church officers and ministers of Word and Sacrament may in good conscience disagree with constitutional requirements for both faith and behavior, nevertheless, the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), while allowing freedom of conscience in interpreting the Scripture (G-6.0108a), also requires that in becoming candidates and officers, members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) choose to exercise their consciences within certain bounds:

“... His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek or hold office in that body...” (G-6.0108b).

2. Declare that G-6.0108b shall be understood to mean that no governing body may grant an exception to any explicitly stated behavioral standard for ordination and that church officers are to remain in compliance with such standards.

3. Consequently, declare that any person declining to comply in practice or refusing to comply in stated intent is ineligible for ordination, installation, or for candidacy as an officer or minister of Word and Sacrament, and shall not be ordained, installed, validated, or reinstated to active ministry by any governing body.

We recognize the church's responsibility to counsel with and care for those whose consciences lead them to disagree with standards adopted by consent of the whole church and urge our particular churches and governing bodies to counsel and minister to such persons at all times with Christ's love and moral clarity.

Rationale

- Confusion remains in the PC(USA) about the meaning and application of G-6.0106b in light of G-6.0108.
- Confusion feeds dissention, animosity, inconsistency, and controversy, poorly serving the whole church, which is in need of clear and forthright instruction.
- The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) has a constitutional responsibility to deliver binding authoritative interpretations, both in PJC proceedings and in this General Assembly.
- Whether the standards adopted by the whole church must be applied uniformly has been the subject of many complaints, which has resulted in costly litigation that wastes resources that could be used for better purposes.
- The lack of a clear and direct statement has led many to conclude that the PC(USA) is less than serious about constitutional consistency.
- The above statement would promote the peace, unity, and purity of the PC(USA) by stating clearly what the standard is and by uniting the authoritative interpretations of both the GAPJC and the General Assembly.
- The above statement stands in solidarity with the GA Permanent Judicial Commission's authoritative interpretation of the requirements for ordination.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-18

Advice on Item 06-18—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 06-18.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution refers the 219th General Assembly (2010) to its advice concerning Item 06-04, which sets forth the background that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the assembly should consider in addressing each of the items related to ordination and installation of church officers.

While the overture appears to seek that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve an authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108b, it is framed in terms of seeking a declaration. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires to approve an authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108b, it should expressly state that intent in taking action on this item.

The intent of Item 06-18 appears to be to remove the authoritative interpretation adopted by the 217th General Assembly in response to the recommendations of the Task Force on Peace, Unity and Purity, as revised by the 218th General Assembly (2008). As discussed in more detail in Section 4 of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution's advice concerning Item 06-04, the authoritative interpretations describe the relationship between G-6.0108 and G-6.0106b.

Under the authoritative interpretations approved by the 217th and the 218th General Assemblies (2008 and 2010), governing bodies are not permitted to determine outside the examination of a particular candidate whether a departure is from the essentials of Reformed faith and polity.

The authoritative interpretation offered by Item 06-18 would prohibit ordination or installation of any person "... declining to comply in practice or refusing to comply in stated intent ..." with the "... stated behavioral standard ..." (Item 06-18) of G-6.0106b that a person not engage in a "practice which the confessions call sin" (*Book of Order*, G-6.0106b). G-6.0106b contains an express requirement of self-acknowledgment. "... [I]f a person does not self-acknowledge a practice that the confessions call sin, then a governing body has a positive obligation to make further inquiry only if it has direct and specific knowledge that said person is in violation of the ordination and installation standards of the Constitution..." (*Presbytery of San Joaquin v Presbytery of the Redwoods, Minutes*, 2003, Part I, p. 280; see also *Wier v Second Presbyterian Church of Ft. Lauderdale, Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 339). The declaration in this item does not expressly recognize this important prerequisite to the application of G-6.0106b's standards.

Further, the interpretation offered would extend the prohibitions on ordination or installation to all individuals who "... refus[e] to comply in stated intent ..." with a request for affirmation that he or she will not engage in any practice the confessions call sin. Again, such an interpretation would go well beyond the restrictions on ordination or installation expressed in G-6.0106b, and potentially interfere with a candidate's expressions of conscience.

Finally, this item does not provide guidance as to how governing bodies are to determine which practices the confessions call sin. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) desires that G-6.0108b not be applied to making such a determination in the context of an examination for ordination or installation, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises, *consistent with its advice to the 218th General Assembly (2008)*, that the assembly either (1) withdraw the authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108 and approve an authoritative interpretation of G-6.0106b defining which practices the confessions call sin; or (2) submit to the presbyteries an amendment to G-6.0106b that replaces the phrase “practices the confessions call sin” with a list of conduct the assembly believes should bar ordination or installation, or with some other standard that does not require definition through interpretation of the confessions.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Since the proposed Form of Government retains the language of the current G-6.0106b in section G-2.0105, the approval of Item 06-18 would have substantially the same effect on the proposed Form of Government as it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-18

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-18—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 06-18 from the Presbytery of Central Washington overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to declare that under G-6.0106b no governing body may permit an exception to “any explicitly stated behavioral standard for ordination...” (Item 06-18).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 06-18 be disapproved.

Rationale

Please see ACSWP’s Advice and Counsel to Item 06-04.

Item 06-19

[The assembly referred Item 06-19 to the Office of Vocation. See pp. 33, 47.]

On Establishing a Process to Evaluate the Current Call System—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to establish a process to evaluate the current call system of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and bring recommendations back to the 220th General Assembly in 2012 for changes that will shorten the length of time during which a church seeking a pastor is ordinarily without an installed pastor.

Rationale

The average time line to conduct and complete the search for a new pastor appears to be anywhere from eighteen months to two and a half years. In 1998, the Barna Research Group, Inc. reported that the average length of time for an installed pastor to remain in place was five years. For many churches that average now is closer to four years. The instability that ensues when a congregation invests its time and resources in a search for a new pastor—as often as occurs—is detrimental to the mission and vision of that congregation, as well as to the denomination as a whole.

While there is clearly a provision for temporary pastoral leadership during these times of transition, many congregations feel as though they are always living in transition and that their constant focus is upon who will be the next pastor, not what God is calling them to do in ministry.

A study of our call system in light of these realities, will, we pray, result in recommendations for change that will strengthen the ministries of congregations in the PC(USA).

COGA COMMENT ON 06-19

Comment on Item 06-19—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

This overture seeks to establish a process to evaluate the current call system over a two year period and bring recommendations for changes that will shorten the length of time a church seeking a pastor is ordinarily without an installed pastor to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

The Office of Vocation is already in the early stages of inviting a number of Church Leadership Connection (CLC) users and presbytery leaders into conversation to review and evaluate the current call process and system and would welcome

bringing the Presbytery of New Covenant's concerns about the length of the process into this broader evaluation. If additional study is mandated by the 219th General Assembly (2010), the Office of Vocation recommends that such a study be done through the work of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The only *Book of Order* guidance provided on the call process for installed pastoral relations is found in G-14.0530. It gives latitude to presbyteries regarding the call process including decisions that affect the length of the process. In 2009, the median search time for churches that used Church Leadership Connection (CLC) as part of their call process, from the time a Church Information Form (CIF) was submitted until a person was called, was eight months.

The Barna Research Group, Inc. averages are gathered from a wide range of denominational and non-denominational congregations. Averages for the PC(USA) show that the duration of pastor tenure in installed positions has increased over the past twenty years.

Average Duration of Pastor Tenure (data provided by the Board of Pensions)

	1987–1991	1992–1996	1997–2001	2002–2006	2007–present
Pastors	4.57	6.23	6.87	7.94	8.64
Head of Staff*	5.01	8.05	9.01		
Associates	2.34	3.44	4.02	5.36	5.81
Interims	1.04	1.25	1.35		

* subset of "Pastors (HoS, Solo, Co)"

The Office of Vocation is aware of the concerns expressed by congregations and presbyteries that a lengthy call process can be detrimental to the mission and vision of a particular congregation. Such concerns do not need to wait two years before action can be taken. The Office of Vocation, working with committees on ministry (COM) and presbytery leaders, can begin now to lift up ways to shorten the call process and focus in particular on current factors affecting its length. These include:

- whether a presbytery requires a mission study before the search for a new pastor begins;
- when the COM grants permission for the church to elect a pastor nominating committee;
- how long it takes for the CIF to be written, approved by session and COM, and entered into CLC;
- how long it takes for the COM moderator and clerk of session to approve the CIF so it may be activated in Church Leadership Connection (CLC);
- how long it takes for presbytery leaders to complete the matching for churches in their presbytery. (When CLC does the matching for a presbytery, matches are ordinarily completed within three days of CIF release.);
- how broad the pastoral search will be (geographically, and the time frame for advertising and recruitment);
- how often a PNC will meet to do their work;
- the group dynamic of the PNC as it works to reach agreement on a nominee to be presented to the congregation.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the General Assembly from across the church, made up of elders and ministers who supervise the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 06-20

[The assembly answered Item 06-20 by the action taken on Item 06-09. See pp. 46, 48.]

On Calling All Individuals in the Majority and Minority to Wait Actively Upon the Lord in a Season of Fasting and Forbearance—From the Presbytery of the Miami Valley.

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. Acknowledge, with humility,
 - a. that history reveals that Christians of the Reformed tradition are prone to divide over differences of faith or practice;
 - b. that such division dims the unity within which the Lord has placed us; and

c. that such division is as likely to dim our witness to the Lord Jesus Christ as error or injustice in doctrine or practice.

2. Acknowledge, with humility and patience,

a. that the Lord has not seen fit to bless the church with a unity of conscience with regard to ordination standards, and no one knows the day or hour when the Lord will offer such a blessing; and

b. that despite our earnest desires for justice, for order, and for faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture, many strategies we have pursued to address our controversies over ordination standards have inadvertently obscured to the world the church's resemblance to the mind of Christ.

3. Exhort all members and officers, therefore,

a. to undertake a seven-year fast, abstaining voluntarily from all *legislative* efforts to resolve these controversies, and to hunger for the Lord; and

b. to engage instead in a conscious, deliberative alternative; namely, to wait actively upon the Lord by pursuing untried strategies of humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4. Exhort all officers serving on governing bodies to wait upon the Lord by:

a. studying Ephesians Chapter 4 in light of matters in the church where differing views have become entrenched,

b. resisting the temptation to entertain division of the Spirit,

c. voluntarily extending forbearance as the Lord has voluntarily extended grace, and

d. voluntarily electing not to act when acting is likely to yield only another polarized debate according to the world's ways.

5. Exhort officers in the majority on the ordination standards controversy to wait upon the Lord and forbear Presbyterians in the minority by:

a. refraining from judging fellow Presbyterians, remembering that judgment belongs to the Lord and recognizing that even if the majority holds, there is no genuine unity of conscience among the present or foreseeable PC(USA);

b. honoring Presbyterians in the minority by humbly, gently, and patiently guarding the full range of minority rights which help them submit to Christ's unity despite differing conscience;

c. exercising the majority right to rule, with full humility that a significant portion of Presbyterian sisters and brothers must exert patience, forbearance, or even self-denial to abide by the rule;

d. seeking new, non-legislative ways to relate to Presbyterians in the minority, so that the world might see that in Christ's mission there is neither majority nor minority;

e. honoring Presbyterians in the minority by engaging them in serious conversation, apart from legislative venues, about the theological roots of their convictions; learn how they see their convictions as a faithful response to God's covenant call for a way of life and faith distinct from the ways of the world; and

f. forbearing the temptation to withdraw due to impatience with opponents in the church; forbearance glorifies the Lord.

6. Exhort officers in the minority on the ordination standards controversy to wait upon the Lord and forbear Presbyterians in the majority by:

a. refraining from judging fellow Presbyterians, remembering that judgment belongs to the Lord, and recognizing that even if the majority shifts, there is no genuine unity of conscience among the present or foreseeable PC(USA);

b. honoring Presbyterians in the majority by humbly, gently, and patiently heeding majority rule in the church;

c. exercising the full range of minority rights, especially exploring the more moderate rights of individuals in the minority (the right to express dissent, to passively concur, to actively concur), with full humility that the timing of change is in the hands of the Lord;

d. seeking new, non-legislative ways to relate to Presbyterians in the majority, so that the world might see that in Christ's mission there is neither majority nor minority;

e. honoring Presbyterians in the majority by engaging them in serious conversation, apart from legislative venues, about the theological roots of their viewpoints; learn how they see their convictions as a faithful response to God's covenant call for a way of life and faith distinct from the ways of the world; and

f. forbearing the temptation to withdraw due to impatience with opponents in the church; forbearance glorifies the Lord.

7. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate the foregoing to all presbyteries, urging them to communicate this message to their congregations.

Rationale

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1–5)

Regarding Item 1 (that division dims Christian unity)

As the only chapter of the New Testament using the Greek word translated as *unity*, Ephesians 4 presents a vision for faithful Christian community. It reminds us that the church's unity is both grace and vocation, gift and responsibility. "Church unity is not ours to produce; it is a gift to be received and faithfully displayed, as public testimony that God in Christ is indeed with us. Yet, while the church's unity is not ours to produce, we *do* set the tone that nurtures or withers it, illuminates or darkens it, enhances or defaces it, affirms or denies it."¹ The qualities outlined by Paul—humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and persevering effort for unity—are thus a standard of relationship between Christians, integral to our witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Yet the legacy of the Reformed tradition in the United States is largely one of fragmentation, not unity. We divide over differences in faith, practice, or both. In our dividing, we fall short of glorifying the triune God, described well by Karl Barth in his discussion of the oneness of the church:

A plurality of Churches...means a plurality of lords, a plurality of spirits, a plurality of gods. There is no doubt that to the extent that Christendom does consist of actually different and opposing Churches, to that extent it denies practically what it confesses theoretically—the unity and singularity of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit. There may be good grounds for the rise of these divisions. There may be serious obstacles to their removal. There may be many things which can be said by way of interpretation and mitigation. But this does not alter the fact that every division as such is a deep riddle, a scandal. And in face of this scandal the whole of Christendom should be united in being able to think of it only with penitence, not with the penitence which each expects of the other, but with the penitence in which—whatever may be the cost—each is willing to precede the other.²

Regarding Item 2 (effects of division over ordination standards)

The present controversy over ordination standards has tested Presbyterian unity for more than three decades. Most organized efforts to resolve the controversy and maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace have been legislative and judicial. Some of us have sought to clarify and maintain the long tradition within our constitution and polity prohibiting self-affirming, practicing homosexual persons from ordination. Some of us have sought to revise these standards to permit gay ordination within our constitution and polity. Some of us, for varying reasons, have not made this controversy our priority in discipleship, and yet are called upon nearly annually to line up with majority or minority. The debates surrounding gay ordination have dominated our public discourse, informal and formal. Some of us believe this matter is a central issue of faith in our time. Some of us believe this focus has come, at least in part, at the expense of faithful attention and care to growth in our knowledge of Scripture, our ability to engage one another theologically, our courage to bring the love of Christ to our neighbor, our generosity and creativity in lifting the sorrows of our world, and our readiness to represent Christ in interfaith interactions.

After these three decades, evidence indicates there is not yet a unity of conscience on the subject of ordination standards. Margins in voting attest to the lack of consensus: for instance, the 218th General Assembly (2008) approved an amendment of G-6.0106b by a slim margin (380 affirmative, 325 negative, 3 abstaining),³ then the presbyteries rejected it, but with a significant minority (78 yes, 95 no).⁴ Polling data indicates that a significant majority of Presbyterian members oppose ordination of gay persons as Minister of Word and Sacrament.⁵ Yet, the same poll also indicates a smaller majority opposing ordination of gay persons as Elder or Deacon.⁶

Just as significantly, evidence suggests that our approach to the controversy has diminished our resemblance to the mind of Christ. While proponents of gay ordination have long argued that the church's prohibition is unbecoming of the gospel of Jesus Christ, opponents of gay ordination are beginning to notice the detrimental effects of the controversy. For instance, the Barna Group conducted research on Americans born between 1965 and 2002, who are "outsiders," namely, those looking at Christian faith from the outside. Representing an evangelical voice, authors Kinnaman and Lyons published their findings under the title, *Unchristian*, to denote the essence of outsiders' most common reaction to Christian faith: "... they think that Christians no longer represent what Jesus had in mind, that Christianity in our society is not what it was meant to be."⁷ In

their national surveys, Barna Group found that the three most common perceptions of present-day Christianity are anti-homosexual (an image held by 91 percent of young outsiders), judgmental (87 percent), and hypocritical (85 percent).⁸ Notwithstanding their conservative stance on homosexuality, the authors do not flinch from this alarming summary:

When most of us engage homosexuals, we come across as arrogant, self-righteous, and uncaring—the opposite of how Jesus engaged outsiders. Rather than articulating a biblical perspective and living out a biblical response to homosexuals, the research demonstrates how inconsistent and uncompassionate—how unchristian—we have been.⁹

Kinnaman and Lyons urge Christians who view homosexual behavior as sin to change their approach. They urge biblical responses which acknowledge complexity, treat others with respect, and above all demonstrate compassion.

Standards matter; yet, when our debate causes us to depart from such fundamental standards of Christian behavior as evidently perceived by many young Americans, then we have dimmed our capacity to witness to the Light of Christ. Further, by neglecting such standards of behavior—humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and persevering effort for unity—we have fractured trust, withering the gift of community.

Regarding Item 3 (seven-year fast and active waiting upon the Lord)

Three decades of legislative wrangling has not yielded unity, nor does the future portend unity, no matter whether the majority holds or the majority shifts. Legislative effort does not appear to be the way at this time. Returning to Ephesians, then, though we have made *long* effort, we have not made *every* effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Further, we have often forgotten along the way to act with humility, gentleness, and patience.

We believe the PC(USA) would benefit and the Lord would be glorified by a General Assembly call to fasting and active waiting upon the Lord. This is not to be understood as a moratorium in religious clothing. A moratorium is a legislative order, meaning delay, implying inaction. In effect, it is often little more than a cease-fire, allowing opponents time to reload. Fasting, by contrast, is active. To fast is to voluntarily hold back or refrain from something in order to hunger for the Lord. To fast is to wait actively for the Lord, engaging in activities that sharpen our readiness for revelation, insight, and call.

To fast from legislative efforts to resolve the ordination standards controversy will be a significant spiritual challenge for many of us. It will require prayer, self-emptying, self-control, and community support. As with any fast, it must be voluntarily chosen, not coerced. This draws us closer to the mind of Christ (Philippians 2). As with every gift of grace, it will be costly.

Further, to fast is to hunger for the Lord, also understood as actively waiting upon the Lord. We believe that in our focus on legislative solutions, we have overlooked many potential efforts to maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We believe active waiting in this time means consciously, deliberately pursuing untried efforts, especially guided by the standard of behavior set forth in Ephesians 4.

The recommended length of the fast—seven years—stems from our biblical formation, as well as a sober recognition of the depth of fractures in many of our relationships. Time is an important tool for healing. Wounds more than thirty years in the making will not heal overnight.

Regarding Item 4 (Ephesians 4, Officers, and Forbearance)

Our historic principles call us to preserve and nurture our unity by “exercising mutual forbearance in love.” This phrase, mutual forbearance, stems from Ephesians 4 in the King James Version, but does not quote it precisely. Paul does not beg the church in Ephesus to “mutually forbear”; he begs them to “forbear.” We observe that despite all laudable pleas for mutual forbearance, no individual can exercise it. We can only forbear. We can offer only our own patience, we cannot demand it from another.

To paraphrase Barth (above), it behooves the church to think of this controversy only with forbearance, not with the forbearance that each expects of the other, but with the forbearance in which—whatever may be the cost—each is willing to precede [that is, offer first to] the other. Reconciliation precedes righteousness. Christ forbore us while we were yet sinners.

In such a time of division, it is especially incumbent upon Presbyterian leaders to equip themselves to nurture and affirm the gift of unity. Our recommendations encourage officers to be grounded in biblical study and strengthened for the hard work of resisting temptation and exercising forbearance. Forbearance can restore trust, and the church hungers for trust.

Regarding Items 5 and 6 (Exhortations for majority and minority)

Habits are hard to break. Items five and six specifically address those representing opposing viewpoints. We are so accustomed to the controversy that guidance is warranted in turning to a new direction.

How, then, do communities of conviction within the church relate to other communities of different conviction within the church? If disassociation is ruled out, each group is called to life together. If castigation is ruled out, each group is called to speaking and listening in a manner that recognizes the integrity of the other. If indifference is ruled out, each group is called to bear faithful witness to its own apprehension of the truth.¹⁰

Items five and six seek to assist in our call to life together, to recognize the integrity of the other, and to bear faithful witness.

In particular, the approaches outlined draw upon insights from the 1983 document, *Historic Principles, Conscience and Church Government*, prepared at the time of reunion of the UPCUSA and the PCUS to address issues of diversity of conscience. This document asserts the political means by which we cope with unity and diversity:

The polity of Presbyterianism—with its strong insistence on the rule of the majority and the rights of the minority—is indeed the way in which Presbyterians affirm their unity amid their diversity.¹¹

We have therefore extended specific counsel to each group—majority and minority—within the PC(USA). Each group has a specific set of opportunities and responsibilities, protected by the polity of *Robert's Rules of Order*, yet each group also has a more fundamental set of responsibilities set forth by biblical standards. Our counsel calls attention to opportunities and responsibilities for both majority and minority—opportunities and responsibilities that we believe have been thus far overlooked or under-explored in our wrestling with this controversy.

According to *Historic Principles*, the majority has the right to rule, to establish its own standards, and this freedom includes the right to be wrong. Nevertheless, the dissenter also has rights. “The church protects its own minority point of view as if it were protecting its future, recognizing that the dissenter may well represent the will of God.”¹²

The church is cautioned that schism is generally the result not of an issue itself, but of an improper understanding or use of Presbyterian polity, such as when

- “a governing body acts on crucial matters which affect the whole church, even with proper authority, but without giving consideration to consultation and the slow process necessary to aid in the building of consensus” and
- “an individual church officer or group of church officers become isolated from the governing body and see the action of the body as that of an enemy, thus refusing to take such action with seriousness.”¹³

While the majority has the right to rule, the minority has rights as well. After an action has been taken, individuals in the minority possess five specific rights: (1) the right to work for change, (2) the right of dissent, protest, or appeal, (3) the right of passive concurrence (abide by the rule without agreeing), (4) the right of active concurrence (changing one’s mind), and (5) the right of peaceful individual withdrawal.¹⁴

In three decades of debate, the minority has not explored the full complement of these rights. For instance, to our knowledge, there has been no sustained effort by those in the minority to enter a formal dissent or protest on the records of the governing body to which they belong. Better, the right to work for change can include non-legislative and non-judicial methods.

Because both sides seek to gain the majority, we cite this prophetic observation from the report:

Divisiveness and schism are most likely to occur when the church does not follow its own procedures carefully. When an attempt is made to force consensus before the time is right, the impatience of those who demand premature action may produce a lack of proper attention to the convictions of a large minority. Such a lack is one which produces ill will and potential for schism.¹⁵

The minority is now large. And even if the minority gains majority, the consequent minority will be large. We must try a different way.

Regarding Item 7 (Communicating to the Church)

By choosing to communicate with the church by means of a message, rather than a rule, the General Assembly invites forbearance by exercising it.

Endnotes

1. “Bearing with One Another: The Pastoral Task in Times of Struggle,” Sheldon W. Sorge, PC(USA) Office of Theology and Worship, Church Issues Series, No. 5, p. 4.
2. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV.1*, tr. G. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), 675–676.
3. See <<http://www.pc-biz.org/>>. Check 218th General Assembly (2008), Item 05-09.
4. See <<http://www.pcusa.org/generalassembly/vote08.htm>>.

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDERS AND MINISTRY

5. “Would personally like to see the PC(USA) permit ordination of sexually active gays and lesbians as ministers (yes, definitely or yes, probably)”: Members 35 percent, Elders 30 percent, Pastors 64 percent, Specialized Clergy 64 percent. “A Presbyterian Panel Snapshot Characteristics of Presbyterians 2008,” by Research Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). See <www.pcusa.org/research/panel>.
6. Yes, definitely or yes, maybe permitting active gays and lesbians as elders: Members 45 percent, Elders 40 percent, Pastors 47 percent, Specialized Clergy 67 percent. Yes, definitely or yes, maybe permitting active gays and lesbians as deacons: Members 46 percent, Elders 41 percent, Pastors 48 percent, Specialized Clergy 68 percent.
7. Kinnaman, David and Gabe Lyons, *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity...and Why It Matters*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007, p. 15.
8. *Unchristian*, p 27.
9. *Unchristian*, p 93.
10. “Who’s In? Who’s Out? Pharisees, Presbyterians, and the Discernment of Faithfulness,” Joseph D. Small, The Price H. Gwynn III Church Leadership Series #5, Louisville: Geneva Press, 2001.
11. *Historic Principles, Conscience, and Church Government*, Adopted by the 195th General Assembly (1983) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), p 1.
12. *Historic Principles*, p 8.
13. *Historic Principles*, p 16.
14. *Historic Principles*, p 8.
15. *Historic Principles*, pp 11–12.

Item 07-01

Form of Government Task Force Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010)

The Form of Government Task Force recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010):

[The assembly approved Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, with amendment. See pp. 18–24.]

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

Shall the *Book of Order* be amended by striking out the text of Chapters I–XVIII of the current Form of Government (G-1.0000–G-18.0401) and inserting two documents, Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and a new Form of Government, to read as follows:

“THE FOUNDATIONS OF PRESBYTERIAN POLITY

“CHAPTER ONE

“THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH¹

“F-1.01 GOD’S MISSION

“The good news of the Gospel is that the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—creates, redeems, sustains, rules, and transforms all things and all people. This one living God, the Scriptures say, liberated the people of Israel from oppression and covenanted to be their God. By the power of the Spirit, this one living God is incarnate in Jesus Christ, who came to live in the world, die for the world, and be raised again to new life. The Gospel of Jesus Christ announces the nearness of God’s kingdom, bringing good news to all who are impoverished, sight to all who are blind, freedom to all who are oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord’s favor upon all creation.

“The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church. In Christ, the Church participates in God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ. Human beings have no higher goal in life than to glorify and enjoy God now and forever, living in covenant fellowship with God and participating in God’s mission.

“F-1.02 JESUS CHRIST IS HEAD OF THE CHURCH

“1.0201 The Authority of Christ

“Almighty God, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead and set him above all rule and authority, has given to him all power in heaven and on earth, not only in this age but also in the age to come. God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has made Christ Head of the Church, which is his body. The Church’s life and mission are a joyful participation in Christ’s ongoing life and work.

“1.0202 Christ Calls and Equips the Church

“Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills.

“1.0203 Christ Gives the Church Its Life

“Christ gives to the Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its order and discipline. Scripture teaches us of Christ’s will for the Church, which is to be obeyed. In the worship and service of God and the government of the church, matters are to be ordered according to the Word by reason and sound judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

“1.0204 Christ Is the Church’s Hope

“In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the Church confesses that he is its hope, and that the Church, as Christ’s body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God.

¹ Throughout this document and the Form of Government, the capitalized term ‘Church’ refers to the Church Universal, the Church as it is called to be in Christ, [~~the lower case term ‘church’ refers to denominations,~~] except as part of a title (i.e. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). [~~In place of the vernacular use of ‘church’ to denote a congregation of believers, the term ‘congregation’ is used.~~]

“1.0205 Christ Is the Foundation of the Church

“In Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Christ God reconciles all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross (Col. 1:19–20). In Christ’s name, therefore, the Church is sent out to bear witness to the good news of reconciliation with God, with others, and with all creation. In Christ the Church receives its truth and appeal, its holiness, and its unity.

“F-1.03 THE CALLING OF THE CHURCH**“1.0301 The Church Is the Body of Christ**

“The Church is the body of Christ. Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body. The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts in its life as a community in the world (1 Cor. 12:27–28):

“The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.

“The Church is to be a community of hope, rejoicing in the sure and certain knowledge that, in Christ, God is making a new creation. This new creation is a new beginning for human life and for all things. The Church lives in the present on the strength of that promised new creation.

“The Church is to be a community of love, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.

“The Church is to be a community of witness, pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God’s transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord.

“1.0302 The Marks of the Church²

“With all Christians of the Church catholic, we affirm that the Church is ‘one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.’

“a. The Unity of the Church

“Unity is God’s gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Just as God is one God and Jesus Christ is our one Savior, so the Church is one because it belongs to its one Lord, Jesus Christ. The Church seeks to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone. There is one Church, for there is one Spirit, one hope, ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all’ (Eph. 4:5–6).

“Because in Christ the Church is one, it strives to be one. To be one with Christ is to be joined with all those whom Christ calls into relationship with him. To be thus joined with one another is to become priests for one another, praying for the world and for one another and sharing the various gifts God has given to each Christian for the benefit of the whole community. Division into different denominations obscures but does not destroy unity in Christ. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirming its historical continuity with the whole Church of Jesus Christ, is committed to the reduction of that obscurity, and is willing to seek and to deepen communion with all other churches within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

“b. The Holiness of the Church

“Holiness is God’s gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Through the love of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God takes away the sin of the world. The holiness of the Church comes from Christ who sets it apart to bear witness to his love, and not from the purity of its doctrine or the righteousness of its actions.

“Because in Christ the Church is holy, the Church, its members, and those in its ordered ministries strive to lead lives worthy of the Gospel we proclaim. In gratitude for Christ’s work of redemption, we rely upon the work of God’s Spirit through Scripture and the means of grace (W-5.5001) to form every believer and every community for this holy living. We confess the persistence of sin in our corporate and individual lives. At the same time, we also confess that we are forgiven by Christ and called again and yet again to strive for the purity, righteousness, and truth revealed to us in Jesus Christ and promised to all people in God’s new creation.

“c. The Catholicity of the Church

“Catholicity is God’s gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. In the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God overcomes our alienation and repairs our division.

² See ‘The Nicene Creed,’ *The Book of Confessions*, 1.3.

“Because in Christ the Church is catholic, it strives everywhere to testify to Christ’s embrace of men, women, and children of all times, places, races, nations, ages, conditions, and stations in life. The catholicity of the Church summons the Church to a deeper faith, a larger hope, and a more complete love as it bears witness to God’s grace.

“d. The Apostolicity of the Church

“Apostolicity is God’s gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God sends the Church into the world to share the gospel of God’s redemption of all things and people.

“Because in Christ the Church is apostolic, it strives to proclaim this gospel faithfully. The Church receives the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ through the testimony of those whom Christ sent, both those whom we call apostles and those whom Christ has called throughout the long history of the Church. The Church has been and is even now sent into the world by Jesus Christ to bear that testimony to others. The Church bears witness in word and work that in Christ the new creation has begun, and that God who creates life also frees those in bondage, forgives sin, reconciles brokenness, makes all things new, and is still at work in the world. To be members of the body of Christ is to be sent out to pursue the mission of God and to participate in God’s new creation, God’s kingdom drawing the present into itself. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms the Gospel of Jesus Christ as received from the prophets and apostles, and stands in continuity with God’s mission through the ages.

“The Church strives to be faithful to the good news it has received and accountable to the standards of the confessions. The Church seeks to present the claims of Jesus Christ, leading persons to repentance, acceptance of Christ alone as Savior and Lord, and new life as his disciples.

“The Church is sent to be Christ’s faithful evangelist:

“making disciples of all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;

“sharing with others a deep life of worship, prayer, fellowship, and service; and

“participating in God’s mission to care for the needs of the sick, poor, and lonely; to free people from sin, suffering, and oppression; and to establish Christ’s just, loving, and peaceable rule in the world.

“1.0303 The Notes of the Reformed Church³

“Where Christ is, there is the true Church. Since the earliest days of the Reformation, Reformed Christians have marked the presence of the true Church wherever:

“the Word of God is truly preached and heard,

“the Sacraments are rightly administered, and

“ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered.

“In our own time, we affirm that, in the power of the Spirit, the Church is faithful to the mission of Christ as it:

“Proclaims and hears the Word of God,

“responding to the promise of God’s new creation in Christ, and

“inviting all people to participate in that new creation;

“Administers and receives the Sacraments,

“welcoming those who are being engrafted into Christ,

“bearing witness to Christ’s saving death and resurrection,

“anticipating the heavenly banquet that is to come, and

“committing itself in the present to solidarity with the marginalized and the hungry; and

“Nurtures a covenant community of disciples of Christ,

“living in the strength of God’s promise and

“giving itself in service to God’s mission.

“1.0304 The Great Ends of the Church

“The great ends of the Church are:

“the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;

³ See *The Scots Confession, Ch. XVIII (The Book of Confessions, 3.18)*

*“the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
 “the maintenance of divine worship;
 “the preservation of the truth;
 “the promotion of social righteousness; and
 “the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.”⁴*

“F-1.04 OPENNESS TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“1.0401 Continuity and Change

“The presbyterian form of government set forth in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is grounded in Scripture and built around the marks of the true Church. It is in all things subject to the Lord of the Church. In the power of the Spirit, Jesus Christ draws worshiping communities and individual believers into the sovereign activity of the triune God at all times and places. As the Church seeks reform and fresh direction, it looks to Jesus Christ who goes ahead of us and calls us to follow him. United with Christ in the power of the Spirit, the Church seeks ‘not [to] be conformed to this world, but [to] be transformed by the renewing of [our] minds, so that [we] may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect’ (Rom. 12:2).

“1.0402 Ecumenicity

“The presbyterian system of government in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is established in light of Scripture but is not regarded as essential for the existence of the Christian Church nor required of all Christians.

“1.0403 Unity in Diversity

“ ‘As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise’ (Gal. 3:27–29).

“The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

“1.0404 Openness

“In Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all creation, the Church seeks a new openness to God’s mission in the world. In Christ, the triune God tends the least among us, suffers the curse of human sinfulness, raises up a new humanity, and promises a new future for all creation. In Christ, Church members share with all humanity the realities of creatureliness, sinfulness, brokenness, and suffering, as well as the future toward which God is drawing them. The mission of God pertains not only to the Church but also to people everywhere and to all creation. As it participates in God’s mission, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks:

“a new openness to the sovereign activity of God in the Church and in the world, to a more radical obedience to Christ, and to a more joyous celebration in worship and work;

“a new openness in its own membership, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, ethnicities, and [worldly] conditions, made one in Christ by the power of the Spirit, as a visible sign of the new humanity;

“a new openness to see both the possibilities and perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activity in the world; and

“a new openness to God’s continuing reformation of the Church ecumenical, that it might be more effective in its mission.

⁴*This statement of the Great Ends of the Church, slightly edited here, came from the United Presbyterian Church of North America, which united with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1958. The statement was then made a part of the Constitution of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as the united body was called. This now classic statement was adopted by the United Presbyterian Church of North America in 1910, following various actions between 1904 and 1910 looking forward to the revision of the church’s Constitution.*

“CHAPTER TWO**“THE CHURCH AND ITS CONFESSIONS****“F-2.01 THE PURPOSE OF CONFESSIONAL STATEMENTS**

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith and bears witness to God’s grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in The Book of Confessions. In these statements the church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes, and what it resolves to do. These statements identify the church as a community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions. They guide the church in its study and interpretation of the Scriptures; they summarize the essence of Reformed Christian tradition; they direct the church in maintaining sound doctrines; they equip the church for its work of proclamation. They serve to strengthen personal commitment and the life and witness of the community of believers.

“The creeds and confessions of this church arose in response to particular circumstances within the history of God’s people. They claim the truth of the Gospel at those points where their authors perceived that truth to be at risk. They are the result of prayer, thought, and experience within a living tradition. They appeal to the universal truth of the Gospel while expressing that truth within the social and cultural assumptions of their time. They affirm a common faith tradition, while also from time to time standing in tension with each other.

“F-2.02 THE CONFESSIONS AS SUBORDINATE STANDARDS

“These confessional statements are subordinate standards in the church, subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him. While confessional standards are subordinate to the Scriptures, they are, nonetheless, standards. They are not lightly drawn up or subscribed to, nor may they be ignored or dismissed. The church is prepared to instruct, counsel with, or even to discipline one ordained who seriously rejects the faith expressed in the confessions. Moreover, the process for changing the confessions of the church is deliberately demanding, requiring a high degree of consensus across the church. Yet the church, in obedience to Jesus Christ, is open to the reform of its standards of doctrine as well as of governance. The church affirms ‘Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei,’ that is, ‘The church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God’ in the power of the Spirit.

“F-2.03 THE CONFESSIONS AS STATEMENTS OF THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH CATHOLIC

“In its confessions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) witnesses to the faith of the Church catholic. The confessions express the faith of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church in the recognition of canonical Scriptures and the formulation and adoption of the ecumenical creeds, notably the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds with their definitions of the mystery of the triune God and of the incarnation of the eternal Word of God in Jesus Christ.

“F-2.04 THE CONFESSIONS AS STATEMENTS OF THE FAITH OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

“In its confessions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) upholds the affirmations of the Protestant Reformation. The focus of these affirmations is God’s grace in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. The Protestant watchwords—grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone—embody principles of understanding that continue to guide and motivate the people of God in the life of faith.

“F-2.05 THE CONFESSIONS AS STATEMENTS OF THE FAITH OF THE REFORMED TRADITION

“In its confessions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) expresses the faith of the Reformed tradition. Central to this tradition is the affirmation of the majesty, holiness, and providence of God who in Christ and by the power of the Spirit creates, sustains, rules, and redeems the world in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love. Related to this central affirmation of God’s sovereignty are other great themes of the Reformed tradition:

“The election of the people of God for service as well as for salvation;

“Covenant life marked by a disciplined concern for order in the church according to the Word of God;

“A faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God’s creation; and

“The recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God.

“CHAPTER THREE
“PRINCIPLES OF ORDER AND GOVERNMENT

“F-3.01 HISTORIC PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH ORDER⁵

“In setting forth this Book of Order, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reaffirms the historic principles of church order, which have been a part of our common heritage and which are basic to our Presbyterian concept and system of church government, namely:

“3.0101 God Is Lord of the Conscience

“a. That ‘God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men⁶ which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.’⁷

“b. Therefore we consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable: We do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time, be equal and common to all others.

“3.0102 Corporate Judgment

“That, in perfect consistency with the above principle of common right, every Christian Church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed; that in the exercise of this right they may, notwithstanding, err, in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet, even in this case, they do not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only make an improper use of their own.

“3.0103 Officers

“That our blessed Savior, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers,⁸ not only to preach the gospel and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation of both truth and duty; and that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the Word of God.

“3.0104 Truth and Goodness

“That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness, according to our Savior’s rule, ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ And that no opinion can either be more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man’s opinions are. On the contrary, we are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it.

“3.0105 Mutual Forbearance

“That, while under the conviction of the above principle we think it necessary to make effectual provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith, we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.

“3.0106 Election by the People

“That though the character, qualifications, and authority of Church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution, yet the election of the persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society.

⁵This section, with the exception of the first paragraph, was first drawn up by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, and prefixed to the Form of Government as published by that body in 1788. In that year, the synod was divided into four synods and gave place to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which held its first meeting the following year. The four synods formed were the Synod of New York and New Jersey, the Synod of Philadelphia, the Synod of Virginia, and the Synod of the Carolinas. The presbyteries of these four synods were represented in the first General Assembly, which met in Philadelphia on May 21, 1789. The general plan drawn up in 1788 became that by which the Presbyterian Church in the United States and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America were subsequently governed.

⁶ The words ‘men’ and ‘man’s’ in this section from the eighteenth century should be understood as applying to all persons.

⁷ See the Westminster Confession of Faith (The Book of Confessions, 6.109).

⁸ The terms ‘officers’ and ‘office’ are preserved here and in G-3.0106 as part of the historic language of the Principles. Elsewhere in the Form of Government the terms ‘ordered minister’ and ‘ordered ministry’ are used in place of ‘officer’ and ‘office.’

“3.0107 Church Power

“That all Church power, whether exercised by the body in general or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative; that is to say, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no Church judicatory⁹ ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. Now though it will easily be admitted that all synods and councils may err, through the frailty inseparable from humanity, yet there is much greater danger from the usurped claim of making laws than from the right of judging upon laws already made, and common to all who profess the gospel, although this right, as necessity requires in the present state, be lodged with fallible men.

“3.0108 The Value of Ecclesiastical Discipline

“Lastly, that if the preceding scriptural and rational principles be steadfastly adhered to, the vigor and strictness of its discipline will contribute to the glory and happiness of any church. Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church universal.

“F-3.02 PRINCIPLES OF PRESBYTERIAN GOVERNMENT¹⁰

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reaffirms, within the context of its commitment to the Church universal, a special commitment to basic principles of Presbyterian polity:

“3.0201 One Church

“The particular congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) wherever they are, taken collectively, constitute one church, called the church.

“3.0202 Governed by Presbyters

“This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders. Ruling elders are so named not because they ‘lord it over’ the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Teaching elders shall be committed in all their work to equipping the people of God for their ministry and witness.

“3.0203 Gathered in Councils

“These presbyters shall come together in councils in regular gradation. These councils are sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. All councils of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The councils are distinct, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate council. The larger part of the church, or a representation thereof, shall govern the smaller.

“3.0204 Seek and Represent the Will of Christ

“Presbyters are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ.

“3.0205 Decision by Majority Vote

“Decisions shall be reached in councils by vote, following opportunity for discussion and discernment, and a majority shall govern.

⁹ The term ‘judicatory,’ employed here as part of the historical language of the Principles, is elsewhere in the Form of Government replaced with ‘council.’

¹⁰ This provision is derived from and intended to restate the Historic Principles of Church Government, which were adopted in 1797 by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and the Principles of Presbyterian Government. In this quotation, the word ‘radical’ is used in its primary meaning of ‘fundamental and basic,’ and the word ‘appeals’ is used in a general sense rather than with reference to a case involved in judicial process: ‘The radical principles of Presbyterian church government and discipline are: “That the several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one Church of Christ, called emphatically the Church; that a larger part of the Church, or a representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein; that, in like manner, a representation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part, and to all the parts united: that is, that a majority shall govern; and consequently that appeals may be carried from lower to higher governing bodies [councils], till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church. For these principles and this procedure, the example of the apostles and the practice of the primitive Church are considered as authority.”’

“3.0206 Review and Control

“A higher council shall have the right of review and control over a lower one and shall have power to determine matters of controversy upon reference, complaint, or appeal.

“3.0207 Ordination by Council

“Presbyters (ruling elders and teaching elders) and deacons are ordained only by the authority of a council.

“3.0208 Shared Power, Exercised Jointly

“Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is a shared power, to be exercised jointly by presbyters gathered in councils.

“3.0209 General Authority of Councils

“Councils possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church. The jurisdiction of each council is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution, with powers not mentioned being reserved to the presbyteries.

“F-3.03 FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

“The statements contained in this section, ‘The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity,’ describe the ecclesiological and historical commitments on which the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) rests. Provisions of any part of this Constitution are to be interpreted in light of the whole Constitution. No provision of the Book of Order can of itself invalidate any other. Where there are tensions and ambiguities between provisions, it is the task of councils and judicial commissions to resolve them in such a way as to give effect to all provisions.

“F-3.04 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A) DEFINED

“The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consists of The Book of Confessions and the Book of Order.

“The Book of Confessions includes:

“The Nicene Creed

“The Apostles’ Creed

“The Scots Confession

“The Heidelberg Catechism

“The Second Helvetic Confession

“The Westminster Confession of Faith

“The Westminster Shorter Catechism

“The Westminster Larger Catechism

“The Theological Declaration of Barmen

“The Confession of 1967

“A Brief Statement of Faith—Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

“The Book of Order includes:

“The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity

“The Form of Government

“The Directory for Worship

“The Rules of Discipline

*“THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT**“CHAPTER ONE**“CONGREGATIONS AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP**“G-1.01 THE CONGREGATION**“1.0101 The Mission of the Congregation*

“The congregation is the church engaged in the mission of God in its particular context. The triune God gives to the congregation all the gifts of the gospel necessary to being the Church. The congregation is the basic form of the church, but it is not of itself a sufficient form of the church. Thus congregations are bound together in communion with one another, united in relationships of accountability and responsibility, contributing their strengths to the benefit of the whole, and are called, collectively, the church.

“Through the congregation God’s people carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the Sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other. In the life of the congregation, individual believers are equipped for the ministry of witness to the love and grace of God in and for the world. The congregation reaches out to people, communities, and the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to gather for worship, to offer care and nurture to God’s children, to speak for social justice and righteousness, to bear witness to the truth and to the reign of God that is coming into the world.

“1.0102 The Fellowship of the Congregation

“The polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presupposes the fellowship of women^[s] ~~[and]~~ men^[s] ~~[with their]~~ ~~[and]~~ children united in covenant relationship with one another and with God [through Jesus Christ]. The organization rests on the fellowship and is not designed to work without trust and love.

“1.0103 Governed by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

“A ‘congregation’ as used in this Form of Government refers to a formally organized community chartered and recognized by a presbytery as provided in this Constitution. Each congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be governed by this Constitution. The members of a congregation put themselves under the leadership of the session and the higher councils (presbytery, synod, and General Assembly). The session is responsible to guide and govern the life of the congregation. The session leads the congregation in fulfilling its responsibilities for the service of all people, for the up-building of the whole church, and for the glory of God.

“Other forms of corporate witness established by the presbytery shall also be governed by this Constitution and shall be subject to the authority of the presbytery.

“G-1.02 THE ORGANIZING OF A CONGREGATION

“A congregation in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can be organized only by the authority of a presbytery and shall function under the provisions of this Constitution.

“1.0201 Organizing Covenant

“In organizing a congregation, presbytery shall receive applications for membership from persons wishing to unite in forming a new congregation. These persons shall covenant together as follows:

“ ‘We, the undersigned, in response to the grace of God, desire to be constituted and organized as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to be known as _____. We promise and covenant to live together in unity and to work together in ministry as disciples of Jesus Christ, bound to him and to one another as a part of the body of Christ in this place according to the principles of faith, mission, and order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“ ‘(Signatures)’

“~~[They shall be]~~ [At its sole discretion the presbytery may then] declare~~[#]~~ [them] an organized congregation of the presbytery^[s] ~~[and]~~ [The congregation] shall [then] proceed to the election of ruling elders and, if they so decide, deacons. The presbytery shall prepare, examine, ordain, and install these newly elected persons. Presbytery shall continue to work closely with the congregation in securing pastoral leadership, in plans for the service and witness of the congregation, in coordinating its work with other congregations, in counseling concerning incorporation and bylaws for the congregation conforming to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and in giving other forms of support and encouragement that will strengthen the mission of the congregation in the larger life of the denomination.

“G-1.03 THE MEMBERSHIP OF A CONGREGATION**“1.0301 The Meaning of Membership and Baptism**

“In Jesus Christ, God calls people to faith and to membership in the Church, the body of Christ. Baptism is the visible sign of that call and claim on a human life and of entrance into the membership of the church. The baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God’s love claims people before they are able to respond in faith. The baptism of those who enter the covenant of membership upon their own profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior witnesses to the truth that God’s gift of grace calls forth a response of faithfulness. Thus, the triune God, incarnate in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, gives to the Church not only its mission but also its understanding of membership.

“1.0302 Welcome and Openness

“A congregation shall welcome all persons who trust in God’s grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the fellowship and ministry of his Church (F-1.0403). No person shall be denied membership for any reason not related to profession of faith. The Gospel leads members to extend the fellowship of Christ to all persons. Failure to do so constitutes a rejection of Christ himself and causes a scandal to the Gospel.

“1.0303 Entry into Membership

“Persons may enter into active church membership in the following ways:

“a. Public profession of faith, made after careful examination by the session in the meaning and responsibilities of membership; if not already baptized, the person making profession of faith shall be baptized;

“b. Certificate of transfer, when a person is a member of another Christian church at the time of transfer;

“c. Reaffirmation of faith, for persons previously baptized in the name of the triune God [and having publicly professed their faith].

“1.0304 The Ministry of Members

“Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is a joy and a privilege. It is also a commitment to participate in Christ’s mission. A faithful member bears witness to God’s love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ’s Church. Such involvement includes:

“proclaiming the good news in word and deed,

“taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,

“lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,

“studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,

“supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,

“demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,

“responding to God’s activity in the world through service to others,

“living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,

“working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment,

“participating in the governing responsibilities of the church, and

“reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one’s membership, and considering ways in which one’s participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.

“G-1.04 CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

“The membership of a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) includes baptized members, active members, and affiliate members.

“1.0401 Baptized Member

“A baptized member is a person who has received the Sacrament of Baptism, whether in this congregation or elsewhere, and who has been enrolled as a baptized member by the session but who has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Such baptized members receive the pastoral care and instruction of the church, and may participate in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

“1.0402 Active Member

“An active member is a person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church, has voluntarily submitted to the government of this church, and participates in the church’s work and worship. In addition, active members participate in the governance of the church and may be elected to ordered ministry (see G-2.0102). Active members shall regularly, after prayerful consideration, recommit themselves to the disciplines and responsibilities of membership outlined in G-1.0304. The session shall have responsibility for preparing those who would become active members of the congregation.

“1.0403 Affiliate Member

“An affiliate member is a member of another congregation of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who has temporarily moved from the community where the congregation of membership is situated, has presented a certificate of good standing from the appropriate council or governing body of that congregation, and has been received by the session as an affiliate member. An affiliate member may participate in the life of the congregation in the same manner as an active member except that an affiliate member may not vote in congregational meetings or be elected to ordered ministry or other office in the congregation.

“1.0404 Other Participants

“Persons who are not members of, or who may have ceased active participation in, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are welcome and may participate in the life and worship of this church and receive its pastoral care and instruction. The invitation to the Lord’s Supper is extended to all who have been baptized, remembering that access to the table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love (W-2.4011). Confessing members of other Christian churches may present children for baptism, in conformity with W-2.3014.

“G-1.05 MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**“1.0501 Annual and Special Meetings**

“The congregation shall hold an annual meeting and may hold special meetings as necessary, for any or all of the purposes appropriate for congregational consideration. The business to be transacted at special meetings shall be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting.

“All active members of the congregation present at either annual or special meetings are entitled to vote. Congregations shall provide by rule the quorum necessary to conduct business.

“1.0502 Calling a Congregational Meeting

“Meetings of the congregation shall be called by the session, by the presbytery, or by the session when requested in writing by one fourth of the active members on the roll of the congregation. Adequate public notice of all congregational meetings shall be given. Congregations shall provide by their own rule for minimum notification requirements and give notice at regular services of worship prior to the meeting.

“1.0503 Business Proper to Congregational Meetings

“Business to be transacted at meetings of the congregation shall be limited to matters related to the following:

“a. electing ruling elders, deacons, and trustees;

“b. calling a pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor;

“c. changing existing pastoral relationships, by such means as reviewing the adequacy of and approving changes to the terms of call of the pastor or pastors, or requesting, consenting to, or declining to consent to dissolution;

“d. buying, mortgaging, or selling real property;

“e. requesting the presbytery to grant an exemption as permitted in this Constitution (G-2.0404).

“Whenever permitted by civil law, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same congregational meeting.

“1.0504 Moderator

“The installed pastor shall ordinarily moderate all meetings of the congregation. If it is impractical for the pastor to preside, he or she shall invite another teaching elder who is a member of the presbytery or a person authorized by the

presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, [or the installed pastor is unable to moderate and/or to name another moderator,] the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.

“1.0505 Secretary and Minutes

“The clerk of session shall serve as secretary for all meetings of the congregation. If the clerk of session is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a secretary for that meeting. The secretary shall record the actions of the congregation in minutes of the meeting.

“CHAPTER TWO

“ORDERED MINISTRY, COMMISSIONING, AND CERTIFICATION

“G-2.01 ORDERED MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

“2.0101 Christ’s Ministry

“The Church’s ministry is a gift from Jesus Christ to the whole Church. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills, exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of God’s new creation. Christ’s ministry is the foundation and standard for all ministry, the pattern of the one who came ‘not to be served but to serve’ (Matt. 20:28). The basic form of ministry is the ministry of the whole people of God, from whose midst some are called to ordered ministries, to fulfill particular functions. Members and those in ordered ministries serve together under the mandate of Christ.

“2.0102 Ordered Ministries

“The Church’s ordered ministries described in the New Testament and maintained by this church are deacons and presbyters (teaching elders and ruling elders). Ordered ministries are gifts to the church to order its life so that the ministry of the whole people of God may flourish. The existence of these ordered ministries in no way diminishes the importance of the commitment of all members to the total ministry of the church.

“The government of this church is representative, and the right of God’s people to elect presbyters and deacons is inalienable. Therefore, no person can be placed in any ordered ministry in a congregation or council of the church except by election of that body.

“Ordination to the ministry of teaching elder, ruling elder, or deacon is unique to that order of ministry.

“2.0103 Call to Ordered Ministry

“The call to ordered ministry in the Church is the act of the triune God. This call is evidenced by the movement of the Holy Spirit in the individual conscience, the approval of a community of God’s people, and the concurring judgment of a council of the Church.

“2.0104 Gifts and Qualifications

“a. To those called to exercise special functions in the church—deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders—God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. They must have the approval of God’s people and the concurring judgment of a council of the church.

“b. Those who are called to ordered ministry in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, ruling elders, or teaching elders.

“2.0105 Freedom of Conscience

“It is necessary to the integrity and health of the church that the persons who serve it in ordered ministries shall adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity as expressed in this Constitution. So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained. It is to be recognized, however, that in entering the ordered ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), one chooses to exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds. His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God

as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek, or serve in, ordered ministry. The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the council in which he or she is a member.¹¹

“G-2.02 DEACONS: THE MINISTRY OF COMPASSION AND SERVICE

“2.0201 Deacon Defined

“The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.

“2.0202 Under Authority of the Session

“Deacons may be individually commissioned or organized as a board of deacons. In either case, their ministry is under the supervision and authority of the session. Deacons may also be given special assignments in the congregation, such as caring for members in need, handling educational tasks, cultivating liberality in giving, collecting and disbursing monies to specific persons or causes, or overseeing the buildings and property of the congregation. Deacons shall assume other duties as may be delegated to them by the session, including assisting with the Lord’s Supper. (W-3.3616). A congregation by a majority vote may choose not to utilize the ordered ministry of deacons. If the congregation has neither a board of deacons nor individually commissioned deacons, the function of this ordered ministry shall be the responsibility of the ruling elders and the session.

“G-2.03 RULING ELDERS: THE MINISTRY OF DISCERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

“2.0301 Ruling Elder Defined

“As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they ‘lord it over’ the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as teaching elders, and they are eligible for any office.

“G-2.04 GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS

“2.0401 Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons

“Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, provided that the committee shall consist of at least three active members of the congregation, and shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session. The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote. [~~When no other provision is made, this committee shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on session, and the pastor shall serve ex officio without vote.~~] When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect.

¹¹ [Very early in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, even before the General Assembly was established, the plan of reunion of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia contained the following sentences: ‘That when any matter is determined by a majority vote, every member shall either actively concur with or passively submit to such determination; or if his conscience permit him to do neither, he shall, after sufficient liberty modestly to reason and remonstrate, peaceably withdraw from our communion without attempting to make any schism. Provided always that this shall be understood to extend only to such determination as the body shall judge indispensable in doctrine or Presbyterian government.’ (Historical Sections of the Digest, 1958, The Historical Section of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America p. 1310, “Reunion of 1758,” par. II.)]

“2.0402 Preparation for Ministry as a Ruling Elder or Deacon

“When persons have been elected to the ordered ministry of ruling elder or deacon, the session shall provide a period of study and preparation, after which the session shall examine them as to their personal faith; knowledge of the doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the church; and the duties of the ministry. The session shall also confer with them as to their willingness to undertake the ministry appropriate to the order. If the examination is approved, the session shall appoint a day for the service of ordination and installation.

“2.0403 Service of Ordination and Installation

“The service of ordination and installation shall focus upon Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church, and shall include a sermon appropriate to the occasion. The moderator of session or person authorized to preside shall state briefly the nature of the ministry of ruling elder and deacon. The act of ordination and installation takes place in the context of worship. The order for that service of worship in the Directory for Worship (W-4.4000) shall be followed.

“2.0404 Terms of Service

“Ruling elders and deacons shall be elected to serve terms of no more than three years on the session or board of deacons, and may be eligible for reelection according to congregational rule. However, no ruling elder or deacon shall be eligible to serve more than six consecutive years, and a ruling elder or deacon who has served six consecutive years shall be ineligible for election to the same board for at least one year. Election shall be to classes as nearly equal in number as possible, with the term of only one class ending each year. The presbytery may, upon written request and by majority vote, grant a congregation a waiver of this limitation on terms.

“Once ordained and while they are active members of any congregation of this denomination, ruling elders or deacons not in active service on a session or board of deacons continue to bear the responsibilities of the ministry to which they have been ordained, except as provided in G-2.0406, G-2.0407, or in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.

“2.0405 Dissolution of Relationship

“A ruling elder or deacon may resign from the session or board of deacons, with the session’s consent. On ceasing to be an active member of a congregation, a ruling elder or deacon ceases to be a member of its session or board. When a ruling elder or deacon, because of change of residence or disability, is unable for a period of one year to perform the duties of the ministry to which he or she was installed, the active relationship shall be dissolved by the session unless there is good reason not to do so, which shall be recorded.

“2.0406 Release from Ministry as a Ruling Elder or Deacon

“If a ruling elder or deacon who is in good standing, against whom no inquiry has been initiated, and against whom no charges have been filed, shall make application to the session to be released from the exercise of the ordered ministry, the session of the congregation in which he or she holds membership, upon granting the release, shall delete that person’s name from the appropriate register of ruling elders or deacons of the congregation. No judgment of failure on the part of the ruling elder or deacon is implied in this action. Release from the exercise of the ministry of ruling elder or deacon requires a discontinuation of all functions of that ministry. The status of one so released shall be the same as any church member. Should a person released under this section later desire to be restored to that ordered ministry, that person shall make application to the session that granted the release, and upon approval of the session, that person shall be restored to the exercise of the ministry from which he or she was released without re-ordination.

“2.0407 Renunciation of Jurisdiction

“When a ruling elder or deacon submits to the clerk of session a written statement renouncing the jurisdiction of this church, the renunciation shall be effective upon receipt. When a ruling elder or deacon persists in work disapproved by the session, the session shall consult with him or her and shall give notice of its disapproval. If, after having been provided opportunity for consultation and upon written notice of its disapproval, the ruling elder or deacon persists in the work, the session may then conclude that the ruling elder or deacon has renounced the jurisdiction of this church.

“Renunciation of jurisdiction shall remove the ruling elder or deacon from membership and ordered ministry and shall terminate the exercise of the ministry. The renunciation shall be reported by the clerk of session at the next meeting of the session, which shall record the renunciation, delete the name of the ruling elder or deacon from the appropriate register, and take such other administrative actions as may be required by this Constitution.

“G-2.05 TEACHING ELDERS: THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT**“2.0501 Teaching Elder Defined**

*“Teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament) shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). They may serve in a variety of ministries, as authorized by the presbytery. When they serve as preachers and teachers of the Word, they shall [~~“rightly explain the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15) and shall~~] **[preach and]** teach the faith of the church, so that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service. When they serve at font and table, they shall interpret the mysteries of grace and lift the people’s vision toward the hope of God’s new creation. When they serve as pastors, they shall support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life. When they serve as presbyters, they shall participate in the responsibilities of governance, seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ’s body through devotion, debate, and decision.*

“2.0502 Presbytery and the Teaching Elder

“As the Lord has set aside through calling certain members to be teaching elders, so the church confirms that call through the action of the presbytery. The presbytery shall determine whether a particular work may be helpful to the church in mission and is a call to validated ministry requiring ordination as a teaching elder. In the performance of that ministry, the teaching elder shall be accountable to the presbytery. Teaching elders have membership in the presbytery by action of the presbytery itself, and no pastoral relationship may be established, changed, or dissolved without the approval of the presbytery.

“2.0503 Categories of Membership

“A teaching elder is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or honorably retired.

“a. Engaged in a Validated Ministry

“A validated ministry shall:

“(1) demonstrate conformity with the mission of God’s people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, The Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order of this church;

“(2) serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others;

“(3) give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God’s Word;

“(4) be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any organizations, agencies, and institutions served; and

“(5) include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA) (G-5.0201).

“When teaching elders are called to validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, they shall give evidence of a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships and shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils.

“The presbytery shall review annually the work of all teaching elders engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation.

“b. Member-at-large

“A member-at-large is a teaching elder who has previously been engaged in a validated ministry, and who now, without intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in G-2.0503a. A teaching elder may be designated a member-at-large because he or she is limited in his or her ability to engage in a ministry fulfilling all of the criteria for a validated ministry due to family responsibilities or other individual circumstances recognized by the presbytery. A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-2.0503a as possible and shall actively participate in the life of a congregation. A member-at-large is entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office. The status of member-at-large shall be reviewed annually.

“c. Honorably Retired

“Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member honorably retired because of age or physical or mental disability.

“2.0504 Pastoral Relationships

“When teaching elders are called as pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of a congregation, they are to be responsible for a quality of life and relationships that commends the gospel to all persons and that communicates its joy and justice. They are responsible for studying, teaching, and preaching the Word, for celebrating Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and for praying with and for the congregation. With the ruling elders, they are to encourage people in the worship and service of God; to equip and enable them for their tasks within the church and their mission in the world; to exercise pastoral care, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the troubled, and the dying; to participate in governing responsibilities, including leadership of the congregation in implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness in the decision-making life of the congregation, and its task of reaching out in concern and service to the life of the human community as a whole. With the deacons they are to share in the ministries of compassion, witness, and service. In addition to these pastoral duties, they are responsible for sharing in the ministry of the church in councils higher than the session and in ecumenical relationships.

“a. Installed Pastoral Relationships

“The installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A teaching elder may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call. When a congregation determines that its strategy for mission under the Word so requires, the congregation may call additional pastors. Such additional pastors shall be called co-pastors or associate pastors, and the duties of each pastor and the relationship between the pastors of the congregation shall be determined by the session with the approval of the presbytery. When a congregation has two pastors serving as co-pastors, and the relationship of one of them is dissolved, the other remains as pastor. The relationship of an associate pastor to a congregation is not dependent upon that of a pastor. An associate pastor is [ordinarily] not eligible to be the next installed pastor of that congregation.

“b. Temporary Pastoral Relationships

“Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a teaching elder, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place.

“Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is [ordinarily] not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

“c. Exceptions

“A presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits a teaching elder currently called as an associate pastor to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor or co-pastor, or a teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present and voting.

“2.0505 Transfer of Ministers of Other Denominations

“a. When a minister of another Christian church is called to a work properly under the jurisdiction of a presbytery, the presbytery, after the constitutional conditions have been met, shall recognize the minister’s previous ordination to ministry. Such ministers shall furnish credentials and evidence of good standing acceptable to the presbytery, and shall submit satisfactory evidence of possessing the qualifications of character and scholarship required of candidates of this church. (G-2.0607 and G-2.0610). In exceptional circumstances the following provisions will apply:

“(1) In the case of ministers for immigrant fellowships and congregations, a presbytery may, if it determines that its strategy for mission with that group requires it, recognize the ordination and receive as a member of presbytery a new immigrant minister who furnishes evidence of good standing in a denomination, even though at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required of candidates, and provide such educational opportunities as seem necessary and prudent for that minister’s successful ministry in the presbytery.

“(2) A minister of another Reformed church who has been ordained for five or more years may be granted an exemption for some or all of the examinations required of candidates for ordination by a two-thirds vote of the presbytery.

“b. Upon enrollment, the minister shall furnish the presbytery with evidence of having surrendered membership in any and all other Christian churches with which the minister has previously been associated.

“2.0506 Temporary Membership in Presbytery for a Period of Service

“A presbytery may enroll a minister of another Christian church who is serving temporarily in a validated ministry in this church, or in an installed relationship under the provisions of the Formula of Agreement (Book of Order, Appendix C, G-5.0202), when the minister has satisfied the requirements of preparation for such service established by the presbytery’s own rule.

“2.0507 Release from Ministry as a Teaching Elder

“When a teaching elder against whom no inquiry has been initiated pursuant to D-10.0101 and D-10.0201, against whom no charges have been filed, and who otherwise is in good standing shall make application to be released from the exercise of the ordered ministry of teaching elder, the presbytery shall delete that person’s name from the roll and upon request of a session dismiss that person to a congregation. Release from the exercise of ordered ministry requires discontinuance of all functions of that ministry. The designations that refer to teaching elders shall not be used. The person so released shall engage in the ministry shared by all active members of congregations. Should a person released under this section later desire to be restored to the ordered ministry of teaching elder, that person shall apply through the presbytery which granted the release, and upon approval of that presbytery, the reaffirmation of the ordination questions, and the resumption of a ministry that qualifies that person for membership in the presbytery, shall be restored to the exercise of the ordered ministry as a teaching elder without re-ordination.

“2.0508 Failure to Engage in Validated Ministry

“A teaching elder whom the presbytery determines no longer to be engaged in a validated ministry (G-2.0503a) or to fulfill the criteria for membership-at-large (G-2.0503b), and who is not honorably retired (G-2.0503c), shall not have voice or vote in meetings of the presbytery, except when the matter under consideration pertains to his or her relationship to the presbytery. Names of such persons shall be reported annually to the presbytery by the stated clerk. If after three years the teaching elder does not meet the criteria for validated ministry or membership-at-large, the presbytery may delete that person’s name from the roll of membership and, upon request of a session, dismiss that person to a congregation.

“2.0509 Renunciation of Jurisdiction

“When a teaching elder (or authorized representative) submits to the stated clerk of the presbytery of membership a written statement renouncing the jurisdiction of this church, the renunciation shall be effective upon receipt. When a teaching elder persists in work disapproved by the presbytery having jurisdiction, the presbytery shall consult with the teaching elder and shall give notice of its disapproval. If after having been provided opportunity for consultation and upon written notice of its disapproval, the teaching elder persists in the work, the presbytery may then conclude that he or she has renounced the jurisdiction of this church.

“When a teaching elder accepts or continues membership of any character in another denomination, except as provided in this Constitution, the presbytery shall record the fact and delete the teaching elder’s name from the roll.

“Renunciation of jurisdiction shall remove the teaching elder from membership and ordered ministry and shall terminate the exercise of that ministry. The renunciation shall be reported by the stated clerk at the next meeting of the presbytery, which shall record the renunciation, delete her or his name from the appropriate roll, and take such other administrative actions as may be required by this Constitution, including public communication of such a renunciation.

“G-2.06 PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY***“2.0601 Nature and Purpose of Preparation***

“It is important that those who are to be ordained as teaching elders receive full preparation for their task under the direction of the presbytery. For this purpose, a presbytery shall enter into covenant relationship with those preparing to become teaching elders and with their sessions and congregations. This relationship shall be divided into the two phases of inquiry and candidacy.

“2.0602 Time Requirements

“To be enrolled as an inquirer, the applicant shall be a member of the sponsoring congregation, shall have been active in the work and worship of that congregation for at least six months, and shall have received the endorsement of the session of the sponsoring congregation. The inquiry and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate.

“2.0603 Purpose of Inquiry

“The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ordered ministry as teaching elders to explore that call together so that the presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer’s suitability for ordered ministry.

“2.0604 Purpose of Candidacy

“The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as teaching elders. This shall be accomplished through the presbytery’s support, guidance, and evaluation of a candidate’s fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination.

“2.0605 Oversight

“During the phases of inquiry and candidacy the individual continues to be an active member of his or her congregation and subject to the concern and discipline of the session. In matters relating to preparation for ministry, the individual is subject to the oversight of the presbytery within the context of their covenant relationship.

“2.0606 Service in Covenant Relationship

“Inquirers and candidates shall, with the permission of the presbytery of care, engage in some form of supervised service to the church. No inquirer or candidate who has not been previously ordained as a ruling elder may serve as moderator of a session, administer the Sacraments, or perform a marriage service. An inquirer or candidate previously ordained as a ruling elder may be authorized by the presbytery to preside at the Lord’s Supper when invited by a session.

“2.0607 Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service

“A candidate may not enter into negotiation for his or her service as a teaching elder without approval of the presbytery. The presbytery shall record when it has certified a candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder shall include:

“a. a candidate’s wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;

“b. a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;

“c. a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and

“d. satisfactory grades, together with the examination papers in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.

“2.0608 Transfer of Relationship

“At the request of the inquirer or candidate and with the approval of the sessions and presbyteries involved, a presbytery may transfer the covenant relationship of an inquirer or candidate.

“2.0609 Removal from Relationship

“An inquirer or candidate may, after consultation with the session and the presbytery, withdraw from covenant relationship. A presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove an individual’s name from the roll of inquirers and candidates, reporting this action and the reasons to the session, to the individual, and, if appropriate, to the educational institution in which the individual is enrolled. Prior to taking such action, the presbytery or its designated entity shall make a reasonable attempt to give the candidate or inquirer an opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed removal.

“2.0610 Exceptions

“By a three-fourths vote, a presbytery may waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-quarters vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations. A full account of the reasons for exception shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

“2.07 ORDINATION**“2.0701 Ordination**

“Ordination to the ordered ministry of teaching elder is an act of the whole church carried out by the presbytery, setting apart a person to ordered ministry. Such a person shall have fulfilled the ordination requirements of the presbytery of

care and received the call of God to service to a congregation or other work in the mission of the church that is acceptable to the candidate and to the presbytery of call.

“2.0702 Place of Ordination

“The presbytery placing the call to the candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine, ordain, and install the candidate.

“2.0703 Service of Ordination

“The order for that service [of worship] [~~found~~] in the Directory for Worship [~~(W-4.4000)~~]^[7] shall be followed.

“2.0704 Record of Ordination

“The presbytery of call shall record the ordination and installation, along with written affirmation of the new teaching elder to the obligations undertaken in the ordination questions, and enroll the teaching elder as a member of the presbytery. The stated clerk of the presbytery shall report these actions to the General Assembly, the presbytery of care, and to the congregation of which the candidate was formerly a member.

“2.08 CALL AND INSTALLATION

“2.0801 Pastoral Vacancy

“When a congregation has a vacancy in a pastoral position, or after the presbytery approves the effective date of the dissolution of an existing pastoral relationship, the congregation shall, with the guidance and permission of the presbytery, proceed to fill the vacancy in the following manner.

“2.0802 Election of a Pastor Nominating Committee

“The session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee that shall be representative of the whole congregation. The committee’s duty shall be to nominate a pastor for election by the congregation.

“2.0803 Call Process

“According to the process of the presbytery and prior to making its report to the congregation, the pastor nominating committee shall [~~obtain approval~~] [receive and consider the presbytery’s counsel] on the merits, suitability, and availability of those considered for the call. When the way is clear for the committee to report to the congregation, the committee shall notify the session, which shall call a congregational meeting.

“~~2.0804 Dissent~~

“~~[On the election of a pastor, if it appears that a substantial minority of the voters are averse to the nominee who has received a majority of the votes and that they cannot be persuaded to concur in the call, the moderator may recommend to the majority that they not prosecute the call. If the congregation is nearly unanimous, or if the majority insist upon their right to call a pastor, the moderator shall forward the call to the presbytery, certifying the results of the vote and any other facts of importance. The moderator shall also inform the person being called of the nature and circumstances of the decision.]~~

“~~2.0805~~ [2.0804] Terms of Call

“The terms of call shall always meet or exceed any minimum requirement of the presbytery in effect when the call is made. The session shall review annually the minister’s terms of call and shall propose for congregational action (G-1.0501) such changes as the session deems appropriate, provided that they meet the presbytery’s minimum requirements. The call shall include participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly.

“~~2.0806~~ [2.0805] Installation Service

“When the congregation, the presbytery, and the teaching elder (or candidate) have all concurred in a call to a permanent or designated pastoral position, the presbytery shall complete the call process by organizing and conducting a service of installation. Installation is an act of the presbytery establishing the pastoral relationship. A service of installation occurs in the context of worship. The [order for that] service [of worship] [~~outline found~~] in the Directory for Worship^[7] [~~(W-4.4000)~~]^[7] shall be followed.

“G-2.09 DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS**“2.0901 Congregational Meeting**

“An installed pastoral relationship may be dissolved only by the presbytery. Whether the teaching elder, the congregation, or the presbytery initiates proceedings for dissolution of the relationship, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation to consider the matter and to consent, or decline to consent, to dissolution, ~~unless the presbytery expressly finds that the church’s mission under the Word imperatively demands dissolution of the relationship without such a meeting~~.”

“2.0902 Pastor, Co-Pastor, or Associate Pastor Requests

“A pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor may request the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship. The minister must also state her or his intention to the session. The session shall call a congregational meeting to act upon the request and to make recommendations to the presbytery. If the congregation does not concur, the presbytery shall hear from the congregation, through its elected commissioners, the reasons why the presbytery should not dissolve the pastoral relationship. If the congregation fails to appear, or if its reasons for retaining the relationship are judged insufficient, the request may be granted and the pastoral relationship dissolved.”

“2.0903 Congregation Requests

“If any congregation desires the pastoral relationship to be dissolved, a procedure similar to G-2.0902, above, shall be followed. When a congregation requests the session to call a congregational meeting to dissolve its relationship with its pastor, the session shall call the meeting and request the presbytery to appoint a moderator for the meeting. If the pastor does not concur with the request to dissolve the relationship, the presbytery shall hear from him or her the reasons why the presbytery should not dissolve the relationship. If the pastor fails to appear, or if the reasons for maintaining the relationship are judged insufficient, the relationship may be dissolved.”

“2.0904 Presbytery Action

“The presbytery may inquire into reported difficulties in a congregation and may dissolve the pastoral relationship if, after consultation with the minister, the session, and the congregation, it finds the church’s mission under the Word imperatively demands it.”

“2.0905 Officiate by Invitation Only

“After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not ~~offer~~ provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.”

“G-2.10 COMMISSIONING RULING ELDERS TO ~~LIMITED~~ PARTICULAR PASTORAL SERVICE**“2.1001 Functions**

“When the presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated may be commissioned to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery. Presbytery, in its commission, may authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law. This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually.”

“2.1002 Training, Examination, and Commissioning

“A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction ~~mentioned previously~~ determined by presbytery. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery.”

“2.1003 Commissioning Service

“When the presbytery is satisfied with the qualifications of a ruling elder to serve a congregation providing the services described above, it shall commission the ruling elder to pastoral service as designated by the presbytery, employing the questions contained in W-4.4000.”

“2.1004 Supervision

“The ruling elder commissioned under the terms of G-2.1001 shall work under the supervision of the presbytery. The presbytery may at any time withdraw the commission for reasons it deems good and sufficient. A teaching elder shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.

“G-2.11 CERTIFIED CHURCH SERVICE**“2.1101 Forms of Certified Church Service**

“Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements in a handbook provided by a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.

“2.1102 Presbytery and Certified Church Service

“The presbytery shall encourage sessions to make continuing education funds and time available to those seeking certification, and shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing a service of recognition at the time of certification. The presbytery may grant the privilege of voice at all its meetings to persons in certified church service.

“2.1103 Christian Educators**“a. Skills and Training**

“Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of education in congregations or councils. They shall have skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, worship and sacraments, human development, faith development, religious educational theory and practice, and the polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“b. Presbytery Responsibility

“The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, the presbytery may grant Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

“CHAPTER THREE**“COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH****“G-3.01 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF COUNCILS****“3.0101 Councils as an Expression of Unity of the Church**

“The mutual interconnection of the church through its councils is a sign of the unity of the church. Congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), while possessing all the gifts necessary to be the church, are nonetheless not sufficient in themselves to be the church. Rather, they are called to share with others both within and beyond the congregation the task of bearing witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the world. This call to bear witness is the work of all believers. The particular responsibility of the councils of the church is to nurture, guide, and govern those who witness as part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to the end that such witness strengthens the whole church and gives glory to God.

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is governed by councils composed of presbyters elected by the people (F-3.0202). These councils are called the session, the presbytery, the synod, and the General Assembly. All councils of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The councils are distinct, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church. The jurisdiction of each council is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution, with the acts of each subject to review by the next higher council. Powers not mentioned in this Constitution are reserved to the presbyteries.

“Councils of the church exist to help congregations and the church as a whole to be more faithful participants in the mission of Christ. They do so as they

“Provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard,

“responding to the promise of God’s new creation in Christ, and

“inviting all people to participate in that new creation;

“Provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received,

“welcoming those who are being engrafted into Christ,

“bearing witness to Christ’s saving death and resurrection,

“anticipating the heavenly banquet that is to come, and

“committing itself in the present to solidarity with the marginalized and the hungry; and

“Nurture a covenant community of disciples of Christ,

“living in the strength of God’s promise, and

“giving itself in service to God’s mission.

“3.0102 Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction

“Councils of this church have only ecclesiastical jurisdiction for the purpose of serving Jesus Christ and declaring and obeying his will in relation to truth and service, order and discipline. They may frame statements of faith, bear testimony against error in doctrine and immorality in life, resolve questions of doctrine and discipline, give counsel in matters of conscience, and decide issues properly brought before them under the provisions of this Book of Order. They may authorize the administration of the sacraments in accordance with the Directory for Worship. They have power to establish plans and rules for the worship, mission, government, and discipline of the church and to do those things necessary to the peace, purity, unity, and progress of the church under the will of Christ. They have responsibility for the leadership, guidance, and government of that portion of the church that is under their jurisdiction.

“3.0103 Participation and Representation

“The councils of the church shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices (F-1.0403). In fulfilling this commitment, councils shall give due consideration to both the gifts and requirements for ministry (G-2.0104) and the right of people in congregations and councils to elect their officers (F-3.0106).

“Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body’s implementation of the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation. Councils above the session shall establish by their own rule [~~committees or entities~~] [committees on representation] to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. [A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.]

“3.0104 Officers

“The pastor of a congregation shall be the moderator of the session of that congregation. In congregations where there are co-pastors, they shall both be considered moderators and have provisions for designating who presides at a particular meeting. If it is impractical for the pastor to moderate, he or she shall invite another teaching elder who is a member of the presbytery or a person authorized by the presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.

“The moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the body. He or she shall convene and adjourn the body in accordance with its own action.

“Each council higher than the session shall elect a moderator for such terms as the council determines. At the time of their election, moderators must be continuing members of, or commissioners to, the council over which they are elected to preside. They shall preside at meetings of the council during their term of office; councils shall provide by rule who shall preside in the absence of the moderator.

“Each council shall elect a clerk who shall record the transactions of the council, keep its rolls of membership and attendance, preserve its records, and furnish extracts from them when required by another council of the church. Such extracts, verified by the clerk, shall be evidence in any council of the church. The clerk of the session shall be a ruling elder

elected by the session for such term as it may determine. The clerk of a presbytery, a synod, and the General Assembly shall be called stated clerk, shall be elected by the council for a definite term as it may determine, and must be a ruling elder or teaching elder.

“Councils may elect such other officers as the council requires.

“3.0105 Meetings

“Meetings of councils shall be opened and closed with prayer. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, except when it is in contradiction to this Constitution. Councils may also make use of processes of discernment in their deliberations prior to a vote as agreed upon by the body.

“When a council makes a decision, a member of the body who voted against the decision is entitled to file a dissent or a protest. Filing a dissent or protest neither initiates nor prevents judicial process.

“a. A dissent is a declaration expressing disagreement with a decision of a council. It shall be made at the particular session during which the decision is made. The names of members dissenting shall be recorded.

“b. A protest is a written declaration, supported by reasons, alleging that a decision of a council is or contains an irregularity or a delinquency. Written notice of the protest shall be given at the particular session of the council during which it arose and shall be filed with the clerk before adjournment. If the protest is expressed in decorous and respectful language, it shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting, and may be accompanied by an answer prepared by the council. No further action is required.

“3.0106 Administration of Mission

“Mission determines the forms and structures needed for the church to do its work. Administration is the process by which a council implements its decisions. Administration enables the church to give effective witness in the world to God’s new creation in Jesus Christ and strengthens the church’s witness to the mission of the triune God.

“Councils higher than the session may provide examples of policies and procedures that may be gathered into advisory handbooks. These examples illumine practices required by the Constitution but left to councils for specific implementation. Such handbooks may also offer information that enhances or secures the ministry of the particular council.

“Each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that council.

“A council may delegate aspects of its tasks to such entities as it deems appropriate, provided that those entities remain accountable to the council.

“The administration of mission demonstrates the unity and interdependence of the church, in that councils share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers (F-3.0203). Through their members and elected commissioners, lower councils participate in planning and administration of the work of higher councils, and in consultation between bodies concerning mission, budget, staffing and fair employment practices, and matters of equitable compensation.

“The funding of mission similarly demonstrates the unity and interdependence of the church. The failure of any part of the church to participate in the stewardship of the mission of the whole church diminishes that unity and interdependence. All mission funding should enable the church to give effective witness in the world to God’s new creation in Jesus Christ, and should strengthen the church’s witness to the mission of God.

“Each council above the session shall prepare a budget for its operating expenses, including administrative personnel, and may fund it with a per capita apportionment among the particular congregations within its bounds. Presbyteries are responsible for raising their own funds and for raising and timely transmission of [per capita] funds to their respective synods and the General Assembly. Presbyteries may direct per capita apportionments to sessions within their bounds[, but in no case shall the authority of the session to direct its benevolences be compromised].

“3.0107 Records

“Each council shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings. Minutes and all other official records of councils are the property in perpetuity of said councils or their legal successors. When a council ceases to exist, its records shall become the property of the next higher council within whose bounds the lower council was prior to its cessation. The clerk of each council shall make recommendation to that body for the permanent safekeeping of the body’s records with the Presbyterian Historical Society or in a temperature and humidity controlled environment of a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“3.0108 Administrative Review

“Higher councils shall review the work of lower councils in the following ways:

“a. General Administrative Review

“Each council shall review annually or biennially, based on the body’s meeting frequency, the proceedings and actions of all entities related to the body, all officers able to act on behalf of the body, and lower councils within its jurisdiction. In reviewing the procedures of the lower council, the higher body shall determine whether the proceedings have been correctly recorded, have been in accordance with this Constitution, have been prudent and equitable, and have been faithful to the mission of the whole church. It shall also determine whether lawful injunctions of a higher body have been obeyed.

“b. Special Administrative Review

“If a higher council learns at any time of an alleged irregularity or delinquency of a lower council, it may require the lower body to produce any records and to take appropriate action.

“c. Directed Response

“The higher council may direct the lower council to reconsider and take corrective action if matters are determined to be out of compliance. In addition to administrative review, review and correction may be sought by initiating judicial process as described in the Rules of Discipline.

“3.0109 Committees and Commissions

“Councils may designate by their own rule such committees and commissions as they deem necessary and helpful for the accomplishment of the mission of the church, and may create such structures jointly with other councils, in consultation with the next higher council. In appointing such committees and commissions councils shall be mindful of the principles of unity in diversity consistent with the provisions of this Constitution (F-1.0403, G-3.0103).

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

“A commission is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by a council. The designating council shall state specifically the scope of the commission’s powers and any restrictions on those powers.

“A council may designate two types of commissions:

“a. Judicial Commissions

“Judicial commissions shall consider and decide cases of process for the council according to the Rules of Discipline. Sessions shall perform the function of a judicial commission for the congregation; each council higher than the session shall elect a permanent judicial commission (see D-5.0000).

“b. Administrative Commissions

“Administrative commissions are designated to consider and conclude matters not involving ecclesiastical judicial process, except that in the discharge of their assigned responsibilities they may discover and report to the designating council matters that may require judicial action by the council.

“Functions that may be entrusted to administrative commissions include, but are not limited to:

“(1) (by sessions) ordaining and installing ruling elders and deacons, receiving and dismissing members, and visiting organizations within the congregation to settle differences therein;

“(2) (by presbyteries) ordaining and installing teaching elders;

“(3) (by presbyteries) examining and receiving into membership teaching elders seeking admission to presbytery, including approval of terms of call and commissions for ordination and installation; and receiving candidates under care;

“(4) (by presbyteries) developing immigrant fellowships, organizing new congregations, merging congregations, or forming union or federated congregations (G-5.05);

“(5) (by presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly) visiting particular councils, congregations, or agencies over which they have immediate jurisdiction reported to be affected with disorder, and inquiring into and settling the difficulties therein, except that no commission of a presbytery shall be empowered to dissolve a pastoral relationship without the specific authorization by the designating body (G-2.0901);

“(6) (by all councils) making pastoral inquiry into persons accused of sexual abuse of another person (D-10.0401c) when jurisdiction in a judicial proceeding against such persons has ended due to death or renunciation of the accused; such inquiries shall not be understood as judicial proceedings but shall seek to reach a determination of truth related to the accusation and to make appropriate recommendations to the designating council.

“~~[Commissions]~~ [A commission] of presbytery, synod, or General Assembly shall be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible and sufficient to accomplish their work. A quorum of any commission shall be established by the designating council but in no case shall be less than a majority of its members (except as limited by D-5.0204).

“~~[Commissions]~~ [A commission] of a session shall be composed of at least two ruling elders, and a teaching elder in an installed or temporary relationship with the congregation governed by that session or a ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service.

“~~[The]~~ [A] commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings and shall submit that record to the council for incorporation into its records. Actions of a commission shall be regarded as actions of the council that created it. A commission may be assigned additional duties as a committee, which duties shall be reported and handled as the report of a committee.

“The decisions of an administrative commission shall be reported to the clerk of the designating council, who shall report it to the council at its next stated meeting. A council may rescind or amend an action of its administrative commission in the same way actions of the council are modified.

“When an administrative commission has been designated to settle differences within a particular organization or council, it shall, before making its decision final, afford to all persons affected by its decision fair notice and an opportunity to be heard on matters at issue.

“3.0110 Administrative Staff

“Councils higher than the session may employ such staff as is required by the mission of the body in accordance with the principles of unity in diversity (F-1.0403). Councils may, in consultation with the next higher council, share staff as required by the mission of the body. A council shall make provision in its manual of administrative operations (G-3.0106) for the process of electing executive staff and the hiring of other staff, the description of the responsibilities of the positions, the method of performance review, and the manner of termination of employment.

“3.0111 Nominating Process

“All councils higher than the session shall have a process for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the council. The process shall ensure that nominations are made by an entity broadly representative of the constituency of the council, and in conformity with the church’s commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403).

“3.0112 Insurance

“Each council shall obtain property and liability insurance coverage to protect its facilities, programs, staff, and elected and appointed officers.

“3.0113 Finances

“Each council shall prepare and adopt a budget to support the church’s mission within its area.

“A full financial review of all financial books and records shall be conducted every year by a public accountant or committee of members versed in accounting procedures. Reviewers should not be related to the treasurer(s). Terminology in this section is meant to provide general guidance and is not intended to require or not require specific audit procedures or practices as understood within the professional accounting community.

“G-3.02 THE SESSION

“3.0201 Composition and Responsibilities

“The session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors. All members of the session are en-

titled to vote. The pastor shall be the moderator of the session, and the session shall not meet without the pastor or designated moderator. [If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provisions for a moderator.] Presbyteries shall provide by rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience.

“The session shall have responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the congregation, the session shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed congregations have identified themselves throughout history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

“In light of this charge, the session has responsibility and power to:

“a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility shall include providing a place where the congregation may regularly gather for worship, education, and spiritual nurture; providing for regular preaching of the Word by a teaching elder or other person prepared and approved for the work; planning and leading regular efforts to reach into the community and the world with the message of salvation and the invitation to enter into committed discipleship; planning and leading ministries of social healing and reconciliation in the community in accordance with the prophetic witness of Jesus Christ; and initiating and responding to ecumenical efforts that bear witness to the love and grace of God.

“b. provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received. This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord’s Supper at least quarterly and the administration of Baptism as appropriate, in accordance with the principles of the Directory for Worship; and exercising pastoral care among the congregation; in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the congregation may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.

“c. nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ. This responsibility shall include receiving and dismissing members; reviewing the roll of active members at least annually and counseling with those who have neglected the responsibilities of membership; providing programs of nurture, education, and fellowship; training, examining, ordaining, and installing those elected by the congregation as ruling elders and deacons; encouraging the graces of generosity and faithful stewardship of personal and financial resources; managing the physical property of the congregation for the furtherance of its mission; directing the ministry of deacons, trustees, and all organizations of the congregation; employing the administrative staff of the congregation; leading the congregation in participating in the mission of the whole church; warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immorality in practice within the congregation and community; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.

“3.0202 Relations with Other Councils

“Sessions have a particular responsibility to participate in the life of the whole church through participation in other councils. It is of particular importance that sessions:

“a. elect, as commissioners to presbytery, ruling elders from the congregation, preferably for at least a year, and receive their reports;

“b. nominate to presbytery ruling elders from the congregation who may be considered for election as commissioners to synod and General Assembly, and to serve on committees or commissions of the same, bearing in mind principles of inclusiveness and fair representation in the decision making of the church (F-1.0403);

“c. see that the guidance and communication of presbytery, synod, and General Assembly are considered, and that any binding actions are observed and carried out;

“d. welcome representatives of the presbytery on the occasions of their visits;

“e. propose to the presbytery, or through it to the synod and General Assembly, such measures as may be of common concern to the mission of the church; and

“f. send to presbytery and General Assembly requested [~~financial contributions,~~] statistics^[2] and other information according to the requirements of those bodies^[3], as well as voluntary financial contributions].

“3.0203 Meetings

“The session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. The moderator shall call a special meeting when he or she deems necessary or when requested in writing by any two members of the session. [The business to be transacted at special

meetings shall be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting.] There shall be reasonable notice given of all special meetings. The session shall also meet when directed by presbytery. Sessions shall provide by rule for a quorum for meetings; such quorum shall include the moderator and either a specific number of ruling elders or a specific percentage of those ruling elders in current service on the session.

“3.0204 Minutes and Records

“Minutes of the session shall be subject to the provisions of G-3.0107. They shall contain the minutes of all meetings of the congregation and all joint meetings with deacons and trustees.

“Each session shall maintain the following roll and registers:

“a. Membership Roll

“There shall be rolls of baptized, active, and affiliate members in accordance with G-1.0401, G 1.0402, and G-1.0403. The session [~~may~~] shall delete names from the roll of the congregation [~~when requested to issue a certificate of transfer of membership to another congregation; when a member requests that his or her membership be terminated; when a member joins another congregation or otherwise renounces the jurisdiction of the session; when a member has moved or otherwise ceased to participate in the ministry of Christ’s Church as defined in G 1.0304 for a period of not less than two years and after efforts on the part of the session to encourage the member to return to meaningful participation have failed, and after provision of written notice; or when a member dies.~~] upon the member’s death, admission to membership in another congregation or presbytery, or renunciation of jurisdiction. The session may delete names from the roll of the congregation when a member so requests, or has moved or otherwise ceased to participate actively in the work and worship of the congregation for a period of two years. The session shall seek to restore members to active participation and shall provide written notice before deleting names due to member inactivity.]

“b. Registers

“There shall be registers of baptisms authorized by the session, of ruling elders and deacons, of installed pastors with dates of service, and such other registers as the session may deem necessary.

“3.0205 Finances

“In addition to those responsibilities described in G-3.0113, the session shall prepare and adopt a budget and determine the distribution of the congregation’s benevolences. It shall authorize offerings for Christian purposes and shall account for the proceeds of such offerings and their disbursement. It shall provide full information to the congregation concerning its decisions in such matters.

“The session shall elect a treasurer for such term as the session shall decide and shall supervise his or her work or delegate that supervision to a board of deacons or trustees. Those in charge of various congregational funds shall report at least annually to the session and more often as requested. Sessions may provide by rule for standard financial practices of the congregation, but shall in no case fail to observe the following procedures:

“a. All offerings shall be counted and recorded by at least two duly appointed persons, or by one fidelity bonded person;

“b. Financial books and records adequate to reflect all financial transactions shall be kept and shall be open to inspection by authorized church officers at reasonable times;

“c. Periodic, and in no case less than annual, reports of all financial activities shall be made to the session or entity vested with financial oversight.

“G-3.03 THE PRESBYTERY

“3.0301 Composition and Responsibilities

“The presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district and is composed of all the congregations and teaching elders within that district. [~~Teaching elders and ruling elders should be present in numbers as equal as possible.~~] The presbytery shall adopt and communicate to the sessions a plan for determining how many ruling elders each session should elect as commissioners to presbytery], with a goal of numerical parity of teaching elders and ruling elders]. This plan shall require each session to elect at least one commissioner and shall take into consideration the size of congregations as well as a method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. Ruling elders elected as officers of the presbytery shall be enrolled as members during the period of their service. A presbytery may provide by its own rule for the enrollment of ruling elders serving as moderators of committees or commissions.

“The minimum composition of a presbytery is ten duly constituted sessions and ten teaching elders.

“The presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of its congregations, the presbytery shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

“In light of this charge, the presbytery has responsibility and power to:

“a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility shall include organizing, receiving, [~~and~~ merging], dismissing, and dissolving] congregations in consultation with their members; overseeing congregations without pastors; establishing pastoral relationships and dissolving them; guiding the preparation of those preparing to become teaching elders; establishing and maintaining those ecumenical relationships that will enlarge the life and mission of the church in its district; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to congregations in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration to the end that the church’s witness to the love and grace of God may be heard in the world.

“b. provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received. This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord’s Supper at its meetings at least annually and for fellowship groups, new church developments, and other non-congregational entities meeting within its bounds; authorizing and training specific ruling elders to administer or preside at the Lord’s Supper when it deems it necessary to meet the needs for the administration of the Sacrament; and exercising pastoral care for the congregations and members of presbytery in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the presbytery may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.

“c. nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ. This responsibility shall include ordaining, receiving, dismissing, installing, removing, and disciplining its members who are teaching elders; commissioning ruling elders to limited pastoral service; promoting the peace and harmony of congregations and inquiring into the sources of congregational discord; supporting congregations in developing the graces of generosity, stewardship, and service; assisting congregations in developing mission and participating in the mission of the whole church; taking jurisdiction over the members of dissolved congregations and granting transfers of their membership to other congregations; warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immorality in practice within its bounds; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.

“3.0302 Relations with Synod and General Assembly

“The presbytery has a responsibility to maintain regular and continuing relationship to synod and General Assembly by:

“a. electing commissioners to synod and General Assembly and receiving their reports;

“b. electing ruling and teaching elders to be readers of standard ordination examinations;

“c. seeing that the guidance and communication of synod and General Assembly are considered and that any binding actions are observed and carried out;

“d. proposing to synod or General Assembly such measures as may be of common concern to the mission of the church; and

“e. sending annually to synod and General Assembly statistical and other information according to the requirements of those bodies.

“3.0303 Relations with Sessions

“Presbytery, being composed of the teaching elders and commissioners elected by the session of congregations within its district, has a particular responsibility to coordinate, guide, encourage, support, and resource the work of its congregations for the most effective witness to the broader community. In order to accomplish this responsibility, the presbytery has authority to:

“a. develop strategy for the mission of the church in its district;

“b. control the location of new congregations and of congregations desiring to move as well as to divide, dismiss, or dissolve congregations in consultation with their members;

“c. establish minimum compensation standards for pastoral calls and Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the presbytery;

“d. counsel with a session concerning reported difficulties within a congregation, including:

“(1) advising the session as to appropriate actions to be taken to resolve the reported difficulties,

“(2) offering to help as a mediator, and

“(3) acting to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the session or if the session is unable or unwilling to do so, following the procedural safeguards of the Rules of Discipline;

“e. assume original jurisdiction in any situation in which it determines that a session cannot exercise its authority. After a thorough investigation, and after full opportunity to be heard has been accorded to the session, the presbytery may conclude that the session of a congregation is unable or unwilling to manage wisely its affairs, and may appoint an administrative commission with the full power of session. This commission shall assume original jurisdiction of the existing session, if any, which shall cease to act until such time as the presbytery shall otherwise direct.

“f. consider and act upon requests from congregations for permission to take the actions regarding real property as described in G-4.0206.

“3.0304 Meetings and Quorum

“The presbytery shall hold stated meetings at least twice each year, shall meet at the direction of synod, and may call special meetings in accordance with its own rules.

“A presbytery may set its own quorum, but it shall not be fewer than three teaching elders who are members of the presbytery and three ruling elder commissioners from three different congregations.

“3.0305 Minutes and Records

“Minutes and other official records of the presbytery are the property of the presbytery, and are subject to the review specified in G-3.0108. The stated clerk is responsible for the preservation of the presbytery’s minutes and records.

“3.0306 Membership of Presbytery

“Each presbytery determines the teaching elders who are its members and validates the ministries in which they are to be engaged. It shall be guided in this determination by written criteria developed by the presbytery for validating ministries within its bounds (G-2.0503a).

“The presbytery shall examine each teaching elder or candidate who seeks membership in it on his or her Christian faith and views in theology, the Sacraments, and the government of this church.

“The presbytery may designate teaching elders to work as teachers, evangelists, administrators, chaplains, and in other forms of ministry recognized as appropriate by the presbytery. Those so designated may administer the Sacraments at times and places authorized by the presbytery.

“Every teaching elder shall ordinarily be a member of the presbytery where his or her work is situated or of the presbytery where she or he resides.

“A teaching elder who is serving in a church outside the United States may, with the approval of the presbytery, accept membership in that church for the period of such service without affecting his or her membership in a presbytery of this church.

“3.0307 Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Teaching Elders and Congregations

“Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations.

“Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.

“Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to guide, nurture and oversee the process of preparing to become a teaching elder.

“To facilitate the presbytery’s oversight of inquirers and candidates, reception and oversight of teaching elder members, approval of calls for pastoral services and invitations for temporary pastoral services, oversight of congregations without pastors, dissolution of relationships, dismissal of members, and its close relationship with both member congregations and teaching elders, it may delegate its authority to designated entities within the presbytery. Such entities shall be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders in approximately equal numbers, bearing in mind the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403. All actions carried out as a result of delegated authority must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting.

“G-3.04 THE SYNOD

“3.0401 Composition and Responsibilities

“The synod is the intermediate council serving as a corporate expression of the church throughout its region. It shall consist of not fewer than three presbyteries within a specific geographic region.

“When a synod meets, it shall be composed of commissioners elected by the presbyteries. Each presbytery shall elect at least one ruling elder and one teaching elder to serve as commissioners to synod. A synod shall determine a plan for the election of commissioners to the synod, as well as the method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103; both plans shall be subject to approval by a majority of the presbyteries in the synod. The commissioners from each presbytery shall be divided equally between ruling elders and teaching elders. Each person elected moderator or other officer shall be enrolled as a member of the synod until a successor is elected and installed.

“Synod is responsible for the life and mission of the church throughout its region and for supporting the ministry and mission of its presbyteries as they seek to support the witness of congregations, to the end that the church throughout its region becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the church throughout its region, it shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

“In light of this charge, the synod has responsibility and power to:

“a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility may include developing, in conjunction with its presbyteries, a broad strategy for the mission of the church within its bounds and in accord with the larger strategy of the General Assembly; assisting its member presbyteries when requested in matters related to the calling, ordaining, and placement of teaching elders; establishing and maintaining, in conjunction with its presbyteries, those ecumenical relationships that will enlarge the life and mission of the church in its region; facilitating joint action in mission with other denominations and agencies in its region; facilitating communication among its presbyteries and between its presbyteries and the General Assembly; providing services for presbyteries within its area that can be performed more effectively from a broad regional base.

“b. provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received. This responsibility may include authorizing the celebration of the Lord’s Supper at its meetings and at other events and gatherings under its jurisdiction; and exercising pastoral care among its presbyteries; in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the synod may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.

“c. nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ. This responsibility shall include providing such services of education and nurture as its presbyteries may require; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration; reviewing the work of its presbyteries; warning or bearing witness against error in doctrine or immorality in practice within its bounds; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.

“3.0402 Relations with General Assembly

“The synod has responsibility to maintain regular and continuing relationship with the General Assembly by seeing that the guidance and communication of the General Assembly are considered and that any binding actions are observed and carried out, and by proposing to the General Assembly such measures as may be of common concern to the mission of the whole church.

“3.0403 Relations with Presbyteries

“Each presbytery shall participate in the synod’s responsibility and service through its elected commissioners to the synod. The synod has responsibility for supporting the work of the presbyteries within its bounds and as such is charged with:

“a. developing, in conjunction with its presbyteries, joint plans and objectives for the fulfillment of mission, providing encouragement and guidance to its presbyteries and overseeing their work;

“b. developing and providing, when requested, resources as needed to facilitate the mission of its presbyteries;

“c. organizing new presbyteries, dividing, uniting, or otherwise combining presbyteries or portions of presbyteries previously existing, and, with the concurrence of existing presbyteries, creating non-geographic presbyteries, subject to the approval of the General Assembly, or taking other such actions as may be deemed necessary in order to meet the mission needs of racial ethnic or immigrant congregations. Such presbyteries shall be formed in compliance with the requirements of G-3.0301 and be accountable to the synod within which they were created.

“3.0404 REDUCED FUNCTION

“A synod may decide, with the approval of a two-thirds majority of its presbyteries, to reduce its function. In no case shall synod function be less than the provision of judicial process and administrative review of the work of the presbyteries (G-3.0401c). Such a synod shall meet at least every two years for the purposes of setting budget, electing members to its permanent judicial commission, and admitting to record the actions of its permanent judicial and administrative commissions. Presbyteries of such a synod shall assume for themselves, by mutual agreement, such other synod functions as may be deemed necessary by the synod.

“3.0405 MEETINGS AND QUORUM

“The synod shall hold stated meetings at least biennially, shall meet at the direction of the General Assembly, and may call special meetings in accordance with its own rules.

“A synod may set its own quorum, but it shall include an equal number of ruling elders and teaching elders representing at least three presbyteries or one-third of its presbyteries, whichever is larger.

“3.0406 MINUTES AND RECORDS

“The synod shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings that shall be submitted to the next succeeding meeting of the General Assembly for its general review and control. It shall report to the General Assembly the number of its presbyteries and, in general, all important changes that have occurred within its bounds.

“G-3.05 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

“3.0501 Composition and Responsibilities

“The General Assembly is the council of the whole church and it is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It shall consist of equal numbers of ruling elders and teaching elders elected by the presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds (F-1.0403 and G-3.0103), to serve as commissioners according to the following proportions:

“8,000 members or less: 1 ruling elder and 1 teaching elder

“8,001–16,000: 2 ruling elders and 2 teaching elders

“16,001–24,000: 3 ruling elders and 3 teaching elders

“24,001–32,000: 4 ruling elders and 4 teaching elders

“32,001–40,000: 5 ruling elders and 5 teaching elders

“40,001–48,000: 6 ruling elders and 6 teaching elders

“48,001 or more: 7 ruling elders and 7 teaching elders

“Each person elected Moderator shall be enrolled as a member of the General Assembly until a successor is elected and installed.

“The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the whole church, it shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

“In light of this charge, the General Assembly has responsibility and power to:

“a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility shall include establishing a comprehensive mission strategy and priorities for the church; establishing and maintaining ecumenical relationships and correspondence with other ecclesiastical bodies; uniting with or receiving under its jurisdiction other ecclesiastical bodies consistent with the faith and order of this church, subject to the provisions of G-5.02 and G-5.03; and commissioning, sending, and support of such mission personnel as will spread the good news of the grace of Jesus Christ to the world and foster the growth and development of God’s people.

“b. provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received. This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord’s Supper at meetings of the General Assembly and other events and gatherings under its jurisdiction; authorizing the participation in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in ecumenical gatherings attended by authorized representatives of the General Assembly; and exercising pastoral care throughout the whole church in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the church may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.

“c. nurture the covenant community of disciples. This responsibility shall include providing those services, resources, and programs performed most effectively at a national level; communicating with the whole church on matters of common concern; warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world; providing such services of education and nurture as its presbyteries may require; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration; discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, matters of truth and vision that may inspire, challenge, and educate both church and world; serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline; deciding controversies brought before it and advising and instructing in cases submitted to it, in conformity with this Constitution; authoritatively interpreting the most recent edition of the Book of Order in a manner binding on the whole church, in accordance with the provisions of G-6.02 or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case, with the most recent interpretation of the Book of Order being binding; and establishing and maintaining an office of the Stated Clerk.

“3.0502 Relations with Other Councils

“The General Assembly has responsibility to maintain relationships with presbyteries and synods by:

“a. consulting with and providing resources for presbyteries and synods as they execute their constitutional responsibilities;

“b. overseeing the work of synods;

“c. reviewing the records of synods, taking care to ensure that they conform to this Constitution;

“d. organizing new synods, or dividing, uniting, or otherwise combining previously existing synods or portions of synods; and

“e. approving the acts of synods to organize, divide, unite, or combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries.

“3.0503 Meetings and Quorum

“The General Assembly shall hold a stated meeting at least biennially. The Moderator, or in the event of the incapacity of the Moderator, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, shall call a special meeting at the request or with the concurrence of at least one fourth of the ruling elder commissioners and one fourth of the teaching elder commissioners to the last preceding stated meeting of the General Assembly representing at least fifteen presbyteries, under the jurisdiction of at least five synods. Commissioners to the special meeting shall be the commissioners elected to the last preceding stated meeting of the General Assembly or their alternates. Notice of special meetings shall be sent no fewer than sixty days prior to convening and shall set out the purpose of the meeting. No other business than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.

“A quorum of the General Assembly shall be one hundred commissioners, fifty of whom shall be ruling elders and fifty teaching elders, representing presbyteries of at least one fourth of its synods.

“CHAPTER FOUR

“THE CHURCH AND CIVIL AUTHORITY

“G-4.01 INCORPORATION AND TRUSTEES

“4.0101 Incorporation and Power

“Where permitted by civil law, each congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained. If incorporation is not permitted, individual trustees shall be elected by the congregation. Any such individual trustees shall be

elected from the congregation's members in the same manner as those elected to the ordered ministries of deacon and ruling elder. Terms of service shall be governed by the provisions of G-2.0404.

"The corporation so formed, or the individual trustees, shall have the following powers: to receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for the congregation, provided that in buying, selling, and mortgaging real property, the trustees shall act only after the approval of the congregation, granted in a duly constituted meeting; to accept and execute deeds of title to such property; to hold and defend title to such property; to manage any permanent special funds for the furtherance of the purposes of the congregation, all subject to the authority of the session and under the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The powers and duties of the trustees shall not infringe upon the powers and duties of the session or the board of deacons.

"Where permitted by civil law, each presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained and shall determine a method to constitute the board of trustees by its own rule. The corporation so formed, or individual trustees, shall have the following powers: to receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for and at the direction of the council.

"4.0102 Members of the Corporation

"Only persons eligible for membership in the congregation or council shall be eligible to be members of the corporation and to be elected as trustees. The ruling elders on the session of a congregation, who are eligible under the civil law, shall be the trustees of the corporation, unless the corporation shall determine another method for electing its trustees. Presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly shall provide by rule for the election of trustees from among persons eligible for membership in the council.

"G-4.02 CHURCH PROPERTY

"4.0201 Property as a Tool for Mission

"The property of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), of its councils and entities, and of its congregations, is a tool for the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world.

"4.0202 Decisions Concerning Property

"The provisions of this Constitution prescribing the manner in which decisions are made, reviewed, and corrected within this church are applicable to all matters pertaining to property.

"4.0203 Church Property Held in Trust

"All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether the property is used in programs of a congregation or of a higher council or retained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

"4.0204 Property Used Contrary to the Constitution

"Whenever property of, or held for, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ceases to be used by that congregation as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in accordance with this Constitution, such property shall be held, used, applied, transferred, or sold as provided by the presbytery.

"4.0205 Property of a Dissolved or Extinct Congregation

"Whenever a congregation is formally dissolved by the presbytery, or has become extinct by reason of the dispersal of its members, the abandonment of its work, or other cause, such property as it may have shall be held, used, and applied for such uses, purposes, and trusts as the presbytery may direct, limit, and appoint, or such property may be sold or disposed of as the presbytery may direct, in conformity with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

"4.0206 Selling, Encumbering, or Leasing Church Property

"a. Selling or Encumbering Congregational Property

"A congregation shall not sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber any of its real property and it shall not acquire real property subject to an encumbrance or condition without the written permission of the presbytery transmitted through the session of the congregation.

“b. Leasing Congregational Property

“A congregation shall not lease its real property used for purposes of worship, or lease for more than five years any of its other real property, without the written permission of the presbytery transmitted through the session of the congregation.

“4.0207 Property of Congregation in Schism

“The relationship to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of a congregation can be severed only by constitutional action on the part of the presbytery (G-3.0303b). If there is a schism within the membership of a congregation and the presbytery is unable to effect a reconciliation or a division into separate congregations within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the presbytery shall determine if one of the factions is entitled to the property because it is identified by the presbytery as the true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This determination does not depend upon which faction received the majority vote within the congregation at the time of the schism.

“4.0208 Exceptions

“The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) except that any congregation which was not subject to a similar provision of the constitution of the church of which it was a part, prior to the reunion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America to form the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has been excused from that provision of this chapter if the congregation, within a period of eight years following the establishment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), voted to be exempt from such provision in a regularly called meeting and thereafter notified the presbytery of which it was a constituent congregation of such vote. The congregation voting to be so exempt shall hold title to its property and exercise its privileges of incorporation and property ownership under the provisions of the Constitution to which it was subject immediately prior to the establishment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This paragraph may not be amended (G-6.05).

“G-4.03 CONFIDENCE AND PRIVILEGE***“4.0301 Trust and Confidentiality***

“In the exercise of pastoral care, teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament) and ruling elders who have been commissioned by a presbytery to limited pastoral service (G-2.10), shall maintain a relationship of trust and confidentiality, and shall hold in confidence all information revealed to them in the course of providing care and all information relating to the exercise of such care.

“When the person whose confidences are at issue gives express consent to reveal confidential information, then a teaching elder or a ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service may, but cannot be compelled to, reveal confidential information.

“A teaching elder or a ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service may reveal confidential information when she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of imminent bodily harm to any person.

“4.0302 Mandatory Reporting

“Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

“CHAPTER FIVE***“ECUMENICITY AND UNION******“G-5.01 ECUMENICAL COMMITMENT******“5.0101 Ecumenicity***

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels seeks to manifest more visibly the unity of the body of Christ and will be open to opportunities for conversation, cooperation, and action with other ecclesiastical groups. It will seek to initiate, maintain, and strengthen relations with other Reformed and Christian entities.

“5.0102 Interfaith Relations

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels seeks new opportunities for conversation and understanding with non-Christian religious entities.

“5.0103 Secular Organizations

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all level seeks to initiate and respond to approaches for conversation and common action with secular organizations and agencies where such approaches show promise of serving the mission of the Church in the world.

“G-5.02 RELATIONS WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONS

“5.0201 Correspondence

“In seeking the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ (G-5.0101), the General Assembly may authorize and direct that covenants, agreements, and statements of purpose and intent be developed with other Christian bodies. Such actions, when authorized and approved by the General Assembly, may address, but are not limited to, the mutual recognition of baptism and the orderly exchange of ministers. All councils of this church are encouraged to engage in opportunities to minister together in mutual affirmation and admonition with other Christian bodies.

“The General Assembly, through the Office of the General Assembly, shall maintain a relationship of correspondence with the highest council or governing body:

“a. of those churches with which it has had historical relations outside the United States, as recognized by the General Assembly;

“b. of those churches that are members of the ecumenical bodies in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) holds membership;

“c. of those churches with which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has formal ecumenical dialogue approved by the General Assembly.

“5.0202 Full Communion

“The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in full communion with those churches so recognized by the General Assembly. Full communion shall include the mutual recognition of baptism and the orderly exchange of ministers, as defined by ecumenical agreement. Councils of this church are encouraged to engage in opportunities to minister together in mutual affirmation and admonition with churches with which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in full communion.

“5.0203 Ecumenical Statements

“In seeking the unity of the Church in Jesus Christ (F-1.0302a and G-5.0101), and in addition to the above relations, the Office of the General Assembly shall develop formal agreements and ecumenical statements of understanding with other Christian bodies. Such statements and agreements shall be approved by the General Assembly as guides for shared action, and shall be submitted to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes.

“G-5.03 FULL ORGANIC UNION

“Full organic union of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with any other ecclesiastical body shall be effected subject to the following approvals:

“a. the approval of the proposed plan of union by the General Assembly and its recommendation to the presbyteries;

“b. the approval in writing of two-thirds of the presbyteries; and

“c. the approval and consummation by the next General Assembly, or other General Assembly specified in the proposed plan of union.

“G-5.04 UNION PRESBYTERIES

“A presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may unite to form a union presbytery with one or more comparable councils or governing bodies, each of which is a member of another Reformed body, with the approval of the synod or comparable council or governing body of which each is a part.

“5.0401 Constitutional Authority

“The union presbytery shall be subject to the constitution of each denomination represented in the union. Wherever the constitutions of the denominations differ, any mandatory provisions of one shall apply in all cases where the others are permissive. Where there are conflicting mandatory provisions, the union presbytery shall overture the highest council or governing body of the denominations involved to resolve the conflict either by authoritative interpretation or by constitutional amendment.

“5.0402 Plan of Union

“A union presbytery shall be created by the adoption of a plan of union by two-thirds vote of each presbytery or governing body that is party to the union. The synod and/or governing body having jurisdiction over each of the uniting bodies shall approve the plan of union.

“5.05 JOINT CONGREGATIONAL WITNESS

When its strategy for mission requires it, a presbytery may approve the creation of a joint witness between congregations of this denomination and congregations of other Christian churches that recognize Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, accept the authority of Scripture, and observe the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

“a. Such joint witnesses shall be subject to the constitution of each denomination involved. Wherever the constitutions of the denominations differ, the mandatory provisions of one shall apply in all cases when the others are permissive. Wherever there are conflicting mandatory provisions, the congregational council shall petition the next higher councils or governing bodies to resolve the conflict.

“b. Such joint witnesses shall be formed according to a plan approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of each of the congregations at duly called meetings of the congregation, and by the presbytery or comparable council or governing body of each church. No provision of a plan for joint witness shall be construed as modifying or amending the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).

“c. After consultation with the congregation involved in joint witness and the next higher council or governing body of the other denomination involved, a presbytery may receive a congregation from or transfer a congregation to a denomination with which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in full communion or correspondence when it determines that the strategy for mission of that congregation is better served by such a transfer (G-3.0303b).

“CHAPTER SIX**“INTERPRETING AND AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION****“G-6.01 REFORM**

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to be ‘the church reformed, always to be reformed, according to the Word of God’ in the power of the Spirit (F-2.02.) In light of this commitment, the following interpretation and amendment procedures are understood as a means to faithfulness.

“G-6.02 INTERPRETING THE CONSTITUTION [~~THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION~~]

“The General Assembly may provide authoritative interpretation of the Book of Order, which shall be binding on the councils of the church when rendered in the manner described in this section or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case.

“The General Assembly shall elect an Advisory Committee on the Constitution composed of nine persons, teaching elders and ruling elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be a member ex officio without vote. No person who has served on the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for a full term of six years shall be eligible for reelection until four years have elapsed after the expired six-year term. The General Assembly shall provide by its own rule for the qualifications of members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

“All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the Book of Order arising from councils of the church shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall communicate its report and recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly [no less than sixty days prior to the General Assembly].

“G-6.03 AMENDING THE BOOK OF CONFESSIONS

“Amendments to the confessional documents of this church may be made only if all the following steps are completed:

“a. The proposal to amend The Book of Confessions is approved by the General Assembly for study in the church.

“b. The General Assembly appoints a committee of ruling elders and teaching elders, numbering not fewer than fifteen, of whom not more than two shall be from any one synod, to consider the proposal. This committee shall consult with the committee or council from which the proposal originated. It shall report its findings to the next General Assembly.

“c. The next ensuing General Assembly considers the report of the study committee and approves the proposed amendment and recommends it to the presbyteries for vote.

“d. The proposed amendment receives the approval in writing of two thirds of the presbyteries.

“e. The proposed amendment is approved and enacted by the next ensuing General Assembly following the amendment’s receipt of the necessary two-thirds approval of the presbyteries.

“G-6.04 AMENDING THE BOOK OF ORDER

“Amendments to the Book of Order shall be made only if all the following steps are completed:

“a. All proposals requesting amendment of the Book of Order are communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly.

“b. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such proposals to amend the Book of Order to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (G-6.02), which shall examine the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). [At least sixty days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly,] ~~[F]~~[t]he advisory committee shall report its findings to the General Assembly along with its recommendations, which may include an amended version of any proposed constitutional changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the committee. The General Assembly shall not consider any amendment until it has considered the report and any recommendations from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

“c. The same General Assembly approves the proposal to amend and transmits the proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their vote.

“d. Presbyteries shall transmit their votes to the Stated Clerk no later than one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendments.

“e. The Stated Clerk receives written advice that a proposed amendment to the Book of Order has received the affirmative votes of a majority of all the presbyteries. The proposed amendment so approved shall become effective one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendment.

“G-6.05 EXCEPTIONS

“The provisions of G-4.0208 of this Constitution shall not be amended.

“G-6.06 AMENDMENTS TO SPECIAL PROVISIONS

“The processes for amending the confessional documents and for effecting full organic union (G-5.03) can be amended only by the same method that they prescribe.”

General Introduction

The Form of Government Task Force was created by action of the 217th General Assembly (2006) and charged to draft a Revised Form of Government.¹² This charge was the next step in a process of examination and revision to the Form of Government that began in the early 1990s.¹³

The task force presented its report to the 218th General Assembly (2008). The report included:

- Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, designed to replace G-1.0000–G-4.0403 in the current Form of Government;
- Revised Form of Government, designed to replace G-5.0000–G-18.0401 in the current Form of Government;
- Advisory Handbook for Councils, designed to assist in the development of policies and procedures for items moved from the Form of Government to the manual of operations of a council.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved the recommendation to refer the new Form of Government proposal to the Office of the General Assembly for a period of churchwide study and response overseen by the task force, and to expand the task force to include members from the assembly committee to which the report was assigned. Taking into account the response gathered, the expanded task force was directed to produce a new draft of the documents for consideration by the 219th General Assembly (2010).¹⁴

With one exception, all of the members of the original task force chose to remain part of the new task force. Carol Hunley, Grace Bowen, and Daniel S. Williams were added to the task force from the Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revision.

The task force met in August 2008, under the leadership of the Moderator of the 218th General Assembly, the Reverend Bruce Reyes-Chow, to reorganize and begin its work. Cynthia Bolbach and Daniel S. Williams were elected co-moderators of the task force. The task force divided itself into three work teams:

¹² [Minutes, 217th General Assembly \(2006\)](#), Part I, p. 366; assembly action, pp. 38–39. [*Access GA Minutes from Table of Contents. Go to Wednesday, June 21, 2006, 1:45 p.m., Report of Assembly Committee on Church Polity (05).*]

The five elements of the task force's charge:

- (1) The new Form of Government shall preserve our foundational polity (perhaps most concisely laid out in the first four chapters of the current Form of Government).
- (2) The focus of the Form of Government shall be on providing leadership for local congregations as missional communities.
- (3) The presbytery shall continue as the central governmental unit, as it has been throughout most of our history. The Form of Government shall provide sufficient authority and flexibility to allow the presbytery to assist congregations in addressing the changing cultural, economic, and societal challenges in our new millennial world. The FOG Task Force shall take notice of and address the institutional and structural impediments that currently cripple so very many of our presbyteries.
- (4) The new Form of Government shall provide flexibility at all levels, granting authority while permitting governing bodies to develop the structures to carry out their respective missions.
- (5) The FOG Task Force shall be guided by the principles proposed by Recommendations 1–4 from the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, using those principles as a guide for its own processes and deliberations. They shall incorporate this new Presbyterian ethos into the Form of Government so that it truly functions as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s guidebook for mission.

¹³ [Minutes, 217th General Assembly \(2006\)](#), Part I, pp. 368–371. [*See instructions, footnote #1.*]

¹⁴ [Minutes, 218th General Assembly \(2008\), Part I, pp. 21, 391–450.](#) (*Link is to PC-Biz report*). The referral was:

That the recommendation be referred to the Office of the General Assembly with comment:

The referral to the Office of the General Assembly is for a period of consultation and study with churches and presbyteries through a system or systems designed and implemented by the Form of Government Task Force and members of the 218th General Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revisions. The participation of every presbytery in the period of consultation and study will be strongly urged. New members of this expanded task force are to be chosen from the 218th General Assembly (2008) Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revisions by the Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008), in consultation with the moderator and vice moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revisions.

The new task force will revise the Form of Government Task Force Report, taking into account the concerns and suggestions gleaned from the consultation and study process. The guidance of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, the overtures, and the testimony received by the 218th General Assembly (2008) Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revisions and the committee's comments are referred to the task force for serious and studied consideration.

The revised report of the Form of Government task force is to be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than October 15, 2009, for distribution to the church at large no later than January 15, 2010, for consideration by the 219th General Assembly (2010). [*Note: The referral also appended a list of recommendations from the assembly committee to be considered in the revision of the Form of Government documents.*]

- writing: Paul Hooker, Neal Lloyd, Stephen Smith, and Daniel S. Williams
- study draft: Diana Barber, Carol Hunley, and Paige McRight
- communications: Cynthia Bolbach, Grace Bowen, Gemechisa Guja, and James Kim

Rationale

The task force produced an interim version of the proposed Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and Form of Government documents, based on the feedback received through the 218th General Assembly (2008)—all of the overtures, advice and counsel memoranda, and comments from the assembly committee. These documents were made available online in mid-October 2008, for a period of study and response across the church until June 30, 2009. The task force also developed three papers to guide the study process: an overall description of the objectives of the study process, a guide to assist individuals in studying the documents in preparation for participation in a group response, and a guide for groups to use in discussing and responding to the documents. In addition, the paper “What Is Missional Ecclesiology?” (written by task force member Paul Hooker) was made available to stimulate discussion of missional polity.

Throughout its work, the task force reduced its number of face-to-face meetings by using conference calls, Go-to-Meetings online, Project Path (a Web-based editing tool), and email. Individuals and groups across the church submitted responses to the proposed documents, which were collected by Research Services and forwarded regularly to the task force. Task force members also made themselves available to governing bodies and other groups to interpret their work and gather additional input.

At the conclusion of the study period, the task force produced its final version of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and the proposed Form of Government. The group met in August 2009 to finalize and approve its recommendations to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

Task force members will make themselves available to interpret their work to governing bodies and other groups between the submission of this report and the 219th General Assembly (2010). A face-to-face meeting is planned for April 2010 to make final preparations for the assembly.

Members of the Form of Government Task Force (2008–2010): Elder Diana J. Barber, Elder Cynthia J. Bolbach, the Reverend Grace E. Bowen, the Reverend Gemechisa Guja, the Reverend Paul K. Hooker, Elder Carol A. Hunley, the Reverend James H. Y. Kim, the Reverend Neal E. Lloyd, the Reverend Paige M. McRight, the Reverend Stephen W. Smith, and the Reverend Daniel S. Williams. Elder Sharon M. Davison served on the original task force (2006–2008).

God calls the church to be in mission in God’s world. In Christ, the church participates in God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ.

The recommended revisions to the *Book of Order* do not change the constitutional standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Rather, these revisions return the Form of Government to its original intent—a constitution rather than a manual of operations. By so doing, it establishes a polity that empowers the church to engage effectively in the mission of God in the 21st century. This revised polity lifts up and enhances the core values that shape and govern the whole church. This polity enables the councils of the church to establish the processes through which they can effectively serve God’s mission in their own contexts. As we the church know, affirm, and live out these overarching standards that shape our life together, the work we do will be clearer, more easily understood, and more united in serving our Lord in mission.

The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity lays out the principles that are basic—or foundational—to government, worship, and discipline for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Preserving the vast majority of the material in the first four chapters of the current Form of Government, this section organizes the material into three chapters:

- The first focuses on the activity of God in the world in which the church participates. It describes what the church is called to be and do in terms of the Nicene Creed and the Reformation notes from the Scots Confession and the six great ends of the church. It concludes with a section on the church’s openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which calls the church to reform, to ecumenicity, to unity in its diversity, and to openness to God’s mission in the world.
- The second describes how the Confessions function in the life of the church.
- The third outlines the historic principles of church order and government.

The proposed Form of Government spells out the constitutional framework for government of this denomination as it seeks to respond to God’s call to life in mission.

- Chapter I defines the structure of the congregation and the call to membership in a congregation.
- Chapter II details the orders of ministry (formerly called ‘offices’ of deacon, elder, and minister of the Word and Sacrament) and lifts up our distinctive commitment to parity between ruling elders and teaching elders in the church’s work of government and mission.
- Chapter III reclaims the ancient name of ‘councils’ for those bodies in the church that order its life through deliberation and decisions. This chapter emphasizes the requirement for diversity at every council more inclusive than the session. It describes the work of councils using the marks of the true church: proclamation of the Word, administration of the Sacraments, and right ministrations of discipline.
- Chapter IV provides for those places where the government of the church engages with civil government.
- Chapter V describes the church’s involvement in church union and ecumenicity.

Chapter VI provides for interpretation and amendment of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

[The assembly approved Item 07-01, Recommendation 2, with amendment. See pp. 18, 24–25.]

2. Commend to the councils of the church, “Advisory Handbook for Councils for the Development of Policies and Procedures Required by the Form of Government.”

**Advisory Handbook for
Councils for the Development of Policies and Procedures
Required by the Form of Government**

Policies and Procedures Required for Sessions

Policies and Procedures Required for Presbyteries

Policies and Procedures Required for Synods

Policies and Procedures Required for the General Assembly

Recommended by the Form of Government Task Force
Established by the 217th General Assembly (2006)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Policies and Procedures Guide for the Work of the Session

The congregation is the church engaged in the mission of God in its particular context. Through the congregation God’s people carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the Sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other. In the life of the congregation, individual believers are equipped for the ministry of witness to the love and grace of God in and for the world. The congregation reaches out to people, communities, and the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to gather for worship, to offer care and nurture to God’s children, to speak for social justice and righteousness, to bear witness to the truth and to the reign of God that is coming into the world. (G-1.0101)

The session is the council for the congregation and has responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the congregation, the session is charged to keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed congregations have identified themselves throughout history (F-1.0303), and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304). (G-3.0201)

Councils within our denomination are mutually interconnected. Each council has an expansive range of unique responsibilities; however, the life and ministry of each council is subject to review by the next higher council (G-3.0108). In this review, certain constitutional requirements must be addressed. What follows is a listing of those areas in which a presbytery is required to or justified in reviewing the work of the session of a congregation. The purpose of this review is for mutual awareness of and encouragement in mission. The value of review is in shared knowledge rather than meticulous compliance.

The proposed Form of Government requires that “each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that council.” (G-3.0106) The following list does not intend to be exhaustive of all actions that might now be included in a session’s Manual of Administrative Operations. It does seek to identify those instances in the proposed Form of Government where specific policies or rules are required. In every case, a session should ask whether any existing policies of the session meet the expectations of a particular provision.

Reference	Constitutional Provision	Questions or Options to Consider
F-1.01 G-1.0101	Each congregation is charged to “carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the Sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other.”	Does the session give evidence of a defined mission and do its programs reflect the defined mission?
G-2.03 G-2.04 G-2.05 G-3.02	Nurturing the faith of members & seeing to the proper preparation of persons for ordered ministry.	Has the session sought out members to be encouraged to consider their call to the ordered ministries of ruling elder, teaching elder, and deacon and recommended and supported those who undertake this process?
G-3.0201	Session is directed to an expansive list of responsibilities.	Are routine responsibilities carried out by the session? Is there evidence of energy, intelligence and imagination in the work of the session?
G-1.0303 G-1.0304 G-1.0404 G-4.0101 G-4.0102	Members are to be trained, received, and nurtured.	What opportunities are given for members to be received? Is there a regular program of member nurture after joining the congregation?
G-3.0112 G-3.0113 G-3.0205 G-4.0101 G-4.0102	Certain corporate and financial practices and safeguards are defined for each congregation and session.	Is the congregation incorporated? Do the minutes of the session and congregation give evidence of adequate insurance? Are financial reports regularly presented, annually reviewed or audited? Has the session prepared and approved a budget?
G-1.0303 G-3.0201b W-2.3011-.3014 W-2.4012	The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are acts of the whole church and authorized by a council.	Is there a program of preparation for Baptism offered to parents and unbaptized adults? Are regular observances of the Lord’s Supper authorized? Are special observances reported?
G-3.0107 G-3.0204	Proper and adequate records.	Is there evidence of minutes maintained and reviewed regularly? Is there evidence that membership rolls are current and justly managed?
G-1.05	The congregation holds meetings.	Is an annual meeting held? Has required business been dealt with? Are special meetings appropriately called, reported, minutes approved?
[G-1.0502]	<u>[Meetings of the congregation shall be called by the session, by the presbytery, or by the session when requested in writing by one fourth of the active members on the roll of the congregation. Adequate public notice of all congregational meetings shall be given. Congregations shall provide by their own rule for minimum notification requirements and give notice at regular services of worship prior to the meeting.]</u>	<u>[Has the congregation decided on what adequate notice will be for their meetings?]</u>

Reference	Constitutional Provision	Questions or Options to Consider
F-1.0403 G-3.0103	Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing its implementation of the church's commitment to inclusiveness and representation.	Has the session developed such procedures and mechanisms?
F-1.0403 G-3.0103 G-3.0104 G-2.0401	Elections in the congregation are to be fair, just, and inclusive.	Is a nominating process in place that represents the diversity of the congregation and is made up of a majority not currently in active service as ruling elders or deacons? Is evidence given of the concerns for diversity being addressed?
G-2.0402 G-2.0403 G-2.0601	Preparing and examining candidates for ordered ministry and ordaining or installing them.	Has the session prepared and examined those elected by the congregation? Are there criteria to assess their fitness for office? Was a service of ordination/installation held prior to the beginning of their service? Has the session examined those seeking to become teaching elders, approved the covenant relationship with them, and commended them to presbytery for preparation?
G-2.0404	Ruling elders and deacons serve for specific terms.	Are ruling elders and deacons grouped in classes and do terms meet constitutional standards?
G-3.0105 G-3.0106 G-3.0203	Meetings conducted decently and in order.	Are dockets prepared and material made available for discussion? Is some form of procedure agreed to and followed? Do meetings include opportunity for spiritual reflection and prayer? Has the session approved a quorum for session meeting?
G-3.0106	Manual of administrative operations.	What policies have been developed and approved by the session for the routine administration of the congregation's life?
G-3.0106	Consultative mission strategy.	Has the presbytery initiated discussions with the session as to mutually beneficial mission activities?
G-3.0106 G-3.0202	Participation in the work of presbytery.	Are representatives of the session in attendance as commissioners at meetings of the presbytery? Are reports of meetings given to the session? Is responsible financial support of the mission of the larger church a part of the session's work? Are any directives from the presbytery properly recorded?
G-3.0109	The work of commissions.	Did the session appoint any commissions? Were the directives specific and clear? Were all actions reported back to the session?

Policies and Procedures Guide for the Work of the Presbytery

The presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district and is composed of all the congregations and teaching elders within that district. The presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of its congregations, the presbytery shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304). (G-3.0301)

Councils within our denomination are mutually interconnected. Each council has an expansive range of unique responsibilities; however, the life and ministry of each council is subject to review by the next higher council (G-3.0108). The purpose of this review is for mutual awareness of and encouragement in mission. The value of review is in shared knowledge rather than meticulous compliance.

The proposed Form of Government requires that “each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that body” (G-3.0106). The following list does not intend to be exhaustive of all actions that might now be included in a presbytery’s manual of administrative operations. It does seek to identify those instances in the proposed Form of Government where specific policies or rules are required. In every case, the presbytery should ask whether any existing policies of the presbytery meet the expectations of a particular provision.

Reference	Constitutional Provision	Questions or Options to Consider
F-1.0403 G-3.0103	Councils above the session shall establish by their own rule [committees or entities] <u>[committees on representation]</u> to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. <u>[A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.]</u>	Does the presbytery choose to retain an entity comparable to the current Committee on Representation (COR) to serve this purpose? If a COR is retained, what is the appropriate makeup of such a committee in its context? If this responsibility is lodged with another presbytery entity, how will the presbytery approve its plan for complying with the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation? How and on what basis will the presbytery review the committee’s implementation of its plan?
G-3.0301	A presbytery may provide by its own rule for the enrollment of ruling elders serving as moderators of committees or commissions.	Does the presbytery choose to enroll persons in these leadership positions?
G-3.0104	Moderators of councils higher than the session shall be elected for such terms as the council determines.	Does the presbytery operate on a calendar year? Should the moderator serve for more than one year?
G-3.0104	Councils shall provide by rule who shall preside in the absence of the moderator.	In the absence of the moderator, who most appropriately should preside at a presbytery meeting (e.g. the vice moderator, immediate past moderator, etc.)? Is this something that state law requires be part of the presbytery by-laws?
G-3.0104	The clerk of a presbytery shall be called stated clerk, shall be elected by the council for a definite term as it may determine.	How long should the clerk’s term be? What is the learning curve for this officer? How often should it be reviewed?
G-3.0106	Manual of administrative operations.	Does the presbytery have a manual of administrative operations? Do new procedures need to be included to cover how the presbytery will handle preparation for ministry, the calling of pastors, the number of commissioners sessions elect, and what committees it chooses to have?
G-3.0107	The clerk of each council shall make recommendation to that body for the permanent safekeeping of the body’s records with the Presbyterian Historical Society or in a temperature and humidity controlled environment of a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).	Has the clerk made this recommendation? Is it consistent with the intent of ensuring the permanent accessibility and security of the records?
G-3.0108a	Each council shall review annually or biennially, based on the body’s meeting frequency, the proceedings and actions of all entities related to the body, all officers able to act on behalf of the body, and lower councils within its jurisdiction.	Has the presbytery reviewed and made appropriate revision to its existing processes and guidelines for the review of session minutes, the actions of officers, and other proceedings to ensure that they are consistent with the revisions in the Form of Government?

Reference	Constitutional Provision	Questions or Options to Consider
G-3.0109	Councils may designate by their own rule such committees and commissions as they deem necessary.	What committee or other organizational structure has the presbytery developed to support the implementation of its identified mission? What gifts and skills are needed for those serving within that structure? How has accountability been assured and by what process shall those units report to the body and have their work evaluated?
G-3.0109b	A quorum of any commission shall be established by the designating body but in no case shall be less than a majority of its members (except as limited by D-5.0204).	Has the presbytery established a uniform policy regarding the makeup and quorum of any commission it creates, or will it attend to these specifics on a case-by-case basis? If the latter, does the presbytery have guidelines to advise the stated clerk or the presbytery as it constitutes and charges any commission?
G-3.0110	A council shall make provision in its manual of administrative operations (G-3.0106) for the process of election of executive staff and the hiring of other staff, description of the responsibilities of the position, method of performance review, and the manner of termination of employment.	Has the presbytery approved personnel policies and do those policies include the required items? Is a process in place to guide the calling of executive staff as well as hiring other staff? Are these policies consistent with the secular employment laws of the state as appropriate?
G-3.0111	All councils higher than the session shall have a process for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the council.	Has the presbytery developed such a process and organized itself to implement it? Does this process ensure that the presbytery can make nominations from the floor? Are there clear expectations stated for those serving in presbytery elected positions and are there procedures in place for evaluating the effectiveness of those serving in presbytery positions? Are terms clearly stated as appropriate?
G-3.0201	Presbyteries shall provide by rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience.	Does the presbytery have such a rule?
G-3.0301	The presbytery shall adopt and communicate to the sessions a plan for determining how many ruling elders each session should commission to represent it at presbytery meetings.	Does the presbytery have a plan? When will the plan be communicated to sessions?
G-3.0303f	Presbytery has the authority to consider and act upon requests from congregations for permission to take the actions regarding real property as described in G-4.0206.	What entity within the presbytery will consider these matters and make recommendations?
G-3.0304	A presbytery may call special meetings in accordance with its own rules.	Have rules been adopted by the presbytery to state the requirements for calling special meetings?
G-3.0304	A presbytery may set its own quorum, but it shall not be fewer than three teaching elders who are members of the presbytery and three ruling elder commissioners from three different congregations.	What is an appropriate quorum for the presbytery? Should it be higher than the minimum? Has this been adopted by the presbytery?
G-3.0306 G-2.0503a	It (presbytery) shall be guided in this determination by written criteria developed by the presbytery for validating ministries within its bounds.	Does the presbytery have written criteria for the validation of ministries?
G-3.0306	The presbytery shall examine each teaching elder or candidate who seeks membership in it on his or her Christian faith and views in theology, the Sacraments, and the government of this church.	Does the presbytery have a process for examining prospective members? Does it comply with the constitutional requirements?

Reference	Constitutional Provision	Questions or Options to Consider
G-3.0306	Non-congregationally based teaching elders may administer the Sacraments at times and places as established by the presbytery.	How do non-congregationally based teaching elders secure permission for administering the Sacraments? Are there predetermined situations where permission is automatic?
G-3.0307	Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and Certified Christian Educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and Certified Christian Educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.	Does the presbytery have mechanisms and processes for this? Are there existing entities to provide such care? Will the presbytery continue the committee on ministry structure or does some other process seem more appropriate? What is the best way to settle difficulties? Is there a mechanism in place for this?
G-3.0307	Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to guide, nurture, and oversee the process of preparing to become a teaching elder.	Are there processes and mechanisms in place for this? Do any new procedures need to be developed? (See separate denominational manual for preparation of teaching elders.)
G-3.0307	To facilitate the presbytery's oversight of inquirers and candidates, reception of members, approval of calls for pastoral services and invitations for temporary pastoral services, oversight of congregations without pastors, dissolution of relationships, dismissal of members, and its close relationship with both member congregations and teaching elders, it may delegate its authority to designated entities within the presbytery. ... composed of ruling elders and teaching elders in approximately equal numbers, bearing in mind the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403. All actions carried out as a result of delegated authority must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting.	Are there processes and mechanisms in place for this? Do any new procedures need to be developed? See separate manuals for preparing for ordered ministry and for relationships between congregations and pastors.

Policies and Procedures Guide for the Work of the Synod

The synod is the intermediate council responsible for the life and mission of the church throughout its region and for supporting the ministry and mission of its constituent presbyteries as they seek to support the witness of congregations, to the end that the church throughout its region becomes a community of faith, hope, love and witness (G-3.0401). As it meets, it is composed of commissioners elected by its constituent presbyteries. As it leads and guides the witness of the church throughout its region, the synod is charged to keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

Councils within our denomination are mutually interconnected. Each council has an expansive range of unique responsibilities; however, the life and ministry of each council is subject to review by the next higher council (G-3.0108). The purpose of this review is for mutual awareness of and encouragement in mission. The value of review is in shared knowledge rather than meticulous compliance.

The proposed Form of Government requires that “each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that body” (G-3.0106). The following list does not intend to be exhaustive of all actions that might now be included in a synod’s manual of administrative operations. It does seek to identify those instances in the proposed Form of Government where specific policies or rules are required. In every case, the synod should ask whether any existing policies of the synod meet the expectations of a particular provision.

Reference	Constitutional Provision	Questions or Options to Consider
F-1.0403 G-3.0103	Councils above the session shall establish by their own rule [committees or entities] <u>committees on representation</u> to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. <u>A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.</u>	Does the synod choose to retain an entity comparable to the current Committee on Representation (COR) to serve this purpose? If a COR is retained, what is the appropriate makeup of such a committee in its context? If this responsibility is lodged with another synod entity, how will the synod approve its plan for complying with the church's commitment to inclusiveness and representation? How and on what basis will the synod review?
G-3.0104	Moderators of councils higher than the session shall be elected for such terms as the council determines.	Does the synod operate on a calendar year? Should the moderator serve for more than one year?
G-3.0104	Councils may provide by rule who shall preside in the absence of the moderator	In the absence of the moderator, who most appropriately should preside at a synod meeting (e.g. the vice moderator, immediate past moderator, etc.)? Is this something that state law requires be part of the synod's bylaws?
G-3.0106	Manual of administrative operations.	Does the synod have a manual of administrative operations? Do new procedures need to be included to define the number of commissioners presbyteries elect?
G-3.0107	The clerk of each council shall make recommendation to that body for the permanent safekeeping of the body's records with the Presbyterian Historical Society or in a temperature and humidity controlled environment of a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).	Has the stated clerk made this recommendation? Is it consistent with the intent of ensuring the permanent accessibility and security of the records?
G-3.0108a	Each council shall review annually or biennially, based on the body's meeting frequency, the proceedings and actions of all entities related to the body, all officers able to act on behalf of the body, and lower councils within its jurisdiction.	Has the synod reviewed and made appropriate revision to its existing processes and guidelines for the review of its own committees and entities, the actions of its officers, and other proceedings, as well as presbytery minutes, to ensure that they are consistent with the revisions in the Form of Government?
G-3.0109	Councils may designate by their own rule such committees and commissions as they deem necessary.	What committee or other organizational structure has the synod developed to support the implementation of its identified mission? What gifts and skills are needed for those serving within that structure? How has accountability been assured and by what process shall those units report to the body and have their work evaluated?
G-3.0109b	A quorum of any commission shall be established by the appointing body but in no case shall be less than a majority of its members.	Has the synod established a uniform policy regarding the makeup and quorum of any commission it creates, or will it attend to these specifics on a case-by-case basis? If the latter, does the synod have guidelines to advise the stated clerk or the synod as it constitutes and charges any commission?
G-3.0110	A council shall make provision in its manual of administrative operations (G-3.0106) for the process of election of executive staff and the hiring of other staff, description of the responsibilities of the position, method of performance review, and the manner of termination of employment.	Has the synod approved personnel policies and do those policies include the required items? Is a process in place to guide the calling of executive staff as well as hiring other staff? Are these policies consistent with the secular employment laws of the state as appropriate?

Reference	Constitutional Provision	Questions or Options to Consider
G-3.0111	All councils higher than the session shall have a process for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the body.	Has the synod developed such a process and organized itself to implement it? Does this process ensure that the synod can make nominations from the floor? Are there clear expectations stated for those serving in synod elected positions and are there procedures in place for evaluating the effectiveness of those serving in synod positions? Are terms clearly stated where appropriate?
G-3.0304	A synod may call special meetings in accordance with its own rules.	Have rules been adopted by the synod to state the requirements for calling special meetings?
G-5.0402	The synod and/or governing body having jurisdiction over each of the uniting bodies shall approve the plan of union.	What expectations does the synod have for what shall be included in a plan of union? Do the provisions of the current G-17.0200 provide guidance in this regard?

Policies and Procedures Guide for the Work of the General Assembly

The General Assembly is the council of the whole church and is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the whole church, it shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303), and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304). (G-3.0401)

Councils within our denomination are mutually interconnected. Each council has an expansive range of unique responsibilities; however, the life and ministry of each council is subject to review by the next higher council (G-3.0108). The purpose of this review is for mutual awareness of and encouragement in mission. The value of review is in shared knowledge rather than meticulous compliance.

The proposed Form of Government requires that “each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that body” (G-3.0106). The following list does not intend to be exhaustive of all actions that might now be included in the Manual of the General Assembly. It does seek to identify those instances in the proposed Form of Government where specific policies or rules are required. In every case, the General Assembly should ask whether any existing policies of the General Assembly meet the expectations of a particular provision.

Reference	Constitutional Provision	Questions or Options to Consider
F-1.0403 G-3.0103	Councils above the session shall establish by their own rule [committees or entities] <u>[committees on representation]</u> to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. <u>[A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.]</u>	Does the General Assembly choose to retain an entity comparable to the current Committee on Representation (COR) to serve this purpose? If a COR is retained, what is the appropriate makeup of such a committee in its context? If this responsibility is lodged with another GA entity, how will the General Assembly approve its plan for complying with the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation? How and on what basis will the General Assembly review the committee’s implementation of its plan?
G-3.0104	Moderators of councils higher than the session shall be elected for such terms as the council determines.	What is the appropriate term for the moderator and what procedures shall guide the election?
G-3.0104	Councils may provide by rule who shall preside in the absence of the moderator.	In the absence of the moderator, who most appropriately should preside at a General Assembly meeting (e.g. the vice moderator, immediate past moderator, etc.)? Is

Reference	Constitutional Provision	Questions or Options to Consider
		this something that state law requires be part of the General Assembly's bylaws?
G-3.0107	The clerk of each council shall make recommendation to that body for the permanent safekeeping of the body's records with the Presbyterian Historical Society or in a temperature and humidity controlled environment of a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).	Has the stated clerk made this recommendation? Is it consistent with the intent of ensuring the permanent accessibility and security of the records?
G-3.0108a	Each council shall review annually or biennially, based on the body's meeting frequency, the proceedings and actions of all entities related to the body, all officers able to act on behalf of the body, and lower councils within its jurisdiction.	Has the General Assembly reviewed and made appropriate revision to its existing processes and guidelines for the review of its own committees and entities, the actions of officers, and other proceedings, as well as synod minutes, to ensure that they are consistent with the revisions in the Form of Government?
G-3.0109	Councils may designate by their own rule such committees and commissions as they deem necessary.	What committee or other organizational structure has the General Assembly developed to support the implementation of its identified mission? What gifts and skills are needed for those serving within that structure? How has accountability been assured and by what process shall those units report to the body and have their work evaluated?
G-3.0109b	A quorum of any commission shall be established by the appointing body but in no case shall be less than a majority of its members.	Has the General Assembly established a uniform policy regarding the makeup and quorum of any commission it creates, or will it attend to these specifics on a case-by-case basis? If the latter, does the General Assembly have guidelines to advise the stated clerk or the General Assembly as it constitutes and charges any commission?
G-3.0110	A council shall make provision in its manual of administrative operations (G-3.0106) for the process of election of executive staff and the hiring of other staff, description of the responsibilities of the position, method of performance review, and the manner of termination of employment.	Has the General Assembly approved personnel policies and do those policies include the required items? Is a process in place to guide the calling of executive staff as well as hiring other staff? Are these policies consistent with the secular employment laws of the state as appropriate?
G-3.0111	All councils higher than the session shall have a process for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the body.	Has the General Assembly developed such a process and organized itself to implement it? Does this process ensure that the General Assembly can make nominations from the floor? Are there clear expectations stated for those serving in General Assembly elected positions and are there procedures in place for evaluating the effectiveness of those serving in General Assembly positions? Are terms clearly stated where appropriate?
G-6.02	The General Assembly shall provide by its own rule for the qualifications of members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.	Has the General Assembly defined clear expectations of and qualifications for service on the Advisory Committee on the Constitution?

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-01

Advice on Item 07-01—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The task force's proposal regarding Foundations and the Form of Government represents a significant shift in the way the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) would relate to its Constitution in at least two ways.

First, the task force's proposal envisions a polity that is more missional in nature. The Church exists to bear witness to and to participate in God's work in the world. That mission takes place in particular contexts and in the life of congregations. The focus of the polity contained in the proposal is on supporting the work of the congregation. As understood in this polity, the work of the church at all levels is organized around the classical Reformed marks of the Church: that the Word of God is proclaimed, the sacraments are rightly administered, and the covenant community is nurtured through ecclesiastical discipline.

Second, the task force's proposal regarding Foundations and the Form of Government offers a document that is less regulatory in nature than the existing Form of Government. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has often noted a tendency on the part of the church to use its constitution as if it were a manual of operations, adding through the process of amendment a large number of administrative and procedural details. The proposed Form of Government eliminates many of the passages that define in detail the procedures of governing bodies. A positive aspect of this change may be the freedom offered to governing bodies to establish policies and procedures for their work that best suit the needs of their particular contexts. A negative aspect may be that many Presbyterians may be puzzled or troubled by the silence in the Constitution concerning issues addressed in the Form of Government now in effect.

If the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is ready to make this paradigm shift, the proposed Foundations and Revised Form of Government are coherent from a constitutional perspective to function as a replacement for the existing Form of Government. The advisory committee has, however, noted particular issues that should be resolved before the proposal is sent to the presbyteries for action. These are itemized in Sections VI. and VII. below.

I. The Historic Context of the Work of the Form of Government Task Force

Efforts to revise the Form of Government have been before General Assemblies for at least fifteen years. Throughout that time, the consistent theme has been the impetus to restore a sense of "constitutionality" to the language of the Form of Government. Proposals for revision have sought, by various means, to maintain clarity about national standards while reducing the amount of process-oriented material that might be handled in different ways by different parts of the church.

1993

The Special Committee on the Nature of the Church and the Practice of Governance reported to the 205th General Assembly (1993). It suggested that the content of the Form of Government could be divided into standards and functions that should remain uniform across the church, and practices and processes about which there might reasonably be a greater degree of freedom and diversity. The assembly referred the matter of a systematic review of the Form of Government to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1996–97

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommended to the 208th General Assembly (1996) that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution be charged with creating a Form of Government divided into three components: (1) foundational principles, (2) binding policies, and (3) advisory practices, and that the new draft be presented to the 213th General Assembly (2001). In addition, the 209th General Assembly (1997) referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution an overture from the Presbytery of West Virginia to create a Form of Government

- that is true to the historic principles of polity in the PC(USA);
- that will serve as a constitutional reference, "encouraging creativity with broad strokes of wisdom"; and
- that will "empower governing bodies ... and celebrate the diversity of the church" (*Minutes*, 1997, Part I, p. 710)

1999

In its progress report to the 212th General Assembly (2000), the Advisory Committee on the Constitution offered drafts of Chapters X and XI of the Form of Government that divided the contents into foundational, policy, and practice categories. It also suggested that a draft of the entire Form of Government, reduced to include only foundational principles, be circulated among the church for study and comment. The assembly chose to refer the report back to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for further refinement and report to the next assembly.

2000

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution report to the 212th General Assembly (2000) included a draft revision of Chapter XIV that reduced its contents to broadly stated principles and standards, while removing much of the process oriented material to advisory handbooks. The assembly approved the document for study and comment.

2001–02

The 213th General Assembly (2001) sent to presbyteries a proposal to revise the contents of Chapter XIV along the lines of the 2000 Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommendation. While the amendment was defeated in presbyteries (29-141-2), there was the sense that the problems were not so much with the overall concept as with particular aspects of the proposal. The following year, the 214th General Assembly (2002) asked the Office of the General Assembly to propose a systematic revision of the Form of Government along the lines of the proposed revisions to Chapter XIV, and to report its work to the 217th General Assembly (2006).

2004

The Office of the General Assembly requested and received permission to conduct an extensive series of consultations with various constituencies in the church regarding both the theory and style of revision of the Form of Government deemed most desirable.

2006

The Office of the General Assembly reported its work to the 217th General Assembly (2006) in two parts:

1. A revision of Chapter XIV, similar in content and approach to the revision proposed in 2001, but with several options for dealing with potentially controversial aspects of change. The amendment was approved and is now Chapter XIV of the *Book of Order*.
2. The creation of a Form of Government Task Force, to be charged with revising the entire Form of Government to create a document that preserves the foundational elements of Presbyterian polity, provides leadership and support for congregations as missional units, and maintains the presbytery as the central governmental unit of the church. The task force was required to release the proposed Form of Government including advisory handbooks by September 1, 2007.

2007

The Form of Government Task Force completed work on its initial draft in September and shared the document broadly within the church. Following a period of comment and critique, the task force submitted its final report to the Stated Clerk's office in December, in anticipation of presentation to the 218th General Assembly (2008). The report recommended:

1. The replacement of current Chapters I–IV with a new document, “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity,” intended to become the first of four sections of the *Book of Order*.
2. The replacement of current Chapters V–XVIII with proposed Chapters 1–6.
3. That the assembly send to presbyteries additional proposals for amending potentially controversial aspects of the proposed Form of Government, creating options for the church in such areas as permitting associate pastors and interim pastors to succeed to the position of pastor, requiring the inclusion of proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments in all validated ministries, and creating committees on diversity at the levels of presbytery, synod, and General Assembly.

2008

The 218th General Assembly (2008) referred the recommendations of the task force to the Office of the General Assembly with comment. Augmented with new members appointed by the Moderator of the General Assembly, the task force produced an interim version of the Foundations and Form of Government that it circulated to the church in October 2008, and solicited and received extensive comment from across the church.

2009

Following the period of comment and critique, the task force submitted its final report to the Stated Clerk's office in August 2009. The report recommends:

1. The replacement of the current Form of Government with two documents: Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and a new Form of Government.
2. The commendation to the councils of the church of the “Advisory Handbook for Councils for the Development of Policies and Procedures Required by the Form of Government.”

II. How the Proposed Foundations Would Modify the Current Provisions of Chapters I–IV

One of the most significant elements of the task force’s proposal is the creation of a new section to the *Book of Order*, titled “Foundations of Presbyterian Polity.” Consisting largely of material drawn from Chapters I–IV of the current Form of Government, this is a separate document that would precede the Form of Government, Directory for Worship, and Rules of Discipline as a fourth section of the *Book of Order*. The creation of a new section of the *Book of Order* requires consideration of both its contents and how they relate to the other parts of the *Book of Order*.

A. *Contents of the Foundations*

The Foundations document consists of three chapters. The first is titled “The Mission of the Church” and sets forth an understanding of how the church participates in the mission of God in the world. This chapter contains the greatest amount of new material, principally in sections discussing “The Mission of God” (F-1.01), “The Marks of the Church” (F-1.0302), and “The Notes of the Reformed Church” (F-1.0303). Section F-1.0403 is drawn from the language of our current G-4.0403, and carries our current commitments to unity and diversity forward into the Foundations.

The second chapter, “The Church and Its Confessions,” replicates Chapter II of the current Form of Government with only minor changes. The third chapter, “Principles of Order and Government,” include the Historic Principles of Church Order (F-3.01, retained in their original phrasing), Principles of Presbyterian Government (which are a restatement of the Historic Principles of Church Government in the present G-1.0400), a statement on the interpretation and force of the material in the Foundations, and definitions of *The Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order*.

B. *How the Foundations Relate to Other Sections of the Book of Order*

Thematic relationships: A statement of “foundations” suggests material that is fundamental to understanding that which follows. The organizing theme of “the mission of the Church” recasts familiar material in the Foundations in a new light. The new material in the Foundations takes historic descriptions of the Church’s calling and interprets them as descriptions of the Church’s faithful participation in the mission of God.

Similarly, the Foundations set the tone for the new Form of Government that follows it. Likewise, the Form of Government expands the understanding of how the church’s internal structures and order facilitates the church’s calling as set forth in the Foundations. The Directory of Worship and the Rules of Discipline have not been similarly revised, and it is more difficult to see how the Foundations relate thematically to them.

Constitutional relationships: Section F-3.03 (“Foundational Statements”) puts forth the constitutional relationship between the Foundations and other parts of the *Book of Order*. It declares,

The statements contained in this section, “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity,” describe the ecclesiological and historical commitments on which the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) rests. Provisions of any part of this Constitution are to be interpreted in light of the whole Constitution. No provision of the *Book of Order* can of itself invalidate any other. Where there are tensions and ambiguities between provisions, it is the task of councils and judicial commissions to resolve them in such a way as to give effect to all provisions.”

C. *Comments*

By creating the Foundations section, the task force has given special attention to its charge to preserve the foundational principles of our polity found in Chapters I–IV of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that the material in section F-3.03 preserves the current force of provisions in the *Book of Order*, as well as the relationship between provisions of the *Book of Order*.

III. Overview of the Proposed Form of Government

As noted above, the proposed Form of Government represents a significant shift to a more constitutional and less regulatory Form of Government. Nevertheless, the material in the revised Form of Government has a strong relationship to familiar material in the current *Book of Order*.

Chapter 1 of the proposed Form of Government is drawn from the current provisions of G-5.0000 and G-7.0000.

Chapter 2 is drawn from the current provisions of G-6.0000 and G-14.0000. As required by its mandate, the task force has preserved intact current G-6.0106a and b (G-2.0104). It has also preserved current G-6.0108a and b, but has combined them into a single paragraph (the new G-2.0105).

Chapter 3 is drawn from G-9.0000, G-10.0000, G-11.0000, G-12.0000, and G-13.0000.

Chapter 4 is drawn from specific material in current G-6.0000, G-7.0000, and G-8.0000. Proposed G-4.01 combines existing language in the current Form of Government from the current G-7.0401 and 7.0402. Proposed G-4.02 is the text of

current G-8.0000, including G-8.0200, as mandated by the charter of the task force. Proposed G-4.03, “Confidence and Privilege,” is a summary statement of the provisions on the same subjects in current G-6.0204a and b, G-6.0304b, and G-6.0402b.

Chapter 5 is a consolidation of G-15.0000, G-16.0000, and G-17.0000.

Finally, Chapter 6 is derived from the current G-18.0000.

Except as set forth in the next section, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that the task force has complied with its charge to draft a missional Form of Government that removes materials that could be described as regulatory or “manual”-type provisions.

The task force has honored its charge to retain the current G-6.0106. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes the proposed text uses the terms “ruling elder” and “teaching elder” where our current constitution uses “elder” and “minister”, and that this change was also made in G-2.0104b, which is intended to maintain the rule now found in G-6.0106. The task force has correctly recognized that changing the names of officers in G-2.0104b would maintain the force and effect of G-6.0106b as it currently stands.

The task force has also honored its charge to retain the current G-8.0200.

IV. Paradigm Shifts in the Proposed Form of Government

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution suggests that the 219th General Assembly (2010), in reviewing the Proposed Form of Government, consider its implications for a missional polity, language used concerning the offices of ministry, and its changes in the roles of governing bodies.

A. *Missional Polity*

According to the task force, the proposed Form of Government “establishes a polity that empowers the church to engage effectively in the mission of God in the 21st century.” The shift to a more missional polity is evident in several aspects of the proposal:

- The mission of God is the organizing principle of both the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and the Form of Government. The Foundations document begins with a chapter on “The Mission of the Church.” Familiar material from Chapters I–IV of the current Form of Government is interlaced with new material highlighting the traditional Marks of the Church and Notes of the Reformed Church. Each of these Marks and Notes is expanded in ways that highlight its significance for the mission of the church today.

- The congregation is identified as the primary form and principal agent of God’s mission. The first chapter of the new Form of Government, “Congregations and Their Membership,” begins with the statement, “The congregation is the church engaged in the mission of God in its particular context,” and adds, “In the life of the congregation, individual believers are equipped for the ministry of witness to the love and grace of God in and for the world” (G-1.0101).

- The Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is reclaimed. Most obviously, this is emphasized by a semantic shift from “offices” to “ordered ministries,” and from “minister of the Word and Sacrament” to “teaching elder.” In addition, the meaning of membership is recast to include “a commitment to participate in Christ’s mission” (G-1.0304). Moreover, Chapter 2 of the Form of Government, on “Ordered Ministry, Commissioning, and Certification” begins with the affirmation, “The basic form of ministry is the ministry of the whole people of God, from whose midst some are called to ordered ministries, to fulfill particular functions. Members and those in ordered ministries serve together under the mandate of Christ” (G-2.0101).

- The Form of Government is edited to serve a less regulatory, more flexible function. Governing bodies (renamed “councils”) are given liberty to adopt practices that fit their particular needs and contexts of ministry. Some examples of this can be found in quorum and call requirements for congregational meetings (G-1.0501 and G-1.0502), the training and examination requirements of commissioned lay pastors (now “commissioned ruling elders”—G-2.1002), and required structures of higher councils (G-3.0109). It should be noted that the task force retained without change the church-wide standards on ordination (G-2.0104)¹ and provisions regarding church property (G-4.02).²

Comment:

The proposed Form of Government is influenced by the New Testament model of the Church as the apostolic community; that is, the Church sent forth in mission to the world. In embracing this model of the Church, however, the proposal does not abandon other models of the Church implicit in our polity. Therefore, the result is not a revolution in church polity, but an evolution. The charge to the task force specifically required preserving the foundations of our polity found in Chapters I–IV

of the current Form of Government. Placed in a framework organized by the principle of the mission of God, these foundational statements generate new meanings for the ordering of the mission and ministry of the Church.

Of particular importance is the shift in the dynamics of governance in the proposed Form of Government. While the presbytery is still identified as the principal structure of governance, greater emphasis is placed on the congregation as the principal structure for mission. Thus the proposed Form of Government provides a greater degree of congregational autonomy than does our current Form of Government. This is emblematic of a general shift in responsibility, away from the more centralized, corporate polity of the mid-twentieth century to a more decentralized model. Nowhere is this more evident than in the potential for a vastly reduced role for synods.

The shift to a less regulatory, more missional Form of Government will necessarily result in less uniform practices across the denomination. Greater responsibility is placed on governing bodies to formulate, communicate, and enforce practices under their jurisdiction. While this may result in greater liberty for governing bodies to adapt practices to the particular needs of their mission contexts, it also may result in increased ambiguity and confusion, especially where governing bodies have established rules that are insufficient to order mission or ministry in their bounds, or that contradict or encroach on provisions of the *Book of Order*.

The increasingly regulatory nature of our current Form of Government reflects a decline in the trust and love that is essential to maintaining the fellowship of the church (G-7.0103). The shift to a less regulatory form of government may require councils to work through areas of tension and conflict which would no longer be resolved under the proposed Form of Government.

One of the frequently voiced concerns is that councils will have to spend an inordinate amount of time rewriting their manuals. This could only happen if they are already out of compliance with the requirement in the current Form of Government to have a manual. Existing manuals will remain in effect until the councils amend them. (For a more complete discussion of this matter, we draw the assembly's attention to our advice on Item 07-10, the joint recommendation of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council.)

Under the proposed Form of Government councils will have to decide whether they wish to use their new opportunity for flexibility, and if so, in which areas in their life will they employ a different way of accomplishing their mission.

The purpose of a form of government is to provide the necessary structures and boundaries to ensure that essential Church functions are conducted "decently and in order," in a manner consistent with scripture and the confessions of the church. In this regard, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the proposed Form of Government possesses those structures and boundaries necessary to the orderly functioning of the church, and orders the mission and ministry of the church in a manner consistent with the scriptures and confessions.

B. *Language Concerning Offices of Ministry*

The proposal has adopted terminology concerning church offices that is markedly different than that with which most Presbyterians are familiar. Instead of "church offices," the proposal speaks of "ordered ministries"; rather than "minister of the Word and Sacrament," the proposal utilizes the term "teaching elder." These changes call for special consideration by both the assembly and the church generally.

As stated above, these changes have the purpose of reclaiming the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, that is, the shared nature of the mission and ministry of the Church. The use of "ordered ministries" emphasizes that persons called to ordained service in the church differ in function only, and not status, from other church members: "The basic form of ministry is the ministry of the whole people of God, from whose midst some are called to ordered ministries, to fulfill particular functions" (G-2.0101). By contrast, the term "church officers," it is argued, presents a more hierarchical connotation of ministry. Similarly, by replacing "minister of the Word and Sacrament" with the term "teaching elder," the unique and historic Presbyterian principle of parity in governance between the clergy and ruling elders is underscored. (Indeed, even the word "clergy," with its connotations of special status and privilege, is out of place in historic Presbyterian polity, which asserts that the biblical word "elder" ("presbyteros") embraces both those exercising the role of governance and pastor to the flock.) The term "teaching elder" has been used as the preferred term for those exercising the pastoral function in the Church in various historic streams of our current denomination, most recently in the *Book of Church Order* of the former Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) prior to its reunion with the UPCUSA in 1983.

Comment:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that changes in nomenclature in the proposal constitute a healthy appropriation of the historic principles of Presbyterian polity. Apart from the inherent challenge of relearning some fundamental terms of our polity, the changes do not present obstacles to the orderly functioning of our church government. They may, however, highlight distinctives of polity that are unique to the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition, which have been

our contribution to ecumenical dialogue regarding the mutual recognition of ministries. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that the proposal presents a faithful representation of our historic polity to our ecumenical partners.

C. *Changes in the Roles of Governing Bodies*

The proposal is straightforward in its assertion that a more missional polity will alter the roles and functions of governing bodies in the church. The emphasis on the congregation as the principle locus and agent of mission necessarily suggests a church order that is more decentralized and in which the higher governing bodies find their purpose in advancing the work of lower governing bodies. This shift in focus is also accompanied by a shift in relationships, in that it grants greater responsibility to lower governing bodies to adopt policies and practices that facilitate mission and ministry in their particular contexts.

This decentralization of mission and authority has implications for the structure of our polity. The familiar four-tiered hierarchy of governing bodies (session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly) does not neatly fit the missional theme. The role of synods, in particular, is diminished. The proposal puts forth the congregation as the principal agent of mission, the presbytery as the principal agent of governance, and the General Assembly as the expression of the corporate will of the whole church. However, synods, historically the principal agent of regional and specialized mission, lack a clear rationale. Accordingly, the proposal permits both synods with “reduced functions” (G-3.0404) that perform only essential administrative and judicial roles, and synods that choose to perform other significant functions within their bounds.

Comment:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds nothing inherently contrary to our polity in the role and structure of governing bodies (“councils”) put forth in the proposal. The proposed Form of Government maintains current standards in matters of faith and practice, set by the General Assembly and affirmed by the votes of the presbyteries and preserves the historic function of presbytery as the body charged with the oversight of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. However, the high degree of local responsibility envisioned in the proposed Form of Government calls for an equally high attention to the practice of administrative review of policies and actions of lower governing bodies. Administrative review, often regarded as a perfunctory function of governing bodies, is vital to the maintenance of unity and order in the church.

V. Status of Authoritative Interpretations

While the status and applicability of any authoritative interpretation is subject to the judgment of the assembly, it is the considered judgment of the ACC that if this proposal to amend the Form of Government were to be approved, generally speaking the status of authoritative interpretations would vary according to the relationship of newly approved language to previous language.

1. If language approved in the Constitution explicitly restates the content of existing authoritative interpretations, it is no longer an authoritative interpretation but is incorporated into the Constitution.
2. If language is approved that is identical to, or essentially the same as the language of constitutional provisions that have already been interpreted, current authoritative interpretations would continue in force. The ACC believes this would apply, for example, to authoritative interpretations regarding current G-6.0106b, G-6.0108, G-8.0201, and G-9.0404d.
3. If language is approved that is substantively different from currently interpreted constitutional language, clarification from the General Assembly would be required as to the status and applicability of existing authoritative interpretations through the provisions of G-13.0103r.
4. If language is approved that contradicts the substance of an existing authoritative interpretation, the current interpretation would have no effect.
5. If language is approved that totally removes a constitutional provision that has been authoritatively interpreted, the authoritative interpretations attached to that provision would be removed as well.

VI. Editorial Corrections to the Revised Form of Government

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has noted some places where the proposed document is inconsistent in style or terminology, or places where minor changes can make the language more clear. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution considers these to be noncontroversial editorial changes and proposes that they be made.

A. *G-2.0403, and G-2.0703, and G-2.0806*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that there are three occasions when reference is made to the Directory for Worship for services of ordination/installation—and the wording in each is different: 2.0403, and 2.0703, and 2.0806.

For consistency and to avoid confusion, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends using the same wording in all three locations: “The order for that service in the Directory for Worship [*citation*] shall be followed.”

B. *G-2.0804*

This section should be deleted and sections G-2.0805 and G-2.0806 should be renumbered. The task force’s language at G-2.0804 appears to reinsert material recently removed from the current Constitution.

C. *G-2.0905*

The word “offer” is too vague. Preferable would be “provide.”

“2.0905 Officiate by Invitation Only

After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not ~~offer~~ *provide* their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.”

D. *G-2.1002*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes in 2.1002, “Training, Examination, and Commissioning”, the final words of the second paragraph “mentioned previously” have no specific previous reference—unless it is to “... as determined by the presbytery”. Even if that is the case, the “areas of instruction” are unclear.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises deleting “mentioned previously” and inserting “determined by presbytery” so that the sentence reads: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction ~~mentioned~~ *determined* previously. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery.”

E. *G-3.0101*

Section G-3.0101, First paragraph, third sentence. The clause “...both within and beyond the congregation...” needs to be set apart by commas. (The clause modifies and explains “with others”.)

F. *G-3.0301*

The use of “present” is unclear about where the equal numbers should occur. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the sentence be amended to show that the equal members should occur at meetings, so that the sentence is stricken: “Teaching elders and ruling elders should be present in numbers as equal as possible.” The text would then read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“3.0301 Composition and Responsibilities

“The presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district and is composed of all the congregations and teaching elders within that district. ~~Teaching elders and ruling elders should be present in numbers as equal as possible.~~ The presbytery shall adopt and communicate to the sessions a plan for determining how many ruling elders each session should elect as commissioners to presbytery, *so as to ensure the numerical parity of teaching elders and ruling elders*. This plan shall require each session to elect at least one commissioner and shall take into consideration the size of congregations as well as a method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. Ruling elders elected as officers of the presbytery shall be enrolled as members during the period of their service. A presbytery may provide by its own rule for the enrollment of ruling elders serving as moderators of committees or commissions.”

G. *3.0109b “Committees and Commissions”*

Section G-3.0109b is not consistent in referring to commissions in the plural. There are changes to singular forms when maintaining the use of plural forms would create confusion.

Usage of singular forms in two places would prevent confusion. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that G-3.0109b be amended for clarity as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. *Administrative Commissions*

“Administrative commissions are designated to consider and conclude matters not involving ecclesiastical judicial process, except that in the discharge of their assigned responsibilities they may discover and report to the designating council matters that may require judicial action by the council.

“Functions that may be entrusted to administrative commissions include, but are not limited to:

“(1) (by sessions) ordaining and installing ruling elders and deacons, receiving and dismissing members, and visiting organizations within the congregation to settle differences therein;

“(2) (by presbyteries) ordaining and installing teaching elders;

“(3) (by presbyteries) examining and receiving into membership teaching elders seeking admission to presbytery, including approval of terms of call and commissions for ordination and installation; and receiving candidates under care;

“(4) (by presbyteries) developing immigrant fellowships, organizing new congregations, merging congregations, or forming union or federated congregations (G-5.05);

“(5) (by presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly) visiting particular councils, congregations, or agencies over which they have immediate jurisdiction reported to be affected with disorder, and inquiring into and settling the difficulties therein, except that no commission of a presbytery shall be empowered to dissolve a pastoral relationship without the specific authorization by the designating body (G-2.0701);

“(6) (by all councils) making pastoral inquiry into persons accused of sexual abuse of another person (D-10.0401c) when jurisdiction in a judicial proceeding against such persons has ended due to death or renunciation of the accused; such inquiries shall not be understood as judicial proceedings but shall seek to reach a determination of truth related to the accusation and to make appropriate recommendations to the designating council.

“~~A~~ Commissions of presbytery, synod, or General Assembly shall be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible and sufficient to accomplish their work. A quorum of any commission shall be established by the designating council but in no case shall be less than a majority of its members (except as limited by D-5.0204).

“~~A~~ Commissions of a session shall be composed of at least two ruling elders, and a teaching elder in an installed or temporary relationship with the congregation governed by that session or a ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service.

“~~The~~ *A* commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings and shall submit that record to the council for incorporation into its records. Actions of a commission shall be regarded as actions of the council that created it. A commission may be assigned additional duties as a committee, which duties shall be reported and handled as the report of a committee.

“The decisions of an administrative commission shall be reported to the clerk of the designating council, who shall report it to the council at its next stated meeting. A council may rescind or amend an action of its administrative commission in the same way actions of the council are modified.

“When an administrative commission has been designated to settle differences within a particular organization or council, it shall, before making its decision final, afford to all persons affected by its decision fair notice and an opportunity to be heard on matters at issue.”

H. *G-3.0304*

Section G-3.0304, second paragraph. “...but it shall not be fewer than three...”. “not” modifies “fewer” and should therefore immediately precede “fewer”: “...but it shall be not fewer than three...”.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that G-3.0304 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“*3.0304 Meetings and Quorum*

“The presbytery shall hold stated meetings at least twice each year, shall meet at the direction of synod, and may call special meetings in accordance with its own rules.

“A presbytery may set its own quorum, but it shall *be* not ~~be~~ fewer than three teaching elders who are members of the presbytery and three ruling elder commissioners from three different congregations.”

VII. Items the Advisory Committee on the Constitution Recommends Be Modified

A. *Foundations of Presbyterian Polity*

No changes are recommended.

B. *Form of Government*1. *Chapter 1*a. *G-1.0201*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that in G-1.0201, the last paragraph begins “They shall be declared an organized congregation...” This phrase is in the passive voice and who declares the petitioners an organized congregation is undefined.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the section make clear that it is the presbytery that declares the petitioners an organized congregation, so the last paragraph should be amended to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“They shall be declared them an organized congregation of the presbytery and. The congregation shall then proceed to the election of ruling elders and, if they so decide, deacons. The presbytery shall prepare, examine, ordain, and install these newly elected persons. Presbytery shall continue to work closely with the congregation in securing pastoral leadership, in plans for the service and witness of the congregation, in coordinating its work with other congregations, in counseling concerning incorporation and bylaws for the congregation conforming to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and in giving other forms of support and encouragement that will strengthen the mission of the congregation in the larger life of the denomination.”~~

b. *G-1.0504*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that in G-1.0504 “Moderator,” provisions are made for when it is impractical for the installed pastor to preside or when there is no installed pastor. It does not provide for when the installed pastor is unable to preside and is unable to invite another teaching elder to preside.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the last sentence be modified to read “If there is no installed pastor or the installed pastor is unable to moderate and/or to name another moderator, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.” This section would then read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“1.0504 Moderator

“The installed pastor shall ordinarily moderate all meetings of the congregation. If it is impractical for the pastor to preside, he or she shall invite another teaching elder who is a member of the presbytery or a person authorized by the presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, *or the installed pastor is unable to moderate and/or to name another moderator*, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.”

c. *G-1.0505*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the secretary of the congregational meeting be an active member of the church. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution therefore advises the second sentence be amended to read, “If the clerk of session is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a secretary for that meeting *from among its active members*.” The section would then read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“1.0505 Secretary and Minutes

The clerk of session shall serve as secretary for all meetings of the congregation. If the clerk of session is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a secretary for that meeting *from among its active members*. The secretary shall record the actions of the congregation in minutes of the meeting.

2. *Chapter 2*a. *G-2.0401*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice to the task force about G-2.0401 included specific language to be inserted. The task force followed the Advisory Committee’s advice. But the Advisory Committee on the Constitution did not adequately consider its advice before giving it.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that at 2.0401, “Election of Rulings Elders and Deacons”, that in providing greater flexibility, such ambiguity is created as to make the paragraph confusing. “Congregations may provide by

their own rule for a congregational nominating committee. When no other provision is made, this committee shall include at least one ruling elder..." The logical conclusion is that a congregation could elect a nominating committee consisting of a single elder and the pastor *ex officio*.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that G-2.0401 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

"2.0401 Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons

"Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation's membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, *provided that the committee shall consist of at least three active members of the congregation, and shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session. The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote.* ~~When no other provision is made, this committee shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on session, and the pastor shall serve ex officio without vote.~~ When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect."

b. *G-2.1001*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution had previously recommended that contracts for ruling elders who are commissioned to limited pastoral service be limited to twelve months to correspond to the temporary pastoral relations in G-2.0405. The task force proposal allows for renewable contracts up to three years long.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the renewable terms of contracts for ruling elders who are commissioned to limited pastoral service parallel the renewable terms for temporary pastoral relations. Section G-2.1001 would then read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

"2.1001 Functions

"When the presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated may be commissioned to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery. Presbytery, in its commission, may authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law. This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed ~~three years~~ *twelve months* but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually."

3. *Chapter 3*

a. *G-3.0109 "Committees and Commissions"*

The report of the Form of Government Revision Task Force would require that committees of higher governing bodies consist of teaching elders ['ministers'] and members of congregations "in approximately equal proportion." Administrative commissions of higher governing bodies would be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders "in numbers nearly as equal as possible...."

The proposed composition of committees is more restrictive than the rule under the current *Book of Order*, where G-9.0501b states: "Committees of governing bodies above the session shall consist of laypersons and ministers of the Word and Sacrament with at least one-half the members being laypersons."

We draw attention to our advice on Item 07-02 from the Presbytery of Western Reserve, which recommends an amendment to G-3.0109 that would restore the rule for committee composition as stated in our current *Book of Order*.

It should here be noted that organizational subunits that are delegated the power to make decisions on behalf of the council (such as COM, CPM, and coordinating councils), should be constituted as commissions of the council, not as committees.

b. *G-3.0201 "Composition and Responsibilities"*

(1) *Issue/Rationale*

The first paragraph (addressing the appointment of a moderator when there is no pastor or the pastor is unable to moderate session) is different from 3.0104.

(2) *Advice*

For consistency, the same wording should be used in both paragraphs. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator. As amended, the first paragraph of G-3.0201 would read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“3.0201 Composition and Responsibilities

“The session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors. All members of the session are entitled to vote. The pastor shall be the moderator of the session, and the session shall not meet without the pastor or designated moderator. *If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.* Presbyteries shall provide by rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience.”

c. *G-3.0203*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the Form of Government state that the only business that may be transacted at a special meeting is the business named in the call of the meeting. As amended, G-3.0203 would read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“3.0203 Meetings

“The session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. The moderator shall call a special meeting when he or she deems necessary or when requested in writing by any two members of the session. *The business to be transacted at special meetings shall be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting.* There shall be reasonable notice given of all special meetings. The session shall also meet when directed by presbytery. Sessions shall provide by rule for a quorum for meetings; such quorum shall include the moderator and either a specific number of ruling elders or a specific percentage of those ruling elders in current service on the session.”

d. *G-3.0204 “Minutes and Records”*

Section G-3.0204a. The language proposed by the task force uses “may” to cover all circumstances in which a member’s name is deleted from the rolls. There are circumstances in which it is or ought to be mandatory to delete a member’s name from the rolls, and there are also circumstances in which deletion should be at the session’s discretion.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that G-3.0204a be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“There shall be rolls of baptized, active, and affiliate members in accordance with G-1.0401, G 1.0402, and G-1.0403. The session ~~may shall~~ delete names from the roll of the congregation ~~when requested to issue a certificate of transfer of membership to another congregation; when a member requests that his or her membership be terminated; when a member joins another congregation or otherwise renounces the jurisdiction of the session; when a member has moved or otherwise ceased to participate in the ministry of Christ’s Church as defined in G 1.0304 for a period of not less than two years and after efforts on the part of the session to encourage the member to return to meaningful participation have failed, and after provision of written notice; or when a member dies.~~ *upon the member’s death, admission to membership in another congregation or presbytery, or renunciation of jurisdiction. The session may delete names from the roll of the congregation when a member so requests, or has moved or otherwise ceased to participate actively in the work and worship of the congregation for a period of two years. The session shall seek to restore members to active participation and shall provide written notice before deleting names due to member inactivity.*”

4. *Chapter 4*

No changes are advised.

5. *Chapter 5*

No changes are advised.

6. *Chapter 6**G-6.02*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the section heading be shortened by striking the phrase: “THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION” so that it would read: “G-6.02 INTERPRETING THE CONSTITUTION.” This section preserves the current balance between the General Assembly in plenary and the General

Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission acting properly on a case before it. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution continues with the same name and the same responsibility to give advice that the General Assembly in plenary may accept or reject.

Endnotes

1. In our opinion, the semantic change from “office” to “ordered ministry” in G-6.0106b/G-2.0104b is deemed to have no effect on the meaning, force, or application of the provision, and constitutes an editorial change allowed under Section IV.B.2.c. of the *Organization for Mission*, p. 9.
2. The provisions of G-8.0701/G-4.0208 (“Exceptions”) have been recast in past tense as the window for exercising this provision has closed. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, this does not constitute an amendment to the provision, but rather constitutes an editorial change allowed under Section IV.B.2.c. of the *Organization for Mission*, p. 9.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 07-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 07-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) counsels several considerations and questions on the very consequential decision concerning adoption of the proposed new Form of Government (nFOG):

1. The new Form of Government does contain significant references to “prophetic witness” as a part of the church in all its councils (3.0201a, 3.0301a, 3.0401c, 3.0501c). As the body within the church specifically assigned to help steward Presbyterian social witness and teaching, the Advisory Committee appreciates the Form of Government Task Force’s understanding this essential aspect of the mission of Christ’s body in the world. “Prophetic witness” is not mentioned within the roles given to deacons, elders or ministers, although the “teaching elders” are to assist congregations in the “... task of reaching out in concern and service to the life of the human community as a whole ...” (Item 07-01, 2.0504, adapted from the longer—though eloquent—section G-6.020b, *Book of Order*).

Section 3.0501c includes:

... warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world...providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in ... prophetic witness... (Item 07-01)

This section also includes a clause that speaks to the authority of the General Assembly more broadly:

... discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit matters of truth and vision that may inspire, challenge, and educate both church and world... (Item 07-01)

2. The purpose of constitutions is to provide a framework of law to guide a given community or organization in its life, identifying rights and responsibilities, matters of entry and exit, and specifying relations between members and among institutions created to serve the community or population. The Reformed tradition has been influential in the development of constitutionalism in Western thought, partly through valuing the role of law as a “guide to the elect” (or “Third Use” of the law). Because of our realism about the personal and social dimensions of sin, regulation is seen as necessary, though always in need of reformation in light of God’s purposes for humanity.

The task force that produced the proposed new Form of Government has suggested that the current *Book of Order* over-regulates and recommends that much of what is not constitutionally essential find its way into manuals of operation. Critics have pointed to the duplication of effort and variation of result that this may entail, despite any model manuals provided. A perspective that distrusts “deregulation” might suggest our remembering the Articles of Confederation that preceded the U.S. Constitution. Those Articles—in some ways a treaty among the thirteen former colonies—came to be seen as an insufficient framework for effective interaction and interdependence. Commissioners will have to determine the net effect of removing many smaller rules and guidelines from the nFOG on the unity and institutional effectiveness of the church. (Effectiveness is not always the same as efficiency).

3. With regard to the need for institutions and agencies to maintain connections, develop goals and policies, and accomplish or implement programs, the nFOG is largely silent. Thus it chooses to trust councils to develop new or reinvent institutional forms, a process that is never value-neutral. As one of the key Historic Principles of Church Order (still wisely retained) says, “... truth is in order to goodness ...” (Item 07-01, F-3.0104). Commissioners will have to determine whether there is enough enumeration of the “goodness,” or forms within which the church’s truth and ethos is to be embodied. (An example might be the current function of the Office of the General Assembly to steward the history of the denomination in the Office of History in Philadelphia. Is it necessary to put in wording such as, “safeguarding historical records and other resources that strengthen the identity and faithfulness of the church,” for this function to be done?)

4. Power clearly shifts in the nFOG to the presbyteries and congregations and away from the General Assembly and synods. The hope is that more flexibility if not creativity can be obtained. This is a re-weighting of responsibilities that is termed “missional,” but could contribute to a de facto congregationalism that is already prevalent in our church (and culture). We appreciate the use of the word, “mission,” that necessarily connects us with the Confession of 1967 and other theological

bases of our church. At the same time, we note that as a minority in U.S. culture, increased connectionalism, if not centralization, may be required to retain our identity and ethos. There are various kinds of central, general, or church-wide forms of relationship available to the church, but we are clear that the General Assembly is both a crucial axis of relationship and a symbol of identity for Presbyterians. There is also creativity in the General Assembly and its agencies. The question is whether the nFOG helps develop a more creative connectionalism. (We are aware of a different set of concerns about congregational autonomy in the paper, *Thinking Twice about the Proposed Form of Government*, and acknowledge nFOG's third charge, that the "presbytery shall continue as the central governmental unit ...).

5. The specific area where committee structures have been in debate is with regard to the need for specific committees on representation at the presbytery, synod, and General Assembly levels. The GA Committee on Representation has modified its recommendation to suggest designating some entity or committee to implement the goal of diversity. Their suggestions seem wise to us, and not unduly cumbersome. The goal of inclusiveness is, in fact, often difficult to achieve but even more so without some designated body or officers tasked with this function. ACSWP's Advice and Counsel memorandum on Item 07-06 addresses this.

6. With regard to the ecumenical dimension of our Form of Government, the more streamlined nFOG may be more inviting, but it may leave many functions of union councils up for negotiation—which may be as it should be. The focus on Reformed bodies and others with whom we are in full communion is appropriate, and the inclusion of participation in ecumenical relationships in elder and minister responsibilities is noted (Item 07-01, G-2.0301 and G-2.0504). The provision of a separate chapter of the nFOG to this important area is valuable.

7. Staff for "councils higher than the session" are mentioned in nFOG G-3.0110, though no principles are provided in its short treatment for the structures of authority and accountability, theology of compensation, and freedom of conscience necessarily involved in the development of the manuals. This is an area where, absent guidance on the values of Presbyterian tradition and ethos, corporate or market values may tend to predominate. At the same time, the current Form of Government does not provide such principles in its enumeration of administrative roles (9.0700), while nFOG's much shorter treatment continues to lift up the two qualities of "prudence and equity."

8. The word, council, and the theology of participation it reflects are welcome. The words, teaching elder, are less so, not simply because most of the U.S. population may not understand the term, but because it tends to narrow the function of the ministry. Overall, it is not a defect of a church's form of government to have explicit theology throughout; the question is whether the use of some terms will always require explanation.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 07-01

Comment on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

Item 07-01, Recommendation 1, proposes to amend the *Book of Order* by deleting Chapters 1–18 of the current Form of Government of the *Book of Order* and inserting two new sections entitled "Foundations of Presbyterian Polity" (three chapters) and "Form of Government" (six chapters).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. That F-1.0403 in the proposed "Foundations of Presbyterian Polity" be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

"F-1.0403 Unity [~~in~~] [with] Diversity

"[~~As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise' (Gal. 3:27–29).~~]

"[In Jesus' ministry among us, relationships were restored, outcasts were welcomed at the table and into leadership, and all were invited to learn, to serve, and to follow. At his last supper, Jesus prayed, 'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (Jn. 17:20–21).]

"The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, [~~or~~] theological conviction[, marital, or worldly condition.] There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership[, and shall continue to address the systemic inequities that keep us from living out the ideal of a time when 'there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28)]. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution."

Rationale for Proposed Amendment 1

Despite the concerns of the religious leaders of the day, Jesus welcomed sinners to eat with him, invited outcasts and the marginalized into the inner circle, welcomed women to sit at his feet and learn, used the hated Samaritans as a positive example, and touched the lives of the untouchable. Jesus invited all who heard his call to “Follow me!”

However, Jesus recognized a need for unity in this diverse body of followers and at his final meal with his disciples prayed “that they may all be one.” (John 17:20). Our Christian unity derives from Christ and from his desire for our unity, and yet this is a goal that is still a work in progress.

One of the concerns of the GACOR is that the current language proposed by the New Form of Government Task Force focuses on individual discrimination and ignores the systemic discrimination that continues to exist. Under the current *Book of Order*, there are specific mechanisms in place designed to recognize and address the existence of systemic discrimination of which we as a whole may be unaware. This issue was so important to the denomination that in the Articles of Agreement that brought the PC(USA) into being in 1983, committees on representation were established to help us identify and rectify injustices of representation within the leadership of the church.

The GACOR would also suggest that the categories of diversity outlined in the New Form of Government be broadened to include “marital condition,” which is included in our current *Book of Order*, and “worldly condition.” The Confession of 1967 states, “A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God” (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.46).

Representation and full participation are the as yet unfulfilled goals. In Scripture, we have visions of that time when Christ will return and “the wolf shall live with the lamb” (Isa. 11:6) and there will be a “new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1) In the Confession of 1967, we are reminded that “the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God” (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.55).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is blessed with a diversity of gifts, of cultures, of heritages, of perspectives. We are united into one body of Christ through our baptism in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. We live in a time of “already, but not yet.”

The proclamation of Paul and the early Christian communities found in Galatians 3:28 was a declaration of an alternative way of life, that is, living a horizontal relationship of life in inclusive community, different from the outside social status quo. Diversity is not simple inclusion of all the differences. It includes that dimension, but first of all, the genuine concern about diversity is to challenge the hierarchical social relations and perceptions which sustains the hegemony of the dominant groups to discriminate, suppress, disregard, and even simply tolerate the differences in communities and groups. ... [O]ne of the most significant aspects of the Pauline communities is that the churches practiced radical embracement of diversity and [suppressed] differences for their unity. (Lee, Jae Won. Re: A Question about Galatians and Representation, email message to author, February 5, 2010)

The labels in Galatians expressed some of the widest boundaries that were visible in the culture of the day. “At the very heart of Paul’s proclamation of the Christian identity (existence in Christ with differences of the church members) lies the issue of inclusive diversity as an effort to transform the unjust, unequal, hierarchical relationships among different members, but the differences of the members ... were respected as the personal identities and were not discriminated, nor indifferenced” (Ibid). While it is easy for those in the dominant culture to believe that we have come close to attaining this radical inclusive diversity, the PC(USA) is called to demonstrate the wholeness of Christian community by ensuring that, as in 1 Corinthians 12, the weak part of the Body is more valued in Christ through considered and intentional unity with diversity.

We have made progress; however, we still have a long way to go before we reach the fulfillment of unity with diversity. There are still too many who have not been welcomed into our congregations or leadership in our presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly. These voices, dreams, hopes, visions could reform our denomination and help us more fully live out Christ’s prayer “that they may be one.”

2. That the second paragraph of G-3.0103 (Participation and Representation) in the proposed “Form of Government” be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body’s implementation of the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation. Councils above the session shall establish [committees on representation in accordance with the Articles of Agreement] [~~by their own rule committees or entities~~] to fulfill the following functions: to advise [and report to] the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403.”

Rationale for Proposed Amendment 2

The Purpose of the Amendment: The new FOG proposed language focuses on functions rather than structures. As a result, a council could choose to dismantle existing committees on representation (CORs) and fulfill its G-3.0103 responsibilities by assigning those responsibilities to other existing committees or entities regardless of what their main functions or composition may be.

If the work of representation is not being accomplished while we have a structural, legal, and moral requirement, why do we assume that removing the requirement for that structure will be the impetus for that work to begin or the encouragement for it to continue? The purpose of the amendment proposed by the GACOR is to ensure that the ministry of the committee on representation (COR), as envisioned by the Articles of Agreement, is retained.

Historical and Moral Considerations: At the time of Reunion, leaders of the former racial ethnic, nongeographic, presbyteries were greatly concerned that they would lose their voices and influence if their churches were realigned into strictly geographic presbyteries. To address this concern, the provisions of Article 8, requiring the creation of CORs at each governing body above the session, were included to reassure leaders that racial ethnic leadership would continue to exist and to entice them to accept and approve the Reunion in 1983, in reliance on the implicit assurance that the provisions of Article 8 would always remain in effect. Now, as we seek to restructure our form of government, the GACOR submits that a promise was made that we must keep and, therefore, that CORs should be retained.

Legal Considerations: The Articles of Agreement embody the terms by which reunion between the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (PCUS) and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) was to be accomplished. In its Preamble, it is noted that the “two parties to the original agreement will no longer be in existence as separate Churches and hence the agreement cannot thereafter be altered” (*Book of Order*, Appendix B, Preamble, Paragraph 2). Article 8 describes the functions and the composition of the committee on representation (which is also described in existing G-9.0105a). There is no provision for amending the Articles of Agreement, and there is nothing in Article 8 to suggest that it, unlike other Articles of the Agreement, is a temporary or transitional provision. Thus, it is submitted that the Form of Government proposal to permit the elimination of CORs, and the assignment of its functions or responsibilities to other existing committees or entities, is to disregard the binding nature of Article 8 of the Articles of Agreement.

Role of CORs: The role of the committee on representation is to raise awareness of the places where we have fallen short of the goal of inclusive diversity. It can and has been a vital asset to the nominating committee of the governing bodies in discerning those who may have been inadvertently overlooked but are well-equipped by God for service to our Lord Jesus Christ through the PC(USA).

We recognize that committees on representation do not yet consistently function as they were envisioned. Yet it is important to maintain within our Form of Government this creative innovation of our heritage. By design, the committee on representation has the role of bringing to our attention those who are qualified yet marginalized in our denomination. By retaining the Committee on Representation, we assert that we continue to believe that inclusiveness in our leadership should be one of those high ideals we seek to attain.

Conclusion: There is great value in a ministry of presence. The General Assembly Committee on Representation strongly encourages the PC(USA) to keep its promises and comply with the Articles of Agreement, by retaining the concept of the committee on representation as a separate structure, a reminder of our desire to truly live out the calling of our faith to cherish our diversity in the midst of unity.

3. That G-3.0111 in the proposed “Form of Government” be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“3.0111 Nominating Process

“All councils higher than the session shall have a process for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the council. The process shall ensure that nominations are made by an entity broadly representative of the constituency of the council, and in conformity with the church’s commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403). [This entity shall work in consultation with the council’s committee or entity for representation to ensure fair and equal representation.]”

Rationale for Proposed Amendment 3

This recommendation to amend the proposed new Form of Government addresses the collaborative nature of the work of nominations and representation. Each aspect of the task of securing leadership for our denomination is important, but approaches the responsibility to call into leadership those God has called from a somewhat different perspective. The need for both of these was recognized when the General Assembly in 1984 issued an authoritative interpretation stating that “The committee [on representation] must stand alone” (Minutes, 1984, Part I, paragraphs 55.108, 55.109). This was reaffirmed in 1997 when the General Assembly and the presbyteries approved adding to our current *Book of Order*, G-9.0105f, which

states “The committee on representation shall not, in any governing body, be merged with any other committee or designated as a subcommittee of any other committee” (*Book of Order*, G-9.0105f).

While the goals of full representation and participation have not yet been fulfilled, it is critical that the church continue seeking out opportunities to include persons in the daily life of the church who demonstrate to the world our Christian unity with diversity, showing our “one[ness] with differences” (the diversity within our unity) (Lee, op. cit.). Retaining a structure and therefore an avenue of accountability for committees or entities for representation will fulfill the church’s covenant made in the Articles of Agreement at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s incorporation in 1983. Preserving a procedure whereby councils are held accountable to include fair and equal representation is a critical element to ensuring the church is a welcoming place for all of God’s children.

The advised amendment would ensure collaboration and communication between councils at presbytery, synod, and General Assembly levels, helping form stronger collaborative relationships and guaranteeing more opportunities for representation for the marginalized in our midst.

4. That the second paragraph of G-3.0401 ([Synod] Composition and Responsibilities) in the proposed “Form of Government” be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“When a synod meets, it shall be composed of commissioners elected by the presbyteries. Each presbytery shall elect at least one ruling elder and one teaching elder to serve as commissioners to synod. A synod shall [establish a committee on representation] ~~[determine a plan for the election of commissioners to the synod, as well as the method]~~ to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103; ~~both plans shall be subject to approval by a majority of the presbyteries in the synod]~~ [and determine a plan for the election of commissioners to the synod with the consent of a majority of its presbyteries]. The commissioners from each presbytery shall be divided equally between ruling elders and teaching elders. Each person elected moderator or other officer shall be enrolled as a member of the synod until a successor is elected and installed.”

Rationale for Proposed Amendment 4

While the foundational document of the proposed Form of Government affirms the importance of the denomination’s leadership reflecting the diversity of its members, synods sometimes face additional challenges to their ability to express that diversity through their elected commissioners. Since presbyteries do not consult with each other prior to electing their commissioners for the synod, having a mechanism available to address unintentional injustices or omissions, once they are discerned, is essential (i.e., establishing at-large commissioner positions to address the lack of representation of any group within its elected commissioners). The GACOR recommends that this task be fulfilled by the entity within the synod responsible for addressing areas where representation is lacking, and in particular, by the committee on representation. As this committee should be most aware of the general demographic makeup of the synod and of the elected commissioners, developing a plan to ensure broader representation serves as an important aspect of their advice and advocacy roles.

5. That G-3.0501c (*nurture the covenant community of disciples*) be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“c. nurture the covenant community of disciples. This responsibility shall include providing those services, resources, and programs performed most effectively at a national level; communicating with the whole church on matters of common concern; warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world; providing such services of education and nurture as its presbyteries may require; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration; [providing a committee on representation to give full expression to the rich diversity found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103 and developing means that will assure greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in the body of Christ;] discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, matters of truth and vision that may inspire, challenge, and educate both church and world; serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline; deciding controversies brought before it and advising and instructing in cases submitted to it, in conformity with this Constitution; authoritatively interpreting the most recent edition of the Book of Order in a manner binding on the whole church, in accordance with the provisions of G-6.02 or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case, with the most recent interpretation of the Book of Order being binding; and establishing and maintaining an office of the Stated Clerk.”

Rationale for Proposed Amendment 5

One of the roles of the General Assembly is to nurture the Body of Christ and assist the church to more fully express our “one(ness) with differences” (Ibid) throughout the denomination. A commitment to unity with diversity is established in F-

1.0403, yet that commitment is not explicitly reaffirmed in G-3.0501c, which lists the responsibility of the General Assembly for the various aspects of nurturing the covenant community of disciples. One of the Great Ends of the Church is to exhibit the Kingdom of heaven to the world (Book of Order, G-1.0200) It is imperative that the PC(USA) express its commitment to unity with diversity as an important function of its highest level of government and an essential task of nurturing covenant community.

Item 07-02

[The assembly answered Item 07-02 by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1. See pp. 18, 25.]

On Amending FOG-3.0109 of the Report of the Form of Government Task Force to Allow Flexibility in the Composition of Committees—From the Presbytery of the Western Reserve.

The Presbytery of the Western Reserve respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to amend the second paragraph of FOG-3.0109 of the Report of the Form of Government Task Force as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italics.]

“3.0109 Committees and Commissions...

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

Rationale

One of the elements of the charge to the Form of Government Task Force was to provide flexibility to governing bodies: “The new Form of Government shall provide flexibility at all levels, granting authority while permitting governing bodies to develop the structures to carry out their respective missions” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 366; assembly action, pp. 38–39). However, the proposed new Form of Government, in requiring approximately equal numbers of teaching elders and members of congregation for all committees, would allow *less* flexibility.

The current *Book of Order* requires that all committees have both ministers and members and ensures that members of congregations will not be outnumbered by ministers, but allows governing bodies to form committees with more members than ministers (G-9.0501b); this amendment to the new Form of Government would maintain that flexibility by restoring the current, less-restrictive requirement.

If a presbytery chooses to maintain entities comparable to the committee on ministry and the committee on preparation for ministry, the current requirement of equal proportions of ministers and members in those committees would be preserved in the provision of 3.0307.

Since the pool of teaching elders is much smaller than that of members, those responsible for nominating persons to serve on committees may be challenged to find enough teaching elders to fulfill a requirement of “equal proportion.”

In 1988, a request to require that committees be composed of elders and ministers of Word and Sacrament in numbers as equal as possible was rejected.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-02

Advice on Item 07-02—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 07-02.

Rationale

The overture seeks to amend section G-3.0109 of the Report of the Form of Government Task Force to permit committees of governing bodies to be composed of an unspecified majority of “members of congregations” (i.e., elders and non-elders). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice on the report is found at Item 07-01. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution found no constitutional deficiency with the provision of the report that this overture seeks to amend.

History

One of the Principles of Presbyterian Government states, “Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is a shared power, to be exercised jointly by presbyters gathered in governing bodies” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0301h; proposed F-3.0208). Historically, this has

been expressed through maintaining a balance of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and elders in higher governing bodies, and by limiting participation on committees and commissions of governing bodies to ministers of the Word and Sacrament and elders, in equal number.

With reunion in 1983, the restriction of service on committees to presbyters, found in both predecessor constitutions, was removed as a general requirement, though it was retained for the Committee on Ministry (G-11.0501b). At that time the provision requiring equal numbers of ministers and elders on committees was amended. Committees were required to have a membership with "... at least one-half being laypersons" (*Book of Order*, G-9.0501b). Nominating committees were required to have two-thirds of their membership comprised of members of congregations, equally divided between laymen and laywomen (*Book of Order*, G-9.0801a). "Administrative and judicial commissions of presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly shall be composed of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible" (*Book of Order*, G-9.0504b).

The changes instituted at reunion were subsequently challenged by several overtures. In 1988, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution agreed with the Overture 46-88 from the Presbytery of Pittsburgh and wrote that "... the governance of the church should be by ministers of the Word and elders who are accountable through their vows taken at ordination," and that, "... as part of the historic polity of the Reformed tradition ... councils to which decision making is assigned should be composed of one-half ministers of the Word and one-half voting elders" (*Minutes*, 1988, Part I, p. 134). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution also stated, "... that this policy would be carried too far if extended to every committee. Non-ordained church members should be able to serve on other committees as governing bodies should have flexibility in choosing the committee organization it wishes to follow. It further believes that non-ordained church members may serve on councils with voice but not vote" (*Minutes*, 1988, Part 1, p. 134). The overture was not approved.

The Form of Government Revision Task Force Report

The report of the Form of Government Revision Task Force would require that committees of higher governing bodies consist of teaching elders ['ministers'] and members of congregations "in approximately equal proportion." Administrative commissions of higher governing bodies would be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders "in numbers as nearly equal as possible ..." (G-3.0109). It should here be noted that what is presently known as the Committee on Ministry, if delegated the power to make decisions on behalf of the presbytery, should be constituted as a commission of the presbytery, not a committee. Similarly, governing body coordinating entities (currently referred to as "councils") with decision-making functions should also be treated as "commissions" in regards to their composition.

Findings

The present overture would restore to the proposed revision of the Form of Government the current practice of permitting committees to be composed of an unspecified majority of members of congregations (elders and non-elders). It suggests no change to the composition of commissions. It is consistent with the stated intention of the proposed revised Form of Government to grant greater flexibility to governing bodies to structure themselves for mission. The language proposed is clear and consistent, and sufficient to accomplish its intent.

Moreover, it addresses an oversight in the proposed revision of the Form of Government, namely, that presbyteries could be hindered in the formation of investigating committees to investigate and prosecute complaints of alleged offenses.

That having been said, since governing bodies have sometimes erred in assigning decision-making functions to committees rather than commissions, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution is concerned that the parity of teaching and ruling elders in the governance of the church could be eroded through the careless application of this overture. Should the new Form of Government be adopted, it would be incumbent on the Office of the General Assembly to educate governing bodies so as to limit such errors.

Item 07-03

[The assembly answered Item 07-03 by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1. See pp. 18, 25.]

On Adding a New G-3.0303, "Relations with Other Presbyteries and Ecumenical Partners" to the Proposed Form of Government—From the Presbytery of Huntingdon.

The Presbytery of Huntingdon respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to add to the proposed Form of Government a new G-3.0303 *Relations with Other Presbyteries and Ecumenical Partners* (and renumber current 3.0303–3.0307 as 3.0304–3.0308) to read as follows:

“G-3.0303 Relations with Other Presbyteries and Ecumenical Partners

“The presbytery has a responsibility to work in partnership with its fellow presbyteries and ecumenical neighbors.

“a. The presbytery may grant a teaching elder permission to engage in work that is outside its geographic bounds or that is not under its jurisdiction, but no presbytery shall permit a teaching elder to engage in work that is within the geographic bounds of another presbytery or properly within the responsibility of another denomination without consent of that presbytery or denomination. The presbytery may not grant a teaching elder or a minister of another denomination, who is not seeking to become a member of presbytery, permission to labor within its bounds, without ascertaining the permission of the presbytery of membership or denominational body of oversight for the teaching elder or minister to work within the bounds of the presbytery.

“b. When a particular church of another denomination requests that it be received by a presbytery of this denomination, the presbytery shall verify that the church has been regularly dismissed by the council of jurisdiction, and the advice of the highest council of that denomination dealing with relations between denominations has been received, and shall then receive the church in accord with its responsibilities and powers. Similar procedures shall be followed in dismissing a particular church from this denomination to another.

“c. The presbytery may initiate mission projects in cooperation with other presbyteries and ecumenical neighbors to support the mission of its congregations and its responsibilities in G-3.03.”

Rationale

Presbyterian polity is based on connectionalism and mutual forbearance.

For more than two hundred years, our polity has called upon governing bodies (or councils) to be respectful of our council partners and our ecumenical partners.

In support of such mutual respect, our polity has required that teaching elders receive the approval of both their council of membership and that of the council within whose bounds they wish to labor, upon those occasions when the teaching elders wish to labor outside the bounds of the authority of their council of membership and vice versa.

It is imperative theologically that any council have the authority to ensure that the Word is rightly preached and the Sacraments be rightly administered within its jurisdiction and legally that those preaching in its churches have the authorization both of their council of membership and of the council of work.

Once there is more than one authority involved, there needs to be a clearly defined way of operating, knowable in advance to all parties, in order that we may be respectful of ecumenical and council partners.

The proposed Form of Government (FOG) deals with teaching elders of this denomination and ministers of other denominations who do wish to become members of presbytery, but does not deal with teaching elders and ministers who do not want to become members of the entity within whose bounds they are laboring.

This proposal does not mention any need for a presbytery to ascertain whether such non-members of presbytery have the permission of their own ecclesiastical authority to serve in its congregations.

The new FOG outlines appropriate strategies for presbyteries in their relations with less inclusive and more inclusive councils, but lacks description of appropriate strategies for presbyteries, as councils of original jurisdiction, with one another and with other denominations.

The new FOG outlines appropriate strategies for the reception of a congregation from another denomination or transfer of a PC(USA) congregation to another denomination, when they are involved in “joint congregational witness,” but fails to deal with either congregations that are not playing by the rules or congregations that are following polity, but have not been involved in “joint congregational witness.”

We should set standards of dealing with our neighbors that respect and maintain accountability with our sisters and brothers in Christ in other denominations.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-03

Advice on Item 07-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to approve Item 07-03 with proposed amendment.

Rationale

The intent of Item 07-03 is to amend the proposed Form of Government to articulate the relations of a presbytery with another presbytery or an ecumenical partner. The overture seeks to provide an orderly process for presbyteries and partner denominations to exercise jurisdiction over ministers laboring in contexts outside the bounds of the presbytery or denomination of membership. In addition, it seeks to provide an orderly process for receiving congregations from other denominations, and includes language permitting joint mission endeavors with other presbyteries or denominations.

The orderly exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction is essential to the peace, unity, and purity of the Church. Jurisdiction over ministers of the Word and Sacrament (“teaching elders”) engaged in ministry within the bounds of a presbytery or in a congregation of another denomination properly belongs to that presbytery or denomination (G-11.0401a). The provision for laboring inside/outside presbytery bounds was not included in the proposed Form of Government revision. The language of proposed G-3.0303a borrows from a portion of the current G-11.0401a and adds new language regarding ministers of other denominations that addresses matters in the current G-11.0405a-c.

While the issues addressed are omitted from the proposed revised Form of Government, the language employs makes significant shifts in meaning from the current provisions. The second clause of G-11.0401a currently reads, “. . . but no presbytery shall permit a minister to engage in work which is within the geographic bounds of another presbytery *and which is properly within the responsibility of another presbytery without consent of that presbytery*” (*Book of Order*, G-11.0401a, emphasis added). The present overture not only omits the clause limiting the conditions under which consent of the other presbytery is required, in so doing, it has the effect of altering the understanding of presbytery jurisdiction over ministers. (See Item 05-23, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution answer to a request from the manager for Polity Guidance and Training.)

By inserting language pertaining to ministers of another denomination at the proposed G-3.0303a, the overture outlines procedures for circumstances not addressed in proposed G-2.0506 which assumes the transfer or dual enrollment of the laboring minister. However, a literal reading of the provision would require that permission to labor be obtained even when the minister of another denomination is serving a church of that (or another) denomination. Should the General Assembly wish to approve the language of this section, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that it be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a; strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic.]

“. . . The presbytery may not grant a teaching elder or a minister of another denomination, who is not seeking to become a member of presbytery, permission to labor in a congregation *under its jurisdiction* ~~within its bounds~~, without ascertaining the permission of the presbytery of membership or denominational body of oversight for the teaching elder or minister to work within the bounds of the presbytery.”

The intent of proposed G-3.0303b is also appropriate. However, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the word “shall” at the end of the first sentence be amended to “may.” A presbytery has the right to decline requests that a church be received from another denomination. The language of Item 07-03b would then read: [Text to be deleted is shown with a; strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic.]

“b. When a particular church of another denomination requests that it be received by a presbytery of this denomination, the presbytery shall verify that the church has been regularly dismissed by the council of jurisdiction, and the advice of the highest council of that denomination dealing with relations between denominations has been received, and ~~shall~~*may* then receive the church in accord with its responsibilities and powers. Similar procedures shall be followed in dismissing a particular church from this denomination to another.”

The intent of proposed G-3.0303c is appropriate and consistent with proposed Form of Government revision. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the language to be unnecessary to empower such mutual mission endeavors; however, in the context of the proposed amendment it provides helpful clarification.

Item 07-04

[The assembly answered Item 07-04 by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1. See pp. 18, 25.]

On Commending the Work of the FOG Task Force to the Church for Additional Study and Discernment—From the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. Receive the report and recommendations of the FOG Task Force with thanks, and commend the latest work of the task force to the church for an additional period of study and discernment.
2. Affirm the goals of a more missional, less regulatory form of governance and conclude that the church has not broadly studied, nor adequately digested, the effects and implications of sweeping changes as proposed by the FOG Task Force. The goals of a further discernment process should include

- a. building greater understanding of FOG (or revisions as needed) among presbyteries and congregations that must live with—and make successful—any future form of governance;
- b. further examination of the implications and intended (or unintended) consequences of such sweeping reform;
- c. building confidence, trust, and “ownership” broadly within the PC(USA) for governance reforms to be undertaken.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-04

Advice on Item 07-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to answer Item 07-04 with its response to Item 07-01, Form of Government Task Force Report.

Rationale

This overture asks the General Assembly to commend the report of the Task Force on the Form of Government to the church for an additional period of study and discernment. The overture suggests goals, but not means, for the study and discernment process.

The 218th General Assembly (2008), received a number of overtures requesting that the report and recommendations of the Form of Government Task Force be referred for additional study. The passage of two years during which some presbyteries and sessions have studied the documents, and during which the augmented Form of Government Task Force has consulted broadly across the church and further refined its report and recommendations, does not diminish the authority of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to refer the current proposal for further study.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution reminds the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the advice we gave to the 218th General Assembly (2008):

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the assembly that it should consider the purpose of such a study. If the purpose of the referral is to provide opportunity for longer and more careful study of the proposed polity, then the ACC advises the assembly that some means and process will be necessary to accomplish the study, so that the church may be better prepared to vote on the revisions than it is at present. If the purpose of the referral is to delay action because of opposition to the proposed revision, the ACC reminds the assembly that the most effective way to oppose a proposed action is to speak and vote against it, rather than to postpone action with no plan for bringing more light to the discussion. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 453)

Item 07-05

On Developing the Form of Government as an Enabling Constitution Instead of a Manual of Operations—From the Presbytery of Foothills.

[The assembly disapproved Item 07-05. See pp. 18, 25.]

The Presbytery of Foothills overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. Develop the Form of Government further as an enabling constitution instead of a manual of operations, and thereby help heal the present breakdown of governance.
2. Approve the proposed revision of the General Assembly Form of Government Revision Task Force (9/1/2009) as a step in that direction.
3. Establish a General Assembly-presbyteries partnership to develop the enabling constitution.

Rationale

A. The current breakdown in governance for the PC(USA) is directly linked to the Form of Government (FOG) as a manual of operations.

1. The view is widespread among Presbyterians and the general public: If religion is a matter of the heart, why do we need any organization, rules, or doctrine?

2. A manual of operations establishes rules, doctrine, and organization for everyone and every situation, at every level of the church’s operation. The rules are subject to frequent, easy change, but all members are expected to agree and keep the rules uniformly. Uniform enforcement for a manual of operations comes either by hierarchy from the top down or by peer pressure from the bottom up. Such demands for uniformity have repeatedly caused schisms over the history of American

Presbyterians (1706–present). The same dynamics are at work in the PC(USA) today. As before, demands for uniformity disturb the peace, unity, and purity of the entire church—right, left, and center—and undermine its life and mission.

3. The simple majority now required to amend the *Book of Order* intensifies the dynamics of uniformity, especially at the General Assembly level. For the steady hand of governance over time, the church needs a broad consensus for making changes, hence a supermajority vote to adopt amendments and authoritative interpretations.

4. A manual of operations concentrates on the mechanics of church government, with theology operating separately at another level. Such “layering” disconnects the church’s confessions from its practice of governance.¹

B. An enabling constitution is better suited to Presbyterian church government and the governance of a large, multifaceted church.

1. The focus of an enabling constitution is on the principles of Presbyterian church government stated simply and clearly, *with their biblical-theological warrants and roots*.

2. An enabling constitution finds the unity of the church in Jesus Christ, the true governor of the Church. Such unity is connectional, with clear lines of authorization for each congregation and governing body of the church. The lower councils are subject to review and control by the higher councils, but they have such mutual relations that the act of one council at any level is an act of the whole church.² This kind of unity, in Christ, requires shared worship, vigorous conversation, strong collegiality, and mutual cooperation, in sharp contrast to the uniformity demanded by a top-down hierarchy or bottom-up peer pressure.³

3. The challenge of an enabling constitution, coordinated with the church’s stated theology, is to set definite standards for congregations, members, officers, and church courts; and enable the faithfulness, focus, vigor, creativity, flexibility, resources, and diversity essential to Christian mission for a variety of localities, times, people, and situations.

C. The proposed FOG Revision, while still in a manual of operations mode, is nonetheless an important, incremental step forward, and should be the starting point for developing the FOG as an enabling constitution. The accomplishments include:

1. A considered focus on mission at a foundational level;
2. Recognition that Presbyterian church government is structured around the marks of the true Church, definitively those of the Reformation;
3. A reduction in the size and complexity of the Form of Government;
4. An important shift in language toward orders of ministry, away from a personality-centered approach to church offices, especially for the clergy; and
5. A growing accent on Christ as the point of church unity amidst diversity.

D. As a way to proceed, *a General Assembly-presbyteries partnership with a transparent, on-going dialog over church governance, offers important benefits*. Such a partnership entails a General Assembly group interacting with corresponding groups in the presbyteries. The linkage between the current breakdown of governance and the Form of Government makes a major revision of the FOG crucial for the whole PC(USA). A General Assembly-presbyteries partnership would not only engage the whole church in shaping our future under God but also help to heal the present crisis of governance. Rationale E contains a list of issues that deserve active consideration going forward. Rationale F contains a list of suggestions for putting together the General Assembly side of the partnership.

E. The following issues deserve active consideration, going forward:

1. Whether the vision of the church participating in the ongoing, active life of the risen Jesus Christ (I/we as active members *in Christ’s own body*) holds greater promise for mission, creativity, and faithfulness than the instrumentalist vision (Christ embodied *in* and working *through me/us*) now in place;
2. Whether amendments to and authoritative interpretations of the *Book of Order* should require supermajority votes;
3. Whether the judicial mechanisms of the church need greater coherence and transparency (notably the ladder of PJs, bound by final decisions of the GAPJC, coordinated with the new, separate, powerful role of the ACC);
4. Whether the formative role of the confessions in the life and governance of the PC(USA) can be clarified and strengthened;
5. Whether the orders of ministry, the mission of the congregation, and the councils of the church need more concrete, transparent foundations;

6. Whether provisions for the standards, preparation, examination, and handling of the teaching elder are adequate and properly assigned;

7. Whether the finances of the church are matters of negotiation and voluntary commitment at every level of the church; and

8. Whether the overlapping repetitions of language in the Form of Government can be reduced and the tone of the document moderated.

F. Whenever the General Assembly appoints a partnering group to correspond with similar groups in the presbyteries, we suggest that:

1. The number of General Assembly partners be up to but not more than sixteen.

2. The members include at least:

- two people with legal training;
- active pastors from different backgrounds, ages, and experiences;
- an active general presbyter;
- lay persons for half the members, with due consideration given to gender, ethnic, and geographical representation; and
- a trained theologian who is actively engaged with both the confessions and the Form of Government.

3. The General Assembly partners report their progress transparently at least quarterly over the Internet and to each subsequent meeting of the General Assembly until its work is over and the partnership is dissolved.

4. The General Assembly partners leave untouched the property provisions of the current *Book of Order* and the controversial part of G-6.0106b, unless or until these matters are changed by the larger church.

5. A supermajority vote be required to adopt the enabling constitution (Form of Government) by the General Assembly and the presbyteries.

6. Any change in the voting requirement for amendments and authoritative interpretations be delayed for at least two years after any new enabling constitution is adopted.

Endnotes

1. The disconnection arises from separating the Gospel and the work of the Church into different “layers,” in which God and the Gospel operate at one “layer,” while the merely functional, human practices of worship, service, and governance operate at another “layer.” Connecting the “layers” appears to hinge on a human response and effort that is optional. The disconnection thus remains and with it a crushing sense of the irrelevance of the Gospel to life, and of theology to polity—an irrelevance which all Christians in our time struggle daily to overcome. “Layered” language running through both the Revision and the current FOG includes: call-and-response, Church-and-World, God-and-Church-as-instrument, theory-and-practice. The corrective is to remove the “layered” language from the Form of Government and clarify the origin and role of the confessions in the life of the church.

2. See PC(USA) 2007–09 *Book of Order*, G-4.0302, derived from the 1879 PCUS *Book of Church Order*; see 1981–82 BCO § 14-5.

3. See PC(USA) 2007–09 *Book of Order*, G-1.0400 (top down) and G-4.0400–.0403, 9.0400–.0404d, 9.0104a–9.0106b (bottom up). See also 1981–82 *UPCUSA Book of Order*, Chapter V, especially 35.01 (top down) in concert with 35.07–.104 (bottom up).

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-05

Advice on Item 07-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 07-05 as follows:

Rationale

The present overture seeks to develop the Form of Government “... as an enabling constitution instead of a manual of operations” (Item 07-05); approve the proposed revision coming to this assembly “... as a step in that direction”(Ibid.); and establish a partnership between the General Assembly and presbyteries to further reform the Constitution.

As to the first action proposed in the overture, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) notes that it has previously offered advice consistent with the intent of this action. The committee advises that this part of the overture be answered by the advice on the Report of the Form of Government Task Force (Item 07-01).

As to the second action proposed in the overture, the ACC recommends that this part of the overture be answered by the advice on the Form of Government Task Force, found with Item 07-01.

As to the third action proposed in the overture, the ACC recommends this action be disapproved.

The committee finds the recommended process, “a General Assembly-presbyteries partnership,” to be inconsistent with the Constitution. The process for amending the *Book of Order* is found in G-18.0300. Should the General Assembly wish to develop recommendations to amend the *Book of Order*, the appropriate process would be through a committee (or “task force”), per G-9.0501a:

A committee is appointed either to study and recommend appropriate action or to carry out directions or decisions already made by a governing body. It shall make a full report to the governing body that created it, and its recommendations shall require action by the governing body. (*Book of Order*, G-9.0501a)

The General Assembly may constitute such a task force, consistent with requirements found in G-9.0501b, in the manner that best suits its needs. Moreover, in seeking and obtaining input for its work, the committee or task force should honor the principles of administration found in G-9.0404, which would require consultation with synods.

Item 07-06

[The assembly answered Item 07-06 by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1. See pp. 18, 25.]

On Amending G-3.0103 and G-3.0111 of the Proposed Form of Government—From the Presbytery of San Fernando.

The Presbytery of San Fernando overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. Amend the proposed language of the second paragraph of G-3.0103 in the proposed Form of Government as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body’s implementation of the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation. Councils above the session shall establish *an independent committee on representation in accordance with the Articles of Agreement* ~~by their own rule committees or entities~~ to fulfill the following functions: to advise *and report to* the council regarding the *fair and effective* implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403.”

2. Amend the proposed language of G-3.0111 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“All councils higher than the session shall have a process for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the council. The process shall ensure that nominations are made by an entity broadly representative of the constituency of the council, *in consultation with the council’s committee on representation*, and in conformity with the church’s commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403).”

Rationale

Having studied the proposed Form of Government that will come before the 219th General Assembly (2010), we are concerned about the potential lack of representative accountability and the message we may be sending to our churches and the community at large about our commitment to diversity and full and fair representation, which has been addressed heretofore by the Committee on Representation.

We do not think the proposed Form of Government adequately takes into consideration the following:

- the potential challenge to the Articles of Agreement;
- the nature of cultural integration and understanding;
- the nature of the Committee on Representation as compared with other committees and entities.

1. The Committee on Representation is mandated by the 1983 Articles of Agreement. Some of the other Articles are time specific. However, the committee on representation is not, implying that it was intended to be a permanent committee. If

the *Book of Order* is amended, and the COR is not defined and constituted in a way consistent with the Articles, the Articles may be challenged. We are concerned that a challenge to the Articles would make them subject to interpretation. Furthermore, we strongly believe that the original concern for parity in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that is expressed in the Articles of Agreement, is of no less importance now. We do not think the proposed FOG adequately takes this into consideration.

2. G-3.0103 states that “the councils of the church shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment.” We are concerned that the proposed FOG without specific mechanisms for implementation and oversight is not enough to enforce the imperative “shall.” People naturally seek sameness. For cultures to be integrated, we must be challenged. “Full participation and access” are terms open to interpretation. While we understand that the intention of the proposed FOG is to give us more flexibility. We fear that in this case, it may be too much flexibility. The task of learning to love, which is at the essence of cultural integration, is not accomplished by good intentions. It is learned in the midst of change and challenge. Change is not something we find comfortable. It must be intentional. We must have some sort of accountability; or we may naturally, and perhaps unintentionally, define our “membership” as “us.”

3. While there are many committees, like the Committee on Ministry or Committee on Preparation for Ministry, that are not spelled out in the proposed FOG, we see those entities as ones that address the concerns of “us.” There is a necessary degree of self-interest involved as we strive to order our ministry and mission. Committees on representation however, seek to challenge the definition of “us.” This sets them apart from other entities. If “participation” is left to our ruling councils to define and form, our concern is that we will not actively seek parity. There must be something, a separate entity, to create and maintain a healthy tension, without which we will not change.

In particular:

- We think that by including “in accordance with the Articles of Agreement,” we are referred to our foundational values, and a model after which we may create our own accountability for parity.
- The reporting of this separate committee to its council we think is crucial for accountability.
- We also think maintaining the “fair and effective” qualification lends some needed evaluative weight.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-06

Advice on Item 07-06—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 07-06 presents the following issues that the assembly should consider.

Rationale

In considering the present need for naming a specific structure for helping the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership, and for specifying its composition, the General Assembly should seek to discern the current realities and opportunities, and the best ways of expressing our unity in diversity. The assembly should give attention to our church’s experience of functioning with the constitutionally-specified committees on representation, to the accomplishments made through that structure to date, and to the need for further efforts to give full expression to the rich diversity within the church’s membership.

At the time of Reunion, the reuniting churches intended that:

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life ...” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0403).

In furtherance of this intention, the Plan for Reunion included G-9.0105, the constitutional mandate for the committee on representation. Neither of the reuniting churches had a similar constitutionally-mandated structure. The committee on representation was not compromise, merger, or blend of structures in the reuniting churches but was a new venture for the new church.

In 1992 the General Assembly approved an amendment that added G-9.0105a-(6), naming “persons with disabilities” as an additional category for membership on the committee on representation. This amendment was a development in the church’s efforts to give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership.

The overture states that the Proposed Form of Government might raise a challenge to the Articles of Agreement if it does not require councils above the session to establish a committee on representation as described in the Articles of Agreement. This concern appears to arise from a misunderstanding of the role and purpose of the Articles of Agreement, which were not intended to be or become the foundational documents of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The final paragraph of the Preamble to the Articles of Agreement states:

Immediately upon the formation of the reunited Church, its new Constitution (G-1.0500) will be operative. It, rather than the Articles of Agreement, is the basic document of the single church and is subject to amendment in accordance with its provisions. (*Book of Order*, Appendix B, Articles of Agreement)

The reunited church fulfilled its responsibilities under Article 8.1 of the Articles of Agreement when it began functioning under its new Constitution, which established a committee on representation for each governing body beyond the session.

The overture incorrectly infers from the silence in the Articles of Agreement about an end date for the committee on representation that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was intended to maintain the committees on representation forever.

Section G-18.0302 lists the constitutional provisions that are not to be amended, and that list did not (and does not) include G-9.0105, the section that established committees on representation.

In 1993, an overture (93-31) proposed the removal of G-9.0105 and G-9.0106 from the *Book of Order*, eliminating the constitutional mandate for the committees on representation. At that time the Advisory Committee on the Constitution said:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution is aware of how difficult it is for many governing bodies to accept the principles and implementation of the section of the *Book of Order* that mandates a committee on representation at each level above the session.

The advisory committee is also aware that one of the reasons that principles as well as methods of implementation are in the *Book of Order* is to keep these issues before the church in order to assure compliance. Removing G-9.0105 will remove one more indication of good faith, showing those who have been discriminated against that they are of little importance. So much so that they need not be mentioned in the one place where the church's policies and commitments can readily be seen by all.

The Presbytery of Scioto Valley fears quotas as it perceives this establishment of committee on representation membership to be. The presbytery seems to be unaware that before this, the quota system was used to limit the participation of persons listed in G-9.0105. The selection of the members of the committee based on what is to be monitored seems to be reasonable to the advisory committee. (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 314)

The distinction between our 1993 advice and our current advice has to do with the difference in what was being proposed. The 1993 advice concerned a proposal that singled out the committees on representation for elimination as a constitutional structure. Our current advice on the proposed Form of Government concerns a revision to the Form of Government that removes specific references to most of the currently mandated structures, one that assigns specific responsibilities to the councils, and that allows the councils to determine the best way to fulfill those responsibilities.

The overture proposes inserting into G-3.0103 the words "independent committee on representation in accordance with the Articles of Agreement" This insertion raises a number of issues.

First, "independent" suggests that the committee might not be subject to review and accountability. Perhaps the overture means to state that the committee on representation is not to be merged with or made a subcommittee of any other committee.

Second, "in accordance with the Articles of Agreement" would require the committee's composition to be as the Constitution provided from 1983 to 1992, but would undo the mandated inclusion of "persons with disabilities" that has been in force since 1992. The General Assembly should be aware that mandating committees on representation in accordance with the Articles of Agreement would disenfranchise persons with disabilities. If the assembly believes that the attributes of the committee need to be specified in the Constitution, it would be appropriate to state the specific attributes that it believes will best promote the purposes of the committees on representation. To refer to the Articles of Agreement here, without a clear statement of which guidelines from the Articles of Agreement are intended for constitutional mandate, would tie the church to a standard that the church found inadequate seventeen years ago.

The overture's proposal that the committee's duty to "advise" needs to be replaced with "advise and report" is one that would add redundant language to the provision.

The overture's proposal to insert the words "fair and effective" also adds unnecessary words to the provision, as though any council of the church would otherwise hope for any of its committees to recommend unfair or ineffective implementation of principles the council wishes to lift up.

The proposed amendment to G-3.0111 is in appropriate language that is consistent with the intent of the overture. However, if G-3.0103 is not amended to name the committees on representation, it would not be appropriate to amend G-3.0111 as suggested.

If the 219th General Assembly (2010) believes that the intent of Item 07-06 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language for G-3.0103 in the recommendation of the Form of Government Task

Force can be made consistent with that intent by amending it as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body’s implementation of the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation. Councils above the session shall establish ~~by their own rule committees or entities~~ *committees on representation* to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. *The membership of the committees on representation shall consist of equal numbers of men and women. A majority of the members shall be selected from among the racial ethnic minorities within the council, and the total membership shall include persons from each of the following categories: majority male membership; majority female membership, racial ethnic male membership; racial ethnic female membership; youth male and female membership; and persons with disabilities. The committee on representation shall not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.*”

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 07-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 07-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) concurs with the advice of the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) and advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 07-06 be approved.

Rationale

The report of the Form of Government Task Force proposes that “The councils of the church shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership and shall provide full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices (F-1.0403). In fulfilling this commitment, councils shall give due consideration to both the gifts and requirements for ministry (G-2.0104) and the right of people in congregations and councils to elect their officers (F-3.0106)” (Item 07-01, G-3.0103); and “Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body’s implementation of the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation...” (Item 07-01, G-3.0103), but it does not provide a specific manner to fulfill this requirement.

The proposed overture, Item 07-06, with the proposed amendments of the Committee on Representation (GACOR), proposes the creation of a committee on representation in each council above the session to advise and report to the council regarding its implementation of the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 07-06

Comment on Item 07-06—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) agrees with the intent of Item 07-06, and advises the 219th General Assembly to approve the recommended amendments to the proposed Form of Government (Item 07-01).

The General Assembly is asked to read the comment of the GACOR offered on Item 07-01.

Item 07-07

[The assembly answered Item 07-07 by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1. See pp. 18, 25.]

On Receiving the Report of the Form of Government Task Force and Posting a Draft on the Website Inviting Presbyteries to Propose Specific Amendment to the Present Form of Government—From the Presbytery of Central Washington.

The Presbytery of Central Washington overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Receive the report and recommendations of the Form of Government (FOG) Task Force;
2. Dismiss the task force with thanks;
3. Direct the Stated Clerk to have OGA staff post the draft of the task force-recommended substitutes for the present Form of Government on the PC(USA) website for informational purposes; and
4. Direct the Stated Clerk to send correspondence to the presbyteries inviting them to consider proposing specific amendments to the present Form of Government to improve and enhance the ways in which we govern ourselves missionally.

Rationale

We believe that the proposed changes to the Constitution of the PC(USA) are so vast and foundational, that they are not simply changes to our current communion, but would go so far as to functionally constitute the creation of a new denomination. As such, we believe that many who have taken ordination vows to a vastly different constitution would no longer believe that their vows were still in force. We believe the potential chaos of both intentional changes and unintended, unforeseen consequences will not serve to advance the mission of the church and will only escalate the level of strife and distrust that already exists.

Concurrence to Item 07-07 from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.

Concurrence to Item 07-07 from the Presbytery of Indian Nations (with Additional Rationale)

An action of the 217th General Assembly (2006) created the Form of Government (FOG) Task Force, which was charged with producing a simplified and shortened version of the Form of Government (“G” section) of the *Book of Order*. They completed their task, and presented their report to the 218th General Assembly (2008). However, that report had very little support. A number of presbyteries submitted overtures related to the report to the General Assembly in 2008, none urging its passage. With the exclusion of the members of the task force, testimony before the General Assembly committee considering the report was virtually unanimous in its concern about the rewrite. At one point in the committee consideration, a member of the committee actually asked whether there was someone other than a Task Force member to speak in favor of the adoption of the Form of Government report. (There was no response.) After their work the General Assembly, the committee probably should have made a recommendation to General Assembly similar to the one being proposed above. However, the committee, as is frequently the case, found it very difficult to say “no” to the task force of sincere, hard-working folks who had invested so much time and effort in this report. So, the action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) was ultimately to reconstitute the task force and instruct them to work on the report for two more years. Unfortunately, the revised or new Form of Government report (nFOG) being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010) inspires no more enthusiasm for its passage than the previous version.

The problem with the “old” FOG and the nFOG reports is not the quality of the work, or the effort made by the task force, but the impossibility of the task they were assigned to do. The chilly reception for their work indicates that there is very little enthusiasm around the denomination for a total rewrite of the “G” section of the *Book of Order*. Virtually every line of the present document is the result of some question that arose, or problem that needed resolution. Many of those lines represent substantial amounts of study, debate, and affirmative votes in the presbyteries. In a time when trust is in such short supply in our denomination, there is simply little interest in throwing the present document out. The proposal to shorten the Form of Government and eliminate duplications sounded like a great idea, until someone actually tried to produce a new document. Every removed, changed, or relocated sentence incites someone’s ire. (And the new version only marginally reduces the size.)

A compelling case has not been made that we need a total overhaul of the Form of Government. We are told that the nFOG report is more “missional” and that it is more “flexible.” Yet, curiously, we are not told exactly how the existing version is restricting the mission of the church, or how its specificity prevents presbyteries and sessions from working within the rules to meet the present needs of the people of God and the surrounding culture. Since there is no great demonstrable need to make polity changes, it seems pointless to roil the church with this overwhelming level of change at this time.

In addition to the general concerns about the nFOG report mentioned above, there are numerous specific concerns. A few of them are enumerated in the following:

- *Concern about a diminished view of Scripture:* The primary role of Scripture is not mentioned in the sections on the “Apostolicity of the Church” (nFOG F-1.0302d) and the “Unity of the Church” (nFOG F-1.0302a), or in the new section on the “Catholicity of the Church” (nFOG F-1.0302c). The present G-1.0100c is quite clear on the church’s responsibility to govern itself according to God’s Word. The new version found in F-1.0203 would read that “...Scripture teaches us of Christ’s will for the Church, which is to be obeyed.” This moves Scripture one step further from actually *conveying the will of Christ*, thereby continuing the problem of separating the Word from Scripture.

- *Concern about an impoverished Christology:* The current G-1.0100a recognizes that Christ has been set above “... all power and dominion, and every name that is named ...”. G-1.0100b presently speaks of Christ “... exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of his Kingdom.” This grand language is lost in the nFOG.

- *Concern about new GA powers related to financial assessments:* The nFOG poses enormous danger to the finances of both presbyteries and sessions. The wording in nFOG G-3.0106 could require presbyteries to pay whatever the synods and the General Assembly assess, not only for per capita, but also for the mission budget. Such assessments would not have to be

made on a per member basis, but could be based on the presbytery's analysis of a session's ability to pay. For the first time ever, sessions could be punished if they did not pay assessed charges.

- *Concern about loss of due process for pastors and congregations:* Under nFOG many of the existing procedures related to the relationship between pastors, congregations, and the presbytery are eliminated or changed. An example is that nFOG G-2.0901 allows that a congregational meeting is not even required if "... the presbytery expressly finds that the church's mission under the Word imperatively demands dissolution of the relationship without such a meeting." All the careful due process to dissolve a pastoral relationship presently prescribed in G-14.0600 would be gone. This is a breathtaking expansion of presbytery powers. The thought that a committee composed of as few as four members could be delegated plenary power to dissolve any and all pastoral relationships without due process should be unthinkable to Presbyterians.

- *Other concerns about increased presbytery power:* Criteria for determining the number of elders representing each congregation, currently found in G-11.0101 is eliminated in nFOG. G-3.0301 of nFOG says the presbytery shall adopt a plan for elder representation. Instead of membership, other criteria such as contributions, membership on presbytery committees, or theological stance could be used. All restrictions placed on calling special presbytery meetings are removed from nFOG. Instead, each presbytery is to establish its own rules related to special meetings.

- *Concern about creating significant new work for governing bodies:* G-3.0106 of the nFOG says that each council (governing body) "... shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that council." These manuals are to provide the details that the rewrite simply omits. The nFOG requires governing bodies, from session up to the General Assembly, to take the time and effort to create multiple extensive new manuals of operation to replace regulations that are presently provided for everyone in the *Book of Order*.

- *Concern about less accountability:* One of the problems resulting from shifting so many policies and procedures out of the Constitution and into local manuals is that none of those policies would then be subject to the jurisdiction of permanent judicial commissions. The GAPJC has already ruled (in *Hope et al v Presbytery of San Francisco*) that it will not rule on violations of requirements that are not found in the Constitution.

- *Concern about de-emphasis on Roberts' Rules of Order:* F-3.0205 of the nFOG would enshrine the present enthusiasm for "alternative methods of discernment" in the Constitution. Such an ill-advised attempt to replace *Roberts' Rules* can only serve to rob minorities of their rights and will not increase the level of trust or the quality of decisions in the PC(USA).

- *Concern about the difficulty of comparing documents to determine what has been moved or changed, and the virtual impossibility of determining what has been eliminated from the original:* The study material provided to compare the current Form of Government with nFOG is voluminous, and very difficult to work with. In many cases, however, the problem with nFOG is not what is there, the problem is what is not there. It is insufficient simply to read the nFOG by itself and thus to decide if it should be adopted. Because it is purposefully shorter, and because it purposefully omits many requirements that are found in the present Form of Government, the only way to evaluate it properly is to examine the nature of the omissions. There is no other reasonable way to do this.

- *Concern about congregational meetings:* Most of the requirements related to congregational meetings (G-7.0303b, G-7.0302c, G-7.0305, G-7.0307) are omitted in the nFOG, opening the door to mischief, particularly in the ability to schedule "snap" meetings, or reduce the necessary quorum.

- *Concern about loss of congregational power:* Current G-7.0202a says that a newly organized congregation shall elect officers, making provision for their preparation, examination, ordination, and installation. However, nFOG's G-1.0201 gives this responsibility exclusively to the presbytery. The current section on the "permissive powers of a congregation," spelled out in G-7.0304 a (5), is completely omitted in the nFOG.

- *Concern about voluntary covenants:* The words voluntarily and voluntary are conspicuously removed from G-1.0102 and 1.0103 in the nFOG.

- *Concern about watering down ordination standards:* The requirement currently in G-11.0404b and G-14.0440 for supermajority presbytery approval for waiving ordination requirements is excluded from nFOG.

- *Concern that candidates' preparation becomes more difficult:* The five areas of examination presently found in G-14.0431 are missing from nFOG G-2.0607d, leaving open the possibility that the General Assembly or the Cooperative Committee on Examinations simply could decide that a new area of examination would be required. Also, nFOG G-2.0606 adds a new requirement that candidates "... engage in some sort of supervised service to the church."

- *Concern about politics in pastoral succession:* nFOG G-2.0504 would allow parish associates, associate pastors, and interim pastors to be eligible, with a three-quarters vote of the presbytery, to be the next installed pastor of the church they are serving. A particular problem with this provision is that it would seriously undermine the current understanding of an

interim's job. Interims might be seen as candidating for the open position, rather than taking the hard steps to heal and unite the congregation.

- *Concern about expansion of the requirements for "inclusiveness":* nFOG F-1.0403 gives a much less specific list of categories of persons for inclusion than is presently found in G-4.0403. However, the third sentence of the same paragraph in nFOG F-1.0403 says "The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership." But what are "persons or groups within its membership"? It appears that a governing body might choose to include in their manual of operations any number of other groups for "inclusion." Inclusion of a group so defined by a presbytery would then be mandatory for a session in that presbytery.

- *Concern about how specific parts of the nFOG relate to the whole of the document:* The first four chapters of the current Form of Government are combined into a new section called "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity." Although many would agree that those chapters currently lay out the "foundations" for the PC(USA), it is unclear what the impact of separating that language into a stand alone section of the Constitution might be. Is this a super section, overriding guidelines expressed elsewhere? Are the provisions for amending this section the same?

Concurrence to Item 07-07 from the Presbytery of Chicago (with Additional Rationale).

- The removal of the accrued "best practices" in the current *Book of Order* that were developed incrementally through many years of experience has the effect of creating a vacuum of procedures and practices that will have to be laboriously filled with the required new manuals of operation at every level of church governance. The time and energy this will require will not enhance mission but impede it for the foreseeable future.

- One of the primary claims made by proponents of the Proposed New Form of Government (nFOG) is that it is a *missional* ecclesiology. We do not find that the present Form of Governance has in itself hampered mission. Nor does adoption of such sweeping change as proposed by this nFOG enhance the church's ability to do mission or to be missional.

- One consequence (perhaps unintended) of removing so much material from our Constitution will be to allow such variance in governance, and therefore in actual mission and ministry in different presbyteries and sessions, that what recognizable identity and unity that the PC(USA) has now is likely to be diluted.

- Changes in the Form of Government or G-section of the nFOG reduce congregational freedom in selecting mission, controlling offerings, choosing leaders, and even in deciding what may be appropriate for discussion at a congregational meeting.

- While the present Form of Government has many specifics (pejoratively characterized as "manual of operations"), those specific provisions serve to create a coherent and recognizable whole church in which the act of any governing body can be understood to be the act of the whole denomination. The effect of removing such common determinations would be to further destabilize a denomination already struggling to maintain its unity. The low ebb of trust that is now a fact in the PC(USA) is further drained when the playing field starts changing in ways that may or may not be accountable.

- Accountability is a problem in the new structure because many of the decisions taken in governing bodies under the nFOG will be governed by self-determined manuals. Manuals by definition are not the constitution.

- Because of the change in wording in many areas of the nFOG, settled precedent in General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission [GAPJC] decisions may not apply or may require further and repeated remedial cases to adjust to the changes. No certainty can be inferred from claims to the contrary.

- The change in definition of "church" (lower case "c") from its current usage in the Form of Government to mean "the PC(USA)" in the Proposed New Form of Government (nFOG) has such enormous effect that has yet to be noticed, much less understood because of its sweeping implications. Footnote 1 (attached to the section heading of CHAPTER ONE, THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH) states:

Throughout this document and the Form of Government, the capitalized term "Church" refers to the Church Universal, the Church as it is called to be in Christ; the lower-case term "*church*" refers to denominations, except as part of a title (i.e. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). In place of the vernacular use of "*church*" to denote a congregation of believers, the term "congregation" is used. (Item 07-01, Form of Government Task Force Report, p. 1)

Concurrence to Item 07-07 from the Presbytery of Tropical Florida (with Additional Rationale)

We believe that the Proposed new Form of Government (nFOG) tampers with currently accepted theology.

The nFOG assigns new powers to governing bodies, specifically in the area of ordination; proposes removing precedents established by the church courts; generates concern about its effect on a session's freedom to exercise stewardship principles and scruples, and about the new power given to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

We are also concerned that the Proposed Form of Government proposes changes in the meaning of "inclusiveness." We believe that nFOG is less insightful about the mission of the church than the current form of government; that it generates concern that current practices and regulations which govern us will be eliminated altogether; that it has internal conflicts that seem to contradict themselves; and that it contains vague and confusing language that will lead to subjective interpretations and possible institutional chaos.

We also note that overtures concerning the Proposed new Form of Government have been unanimous in opposing the rewrite submitted in previous years, and we believe that it does not improve on our current *Book of Order*.

Concurrence to Item 07-07 from the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks (with Additional Rationale)

The Presbytery of Plains and Peaks recognizes that a similar overture has been submitted to the assembly by the Presbytery of Central Washington (Item 07-07). While we concur with the text of the overture, we do not support the rationale of Item 07-07 and offer this as an alternative.

An action of the 217th General Assembly (2006) created the Form of Government (FOG) Task Force, which was charged with producing a simplified and shortened version of the Form of Government ("G" section) of the *Book of Order*. They completed their task, and presented their report to the 218th General Assembly (2008). However, that report had very little support. A number of presbyteries submitted overtures related to the report to the 218th General Assembly (2008), none urging its passage. With the exclusion of the members of the task force, testimony before the General Assembly committee considering the report was virtually unanimous in its concern about the rewrite. At one point in the committee consideration, a member of the committee actually asked, isn't there someone other than a task force member who wants to speak in favor of the approval of the FOG report? (There was no response.) After their work, the General Assembly committee probably should have made a recommendation to General Assembly similar to the one being proposed above. However, the committee, as is frequently the case, found it very difficult to say NO to the task force of sincere, hard-working folks who had invested so much time and effort in their report. So the action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) ultimately was to reconstitute the task force and instruct them to work on the report for two more years. Unfortunately, the revised, or new, Form of Government report (nFOG) being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010) inspires no more enthusiasm for its passage than the previous version.

The problem with FOG and nFOG reports is not the quality of the work, or the effort made by the task force, but the impossibility of the task they were assigned to do. The chilly reception for their work indicates that there is very little enthusiasm around the denomination for a total rewrite of the "G" section of the *Book of Order*. Virtually every line of the present document is there as a result of some question that arose, or problem that needed resolution, and many of those lines represent substantial amounts of study, debate, and affirmative votes in the presbyteries. In a time when trust is in such short supply in our denomination, there is simply little interest in throwing the present document out. A proposal to shorten the Form of Government and eliminate duplications sounded like a great idea, until someone actually tried to produce a new document. Every removed, changed, or relocated sentence incites someone's ire. (And the new version only marginally reduces the size.)

A compelling case has not been made that we need a total overhaul of the Form of Government. We are told that the nFOG report is more "missional" and that it is more "flexible". And yet, curiously, we are not told exactly how the existing version is restricting the mission of the church, or how its specificity prevents presbyteries and sessions from working within the rules to meet the present needs of the people of God and the surrounding culture. Moreover, a change of this magnitude carries with it the likelihood of unintended and unforeseen consequences that could significantly affect the polity and mission of our church. This would argue for a more incremental approach to change. Since there is no great demonstrable need to make polity changes, it seems pointless to roil the church with this overwhelming level of change at this time.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-07

Advice on Item 07-07—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to answer Item 07-07 with its response to Item 07-01, the Report of the Form of Government Task Force.

Rationale

This overture asks the General Assembly to take four actions that it could take individually or jointly in a way that is consistent with either approving or disapproving the report and recommendations of the Form of Government Task Force.

When the Task Force presents its report to the 219th General Assembly (2010), the assembly will have received it. The 219th General Assembly (2010) can dismiss a task force with thanks, without regard for its action on the recommendations of the task force. The Report and Recommendations are already posted on the church's website, and the 219th General Assembly (2010) can order that they remain on the website. Further, it is always in order for presbyteries to submit proposed amendments of any of the amendable provisions of the *Book of Order*.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) reported to the 218th General Assembly (2008):

... In reviewing the business coming to the 218th General Assembly (2008), the advisory committee notes that a number of overtures in effect seek to bring motions to postpone or motions to refer particular business before the assembly. The advisory committee reminds the church that these procedural motions could be brought by any commissioner. While such overtures are perfectly permissible, they suggest a lack of trust that the Holy Spirit will work by and through the commissioners to the assembly. The advisory committee reminds the church that such trust in the workings of the Holy Spirit is central to the functioning of our polity ..." (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 286).

From the rationale for the overture it appears that the intention is that the set of four actions should be approved as a disapproval of the recommendations of the task force.

The ACC advised the 218th General Assembly (2008) that it had the authority to approve or disapprove the recommendations of the Task Force on the Form of Government. The 219th General Assembly (2010) has the same authority to approve or disapprove the report and recommendations of the task force.

Item 07-08

[There is no Item 07-08.]

Item 07-09

[The assembly answered Item 07-09 by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1. See pp. 18, 25.]

On Amending the G-3.0103 of the Report of the Form of Government Task Force—From the Presbytery of San Juan.

The Presbytery of San Juan of the Boriquen Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that if the 219th General Assembly (2010) does approve that the amendments to the *Book of Order* proposed by the Form of Government Task Force be sent to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes that amendment be made to that text in G-3.0103, to require the establishment of committees on representation as required by Article 8 of the Articles of Agreement between the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and that said committees on representation be required to report to their respective governing bodies. Therefore, the second paragraph of section G-3.0103 of the proposed Form of Government will be changed to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

"Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body's implementation of the church's commitment to inclusiveness and representation. Councils above the session shall establish *committees on representation in accordance with the Articles of Agreement* ~~by their own rule committees or entities~~ to fulfill the following functions: to advise *and report to* the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403 (*Proposed Form of Government*, G-3.0103)."

Rationale

One of the images we have regarding the Kingdom of God, which also helps guide the committees on representation, is the one speaking of that time in which "... there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!" (Col. 3: 11). The proposed amendment to the *Book of Order* would allow the functions of the committee on representation to be transferred to any other committee or entity and to eliminate the existing committees. This proposal is contrary to the Articles of Agreement between the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. approved in 1983, which required the creation of the committees on representation. It is also contrary to the commitment made with the presbytery and congregational leaders of racial minorities who feared that once they became members of white-majority presbyteries or synods, as a result of the Plan of Union, any real chance of being represented in the leadership of those presbyteries or synods would be lost.

In order to persuade these leaders to vote in favor of the Union, the creation of the committees on representation was agreed to, as well as the inclusion of Article 8 in the *Articles of Agreement*, where the functions and composition of the committees on representation are established.

We believe the aforementioned agreement should still be honored, which is both moral and legal, especially in light of the fact that the Articles of Agreement do not provide any means of amendment. Furthermore, the elimination of the committees on representation compromises and weakens the church's commitment to the goals of eliminating discrimination for reason of race or ethnicity, age, gender, disability, theological differences consistent with the Reformed Tradition, or marital status, and of granting minorities full participation in decision-making structures of the denomination.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-09

Advice on Item 07-09—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to answer Item 07-09 with its response to Item 07-06.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 07-09

Comment on Item 07-09—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) supports the intent of Item 07-09 and advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve the recommended amendments to the proposed Form of Government (Item 07-01).

The GACOR also refers the General Assembly to its comment offered on Item 07-01 for a more detailed discussion.

Item 07-10

[The assembly answered Item 07-10 by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1. See pp. 18, 26.]

Joint COGA/GAMC Amendment to the Proposed Form of Government

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council recommend that the 219th General Assembly (2010) amend the first sentence of G-3.0501c in the Proposed Form of Government as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“c. nurture the covenant community of disciples. This responsibility shall include providing those services, resources, and programs performed most effectively at a national level, *as described in the Organization for Mission*; communicating with the whole church on matters of common concern; warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world; providing such services of education and nurture as its presbyteries may require; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration; discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, matters of truth and vision that may inspire, challenge, and educate both church and world; serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline; deciding controversies brought before it and advising and instructing in cases submitted to it, in conformity with this Constitution; authoritatively interpreting the most recent edition of the Book of Order in a manner binding on the whole church, in accordance with the provisions of G-6.02 or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case, with the most recent interpretation of the Book of Order being binding; and establishing and maintaining an office of the Stated Clerk.”

Rationale

The General Assembly Mission Council and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly note that the task force's proposed new Form of Government provides authority and responsibility for what we currently know as governing bodies without requiring particular structures or entities to carry out those responsibilities. Instead those governing bodies (councils) are to develop manuals of administrative operations. Should the 219th General Assembly (2010) affirm the proposed new Form of Government both of these entities want to be ready to move smoothly into our new Form of Government by having its manual in place. This minor change to G-3.0501c will assure that there is no gap in service by these entities.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-10

Advice on Item 07-10—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove Item 07-10 and offers the following advice.

This item asks that the Proposal of the Form of Government Task Force be amended at G-3.0501c by inserting the words “, as described in the *Organization for Mission*” in the first sentence after the words “at the national level.”

The rationale offered for this amendment is that the Committee on the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council each “want to move smoothly into the new Form of Government by having its manual in place”.

In the current Form of Government, G-9.0405 says in part: “Each governing body above the session shall, in consultation with the governing body above and below it, develop a manual of administrative operations. ...”

In the Proposal of the Form of Government Task Force, G-3.0106 states: “Each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that council.”

Neither the provision in the current *Book of Order* nor the provision in the Proposed Form of Government states which documents a governing body or council must include in its manual. The Proposed Form of Government is accompanied by templates for handbooks for each of the councils of the church; these handbooks do not dictate what the manuals must say, but identify issues that the manuals should address, and in most cases probably do address.

The *Organization for Mission* is an organized collection of policies and deliverances of the General Assembly, that can be amended by action of the General Assembly, according to provisions in the *Organization for Mission*. It is part of the *Manual of the General Assembly*; the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, also part of the *Manual*, make explicit reference to the *Organization for Mission*.

If this item is approved and the proposed Form of Government approved, the General Assembly would need to go through the process of amending the Constitution if it ever wished to change the name of the part of its *Manual* currently called the *Organization for Mission*.

One of the common misconceptions about the Proposed Form of Government is that its approval will cause the existing manuals of each of the governing bodies to become null and void, requiring the councils across the church to spend substantial time writing new manuals. There is no provision in the Proposed Form of Government that would void the existing manuals.

If manuals of governing bodies or councils include citations to nonexistent provisions or to provisions in a defunct Constitution, those citations merely indicate that the governing body or council adopted the rule to accord with a constitutional provision formerly in effect. The rule would not be invalidated unless it was in conflict with the new Constitution, an unlikely event in a Form of Government written to increase flexibility.

Unless the 219th General Assembly (2010) takes some action on its own to set aside its *Manual*, there is no risk of the General Assembly moving into the New Form of Government without its *Manual* in place. Nor is there any risk of a gap for any other governing body that is in compliance with G-9.0405.

Item 07-11

[In response to Item 07-11, the approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 18, 26.]

Effect of a Major Revision of the Book of Order on Previous Authoritative Interpretations—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

Alternate Resolution:

The Assembly Committee on Form of Government Revision recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) empower the Moderator to appoint a Special Committee on Existing Authoritative Interpretations of the *Book of Order*. The special committee shall be composed of six members recommended by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC), and the Office of the General Assembly, and charged to make recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012) concerning the status of specific existing authoritative interpretations of the Constitution based on the Status of Authoritative Interpretations as shown below:

Status of Authoritative Interpretations

While the status and applicability of any authoritative interpretation is subject to the judgment of the assembly, it is the considered judgment of the ACC that if this proposal to amend the Form of Government were to be approved, generally speaking the status of authoritative interpretations would vary according to the relationship of newly approved language to previous language.

1. If language approved in the Constitution explicitly restates the content of existing authoritative interpretations, it is no longer an authoritative interpretation but is incorporated into the Constitution.

2. If language is approved that is identical to, or essentially the same as the language of constitutional provisions that have already been interpreted, current authoritative interpretations would continue in force. The ACC believes this would apply, for example, to authoritative interpretations regarding current G-6.0106b, G-6.0108, G-8.0201, and G-9.0404d.

3. If language is approved that is substantively different from currently interpreted constitutional language, clarification from the General Assembly would be required as to the status and applicability of existing authoritative interpretations through the provisions of G-13.0103r.

4. If language is approved that contradicts the substance of an existing authoritative interpretation, the current interpretation would have no effect.

5. If language is approved that totally removes a constitutional provision that has been authoritatively interpreted, the authoritative interpretations attached to that provision would be removed as well.

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$9,660; 2012: \$0 (Per Capita-OGA)]

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer Item 07-11 with the following response:

The focus of the questions being posed in this request primarily concerns the interpretation of a proposed revision to part of the Constitution. Hence, the questions do not involve matters of constitutional interpretation in responding to which the General Assembly may render an authoritative interpretation. Nevertheless, because the 219th General Assembly (2010) has before it a proposal to approve a revised Form of Government, this request raises issues that the General Assembly should keep in mind when it considers any proposed amendment to the Constitution.

While the status and applicability of any authoritative interpretation is subject to the judgment of the assembly, it is the considered judgment of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) that if this proposal to amend the Form of Government were to be approved, generally speaking the status of authoritative interpretations would vary according to the relationship of newly approved language to previous language.

1. If language is approved that explicitly restates the content of existing authoritative interpretations, it is incorporated into the Constitution

2. If language is approved that is identical to, or essentially the same as the language of constitutional provisions that have already been interpreted, current authoritative interpretations would continue in force. The ACC believes this would apply, for example, to authoritative interpretations regarding current G-6.0106b, G-6.0108, G-8.0201, and G-9.0404d.

3. If language is approved that is substantively different from currently interpreted constitutional language, clarification from the General Assembly would be required as to the status and applicability of existing authoritative interpretations through the provisions of G-13.0103r.

4. If language is approved that contradicts the substance of an existing authoritative interpretation, the current interpretation would have no effect.

5. If language is approved that totally removes a constitutional provision that has been authoritatively interpreted, the authoritative interpretations attached to that provision would be removed as well.

Accordingly, when a General Assembly is considering amending the Constitution, it has a number of options:

1. It may approve language in the proposed amendment that explicitly restates the content of existing authoritative interpretations.

2. It may approve language in the proposed amendment that is sufficiently similar to the language of constitutional provisions that have already been interpreted to ensure that the current authoritative interpretations would continue in force.

3. It may approve language that is sufficiently different from currently interpreted constitutional language to permit governing bodies (“councils” in the Proposal) either to make their own initial good faith judgment about whether the authoritative interpretation continues in effect, or to request a fresh interpretation from the General Assembly.
4. It may approve language that is sufficiently different from the currently interpreted language to require a reasonable reader to conclude that the current authoritative interpretation would be set aside by the adoption of the new language.
5. It may approve language that totally removes a constitutional provision that has been authoritatively interpreted.
6. It may approve language for its own minutes that describes what it was intending to accomplish through the proposed constitutional language.
7. It may explicitly rescind authoritative interpretations that it does not intend to remain in effect under the current constitution or any proposed amendment thereto.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from the General Assembly Committee on Representation. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its findings and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The assembly is free to approve, amend, or decline to approve the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s recommendation.

1. *Questions*

- a. In the event that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approves submitting the new Form of Government to the presbyteries for their approval and the majority of presbyteries approve the adoption of the new Form of Government, what will be the effect of such approval on the authoritative interpretations concerning issues of representation that have been previously approved?
- b. If some authoritative interpretations will continue in force while others will not, who would make the decisions?
- c. As functions of the Committee on Representation continue to be described in the proposed Form of Government, what would be the continuing force and effect of the authoritative interpretations?
- d. How does the first set of questions (referring to F-1.0403 and G-3.0103), found on page 65 of the Form of Government Task Force proposal comment on or affect the recommendation 1 provision that would require that COR functions be retained?

First Question Presented

The first question presented needs to be answered by means of separate analyses of the continuing effectiveness of the four 1984 authoritative interpretations to which it refers, and each analysis must take into account the fact that the proposal of the Form of Government Task Force can still be amended by the General Assembly for submission to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes.

What would be the continuing effect of the Authoritative Interpretation that “Conformity is expected within reasonable time?” This authoritative interpretation is a case in which the proposed language is sufficiently similar to the existing language to ensure the continuing effectiveness of the authoritative interpretation. The inquiry that gave rise to this interpretation emerged because the Plan for Reunion required change. The proposal from the Form of Government Task Force does not require change with regard to a committee on representation. Indeed, with the possible exception of the most recently created presbyteries, reasonable time for conformity with the requirement to elect a Committee on Representation has elapsed.

If the General Assembly approves Recommendation 1 from the Form of Government Task Force, and a majority of the presbyteries concur, every governing body that has a committee on representation, and that has a rule in its manual or standing rules for the formation of such committee, would be in conformity with the G-3.0103 requirement to:

establish by their own rule committees or entities to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403.

Every governing body beyond the session without a rule in its manual or standing rules for the formation of a committee on representation, but which does have a committee on representation formed in accordance with G-9.0105, would be expected to revise its manual to provide for one or more committees or entities to fulfill the requirements of G-3.0103 “within reasonable time.”

A governing body that has a committee on representation and has given itself an exception from the composition requirements (under G-9.0106) would be in compliance with G-3.0103 once it adopts a rule for the establishment of the G-3.0103 committee.

On the other hand, a governing body that is out of compliance with G-9.0105 would be similarly out of compliance with G-3.0103.

What would be the continuing effect of the Authoritative Interpretation that “A presbytery should use its own wisdom in guiding its particular churches in such matters [as identifying minority groups]?” This authoritative interpretation is a case in which the proposed language is sufficiently similar to the existing language to ensure the continuing effectiveness of the authoritative interpretation.

What would be the continuing effect of the authoritative interpretation that “The committee [on representation] must stand alone?” This authoritative interpretation is a case in which the proposed language is so different from the provision interpreted in 1984 as to require the conclusion that the authoritative interpretation would no longer be in effect.

The most significant difference between the interpreted provisions and the proposal is that G-9.0902 lists the structures specified in our current Constitution, while the proposal includes no similar section. According to G-9.0901, a definite title was given to the committee on representation “in order to regularize the procedures that shall enable the governing bodies to work together in joint mission.” The proposal does not specify a name or number for the G-3.0103 committees.

Moreover, in 1997 the General Assembly approved G-9.0105f to codify explicitly the authoritative interpretation given in 1984. The General Assembly’s omission of any language similar to G-9.0105f would underscore the intention that the 1984 interpretation not continue.

What would be the continuing effect of the authoritative interpretation that “the classification of persons should be left to the judgment of the session?” This is a case in which the language of current and proposed provisions are sufficiently similar to ensure the continuing effectiveness of the authoritative interpretation.

Second Question Presented

The second question presented is not one that requires authoritative constitutional interpretation. If there is any question within the governing bodies responsible for implementing the terms of the revised Form of Government, the governing bodies would have access to the process outlined in G-6.02 in the proposal.

Third Question Presented

The third question presented is not one that requires authoritative constitutional interpretation. Inasmuch as the Proposal focuses on functions rather than structures, the authoritative interpretations concerning any functions that a governing body must assign to its committee on representation, and that are named in the proposal, would continue in effect and would be binding on whatever committees or entities the councils create to fulfill those functions.

Fourth Question Presented

The fourth question presented is not one that requires authoritative constitutional interpretation. The issues raised in Recommendation 2 of the proposal are issues that councils need to ensure are addressed in their manuals.

Under the proposal, the General Assembly could choose to update its Manual to fulfill its G-3.0103 responsibilities through its current committee on representation, could assign those responsibilities to other existing committees or entities, or could create new committees or entities to be responsible for those functions. What would be prohibited under G-3.0103 would be to fail to assign any of the named responsibilities to some committee or entity.

The composition of the committee on representation is described in G-9.0105a. The proposal does not specify the composition of the G-3.0103 committees or entities, thus requiring each council to determine the appropriate composition, with the freedom to continue the composition rule it is currently following.

2. Findings

About Authoritative Interpretation

Section G-13.0103r gives the General Assembly the authority to “to provide authoritative interpretation of the *Book of Order* which shall be binding on the governing bodies of the church when rendered in accord with G-13.0112 or through a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case.”

The provisions in G-13.0112c–d for authoritative interpretation state:

c. All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* arising from governing bodies of the church or from individuals shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly.

d. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission. The Advisory Committee [on the Constitution shall communicate its report and recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly].

The proposed Form of Government is subject to amendment by the General Assembly prior to its submission to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes. The proposed Form of Government at G-3.0501c states that the responsibilities of the General Assembly include “authoritatively interpreting the most recent edition of the *Book of Order* in a manner binding on the whole church, in accordance with the provisions of G-6.02 or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case, with the most recent interpretation of the *Book of Order* being binding.”

The provisions of G-6.02 in the proposal from the Task Force on the Form of Government regarding authoritative interpretation state:

All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* arising from councils of the church shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall communicate its report and recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly.

About the Committee on Representation

In 1984 the General Assembly provided authoritative interpretations (*Minutes*, 1984, Part I, pp. 604, 55.099) that:

- “Conformity [with the requirement for a Committee on Representation] is expected within reasonable time;”
- “A presbytery should use its own wisdom in guiding its particular churches in such matters [as determining what is a minority group], giving the fullness of meaning to G-4.0403 and G-9.0104.”
- “The committee [on representation] must stand alone.”
- “Such [session] reports [concerning the composition of the session and congregation] are to [be] made annually. The reports ought to reflect the judgment of the session. The classification of persons should be left to the judgment of the session. Finally, a presbytery may require the age and ethnic descent of persons elected to the nominating committee of a particular church in light of its power to see ‘that the orders of higher governing bodies are observed and carried out.’”

In 1993 the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the assembly against adopting an overture to remove G-9.0105 and G-9.0106 (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, pp. 79, 137, paragraph 13.001). This advice was not an authoritative interpretation.

In 1995 the General Assembly acted upon a report by the Office of the General Assembly as to how presbytery and synod committees on representation are functioning (*Minutes*, 1995, 137, 13.001). There are statements in this report that appear to interpret the Constitution; these statements are the opinion of that General Assembly, as they were not approved through the process for rendering authoritative interpretations.

In 1997 the Advisory Committee on the Constitution reviewed proposed amendments to G-9.0105, G-9.0106, and G-9.0801, and advised the General Assembly (*Minutes*, 1997, Part I, p. 178, paragraph 21.0159). This advice was not an authoritative interpretation.

Item 07-12

[The assembly answered Item 07-12 by the action taken on Item 07-01, Recommendation 1. See pp. 18, 26.]

On Receiving the Report of the Form of Government Task Force, Dismiss the Task Force with Thanks, Taking Specific Actions on the Report’s Recommendations—From the Presbytery of Mississippi.

The Presbytery of Mississippi overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to receive the report and recommendations of the Form of Government (FOG) Task Force, dismiss the task force with thanks, and act upon their recommendations by taking the following actions:

Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

1. Shall Chapter G-14.0000 from the 2005–07 *Book of Order* be substituted for the current G-14.0000;
2. Shall G-6.03 from the proposed Form of Government task force’s recommendations be substituted for the current G-18.0200; and
3. Shall the last sentence of F-2.02 of the proposed Form of Government task force’s recommendations be substituted for the last sentence of the current G-2.0200.

Rationale

Overall Comments:

The report and recommendations of the Form of Government Task Force, taken as a whole, are in no way an improvement over the current Form of Government. The task force’s recommendations would remove important safeguards from congregations and presbyteries, and would render many aspects of our common life immune to judicial review. Among many other flaws, the proposed document would allow presbyteries to dissolve pastoral relationships without congregational meetings. It would remove from sessions the prerogative to determine the distribution of their congregations’ benevolences. It would introduce chaos into the process for ordaining ministers, even removing from the *Book of Order* the constitutionally required areas of examination for candidates. Worst of all, it would allow a vastly expanded vision of inclusivity to threaten our current ordination standards.

The product of the FOG Task Force would do all this in the name and for the sake of making the church more missional, all the while refusing to explain exactly what in the current Form of Government is inhibiting the church from carrying out the work of Jesus Christ.

It is impossible to summarize the many ways in which the form of government proposed by the Task Force would threaten the peace, unity, and purity of the church. Because it is purposely shorter, and because it purposely omits many requirements that are found in the present Form of Government, the only way to evaluate it properly is to examine the nature of the omissions in some detail.

The Presbytery of Mississippi therefore endorses the paper entitled “Thinking Twice about the Proposed Form of Government,” which follows this summary and with it forms the complete rationale for this overture.

Rationale for action item 1:

Since the wholesale revision of Chapter 14 in the *Book of Order*, the lack of specificity in ordination procedures has proven itself to be singularly unhelpful. Some presbyteries have simply adopted the previous version of Chapter 14 as their method of preparing candidates for ministry. Other presbyteries have had to spend time laboring over the development of new procedures, wasting time which could have been better spent on furthering the mission of Christ’s Kingdom. The Task Force’s overall recommendations would require the same sort of fruitless effort to be expended on every part of our common life, developing presbytery handbooks of rules to replicate what is (or was) in the *Book of Order*. It would be far better to restore the previous version of Chapter 14 and do away with these handbooks altogether, exempt as they would be from the process of judicial review.

Rationale for action item 2:

One of the two improvements provided by the Task Force’s recommendations is the clarification of the process of amending *The Book of Confessions*. The Task Force’s G-6.03 helpfully arranges in chronological order the material currently found in G-18.0200. This improvement should be adopted by simple amendment to the current Form of Government.

Rationale for action item 3:

The only other improvement provided by the Task Force’s recommendations is the fuller quotation and more accurate translation of the latin phrase currently found in G-2.0200. The Task Force is correct to say, “The church affirms *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei*, that is, ‘The church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God’ in the power of the Spirit.” This is much to be preferred over the current wording, and should be substituted by simple amendment to the current Form of Government.

For the full rationale: please read “Thinking Twice about the Proposed Form of Government” at <http://www.presbycoalition.org/nFOG%20Critique%2011-19-09.pdf>.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 07-12*Advice on Item 07-12—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to answer Item 07-12 with the following comments.

Advice

1. Regarding the recommendation to substitute Chapter G-14.000 from the *2005–07 Book of Order* for the current G-14.000, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) recommends disapproval of this part of the overture.

The ACC notes that while the recommendation may be in order, the consequences of such an action are not fully clarified. The complexity of the process leading to the adoption of the present Chapter 14 is revealed in the history of reviews and revisions (and ACC recommendations) of Chapter XIV by multiple General Assemblies, is contained in the Rationale for the Proposed Amendments (of Chapter XIV) that were approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006) and the majority of presbyteries in 2007.

If this debate is to be revisited, it should be referred to an appropriate committee of the General Assembly that has sufficient time and resources to consider it thoroughly and bring a recommendation to the General Assembly. The extent and scope of the changes approved in 2007 would require reopening debate on the rationale for each of the specific changes (including those that moved sections of Chapter XIV to other locations in the *Book of Order*.)

2. Regarding the recommendation to substitute Form of Government Task Force wording of G-6.03 for the current 18.0200, the ACC finds that the language is clear and consistent with its intent.

3. Regarding the recommendation to substitute Form of Government Task Force wording in the last sentence of F-2.02 for the last sentence of the current G-2.0200, the ACC finds that the language is clear and consistent with its intent.

4. For these and other reasons, the ACC continues to affirm the advice for the changes to Chapter XIV that it presented to the 217th General Assembly in 2006 and finds no constitutional imperative for reversing the decision of the denomination to adopt the existing Chapter XIV.

Findings

The main presenting recommendation, to receive the report of the Form of Government Task Force and to dismiss the task force with thanks, does not raise any constitutional issues. It is one procedural/parliamentary option available for responding to this report and its recommendations. To do so prior to consideration of the report would have the same effect as defeating the report without discussion of the merits or demerits of the actual report. The committee assigned this overture will need to decide whether this overture's proposed action is preferable to having the report presented, arguments made for and against the actual report, and a vote on the report taken.

The ACC then notes that the three delineated recommendations included in this overture have only a tangential relationship to the Form of Government Task Force report and recommendations. The ACC therefore proposes that the three enumerated recommendations, since they do not apply directly to the question of the Form of Government Task Force Report, be referred, with recommendations to 1) a Standing Committee of the 219th General Assembly (2010) or 2) to the 220th General Assembly (2012) for action.

History

The 216th General Assembly (2004) directed the Office of the General Assembly “[t]o undertake an extensive cycle of consultation with various groups and constituencies within the PC(USA), including but not limited to: governing bodies (sessions, presbyteries, synods), governing body staff, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, racial ethnic caucuses, youth, women, pastors, new immigrant leaders, and other person or groups interested in the role of the Form of Government in the mission and ministry of the PC(USA)” and “[t]o bring recommendations to the 217th General Assembly (2006)” (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 86). This report is the response of the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to that referral.

The *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* has always been a fluid document, being the living reminder of “Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda,” that is, ‘The church reformed, always reforming,’ according to the Word of God and the call of the Spirit” (*Book of Order*, G-2.0200). Virtually every twenty-five years since Presbyterianism came to this continent, the church has “reformed” its Form of Government, the last substantive reformation of it occurring at Reunion in 1983. Over this past decade, the church has consistently called for a new or different Form of Government.

In 1993, the Special Committee on the Nature of the Church and the Practice of Governance recommended to the 205th General Assembly (1993) that the *Book of Order* be revised. This resulted in the amendment of G-9.0103 granting powers not mentioned in the *Constitution* to be reserved to the presbyteries. The assembly also referred further discussion and review to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC).

Every year from 1993 to 2002, the General Assembly has dealt with business that asked for, referred for more study, or reported on major proposed changes in the Form of Government (for details see Appendix A, [*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 369]). The 213th General Assembly (2001) sent to the presbyteries as Amendment 01-H a recommended revision of Chapter 14 in its entirety. Many people maintain that the amendment was defeated

because of two details, one which moved the ordination questions into the Directory for Worship, and one which allowed interim pastors to be called to installed positions in limited circumstances.

The Presbytery of St. Augustine overtured the 214th General Assembly (2002) (*Overture 02-29*) to send a second version of the Chapter 14 revision back to the presbyteries, but without the two offending substantive changes. This recommendation was sent to the OGA for revision, to be reported back to the 217th General Assembly (2006). The OGA presented an interim report to the 216th General Assembly (2004).

During the time since the 216th General Assembly (2004), the OGA, with the able guidance of the Office of Research Services, has undertaken an extensive cycle of information gathering. We have hosted more than thirty focus groups that have been made up of a wide range of participants. More than half of the governing body staff (executive presbyters, stated clerks, associate executives) have participated. A diverse group of Presbyterians involved in new immigrant and racial ethnic ministries (pastors, elders, staff members) took part as well. We spoke with members of a variety of presbytery committees (COMs, CPMs, councils) and the elected members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. In addition, we utilized research survey instruments.

In conducting these consultations, we found an almost universal desire for change in our Form of Government. The great majority of responders hoped that a revision would provide more flexibility in favor of governing bodies and of presbyteries in particular. There was not universal agreement on what else ought to be changed, but two clearly identifiable preferences emerged.

1. There was great interest in an immediate “fix,” namely revising Chapter 14 of the Form of Government to make it shorter and more flexible in favor of presbyteries. Our second proposal is an attempt to do what *Overture 02-29* asked in 2002; we have updated Chapter 14. We propose that the 217th General Assembly (2006) recommend that a whole new Chapter 14 replace the current Chapter 14. We propose that the 217th General Assembly (2006) offer the church as separate options the possibility of moving the ordination questions and allowing some temporary pastors to become installed. In our focus groups, interviews, and surveys the OGA also heard suggestions for a number of substantive changes to Chapter 14, which we suggest the 217th General Assembly (2006) propose as separate amendments. (See Amendments A and B.1.–6. of this report.)

Our consultations described above lead us to believe that the church needs the flexibility that such a revision would provide to presbyteries as soon as possible. Presbyteries are currently, and regularly, facing circumstances where they lack the flexibility to provide the pastoral leadership that is required by their member congregations. We heard great urgency in our consultations for some immediate relief from the regulatory approach currently manifested in Chapter 14, especially in relation to new immigrant fellowships, new church developments, and congregations. We see no inherent conflict in the 217th General Assembly (2006) permitting the presbyteries to vote on this reasonable revision while awaiting the report of a more dramatic revision proposal in 2008. We heard the presbyteries crying for some modest relief during the intervening three years between now and the possible implementation of a dramatically different Form of Government. (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 370)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 217th General Assembly (2006) to approve Item 05-11, Recommendation 2.

Rationale

The recommendation is an omnibus action that would enable the Stated Clerk to send to presbyteries a package of amendments that, taken together, would strike the present contents of Chapter XIV of the *Book of Order* and replace it with a revised text. The amendments are divided into two groups: Amendments A.1 and A.2, and Amendments B.1 through B.6. Amendment A.1 consists of the strike-and-replace revision of the contents of Chapter XIV; in this revision, considerable process-oriented material would be removed to the status of a handbook and rendered optional. The remaining text would be reorganized and renumbered. Amendment A.2, which consists of five subparts, A.2.a.–e., consists of insertions in the text of Chapter 14. Amendment A.2.a.–e. is dependent on the approval of A.1. If Amendment A.1 is approved and transmitted to presbyteries, Amendment A.2.a.–e. is also approved; conversely, if A.1. is defeated, A.2.a.–e. is also defeated. The two are thus to be voted as a package rather than serially.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has examined the work of the Office of the General Assembly in revising the contents of Chapter XIV. The committee believes that OGA has faithfully executed its charge to revise and restructure the contents of the chapter without changing the polity.

The effort to revise the Form of Government has a lengthy history. The 206th General Assembly (1996) charged the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to prepare proposals for revision of the Form of Government “that will take into consideration the possible division into foundational, policy, and advisory components...” (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p.285). The outcome of that work was presented to the 212th General Assembly (2000) in the form of a revision of Chapter 14 that contemplated the removal of considerable process-oriented material in the chapter to handbooks that made such processes optional rather than mandatory. After a year of study and comment, the 213th General Assembly (2001) approved the proposal as Amendment 01-H. Included in the proposed 01-H was an amendment approved on the floor permitting interim ministers to succeed as the next installed pastor of a congregation they have served as interim. Research indicates that the inclusion of this late-developing change was part of the reason for the failure of the amendment at the presbytery level. In 2002, the Presbytery of St. Augustine overtured the 214th General Assembly (2002) to return the substance of 01-H to the presbyteries for vote, but without the provision concerning interim pastors. The assembly referred the overture to the Office of the General Assembly for study as part of a study process to examine the wisdom of revising not Chapter 14 only, but the entire Form of Government.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the committee and the assembly that, since these amendments are of a piece and flow together, the assembly would be well served by considering amendment A as a package, rather than to seek to amend various particular provisions in the revised text. Changes to the text of Amendment A will be considered if presented in appropriate form and in a manner consistent with the policies and practices of the assembly. However, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that, if the committee or commissioners desire to amend particular elements of the revised text of Chapter XIV, this end is best accomplished by adding particular amendments to Amendment B. (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 371–373)

Item 08-01

[The assembly approved Item 08-01. See p. 31.]

On Referring the Covenant to Adopt the Lund Principle, and Its Codicil, to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations—From the Synod of the Northeast.

The Synod of the Northeast overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to refer the Covenant to Adopt and Implement the “Lund Principle” and Codicil to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, requesting a report with recommendations by the 220th General Assembly (2012).

Rationale

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved a document entitled *The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, which contains a reference to the Lund Principle on page 3 and includes the following statement in the Affirmation on page 8: “... we recommit ourselves to the historic Lund principle that Christians should take united action whenever they find this possible” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 524).

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) contains numerous provisions that encourage growing ecumenical relations at all levels of governing bodies (session through General Assembly).

The following Statement of Covenant and its Codicil were drafted and approved by the Board of Trustees of the Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society in 2005 and 2006, approved by the Presbytery of Northern New England in 2007, and adopted by the Synod of the Northeast in 2009.

The following Statement of Covenant and its Codicil are a concrete, regional expression of specific commitments to ecumenical partnerships as affirmed in the *Lund Principle* of 1952 and in *The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* of 2008.

The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) deserves to be more widely publicized and studied. The *Lund Principle* (1952) as affirmed therein also deserves to be more widely publicized and studied.

It would benefit the whole church for the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations to consider and report on what is being done in ecumenical relations by synods, presbyteries, and particular churches, and by state ecumenical bodies and how those activities are appropriate for participation by official representatives of the PC(USA).

It would benefit the whole church for the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations to consider the Vermont Ecumenical Council & Bible Society “Covenant and Codicil” and express an opinion as whether it is a worthy effort and whether others might well consider adapting it for their particular situation, or whatever seems to them to be good and wise in light of the 2008 *Ecumenical Stance* document.

“A COVENANT to Adopt and Implement ‘The Lund Principle’

“The members of the Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society (churches, denominations, and ecclesial communities) have put to themselves the question that has come to be known as ‘The Lund Principle’ [The Third World Conference on Faith and Order, Lund, Sweden, 1952]:

“We have now reached a crucial point in our ecumenical discussions. As we have come to know one another better, our eyes have been opened to the depth and pain of our separations and also to our fundamental unity. The measure of unity which has been given to the Churches to experience together must now find clearer manifestation. A faith in the one Church of Christ which is not implemented by acts of obedience is dead. There are truths about the nature of God and His Church which will remain forever closed to us unless we act together in obedience to the unity which is already ours. We would, therefore, earnestly request our Churches to consider whether they are doing all they ought to do to manifest the oneness of the people of God. Should not our Churches ask themselves whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other Churches, and *whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?*”

“We members of the Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society now consider that we are ready to answer this question in the affirmative. Now each and all, we covenant with one another to pursue, with God’s help, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, full visible unity (Cf. our Bylaws Article II) by *acting together* in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel us to act separately. Here and now we pledge our persons and resources to act toward fuller unity and urge the authorities and members of our churches, denominations, and ecclesial bodies to do the same.

“This Covenant is adopted with a Codicil that is inseparable from the Covenant and which will be understood as integral to the Covenant as an elucidation of the purpose of the Covenant as contained in the purpose of the Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society and as one of the essential means to achieve the Council’s purpose.

“The Covenant is proposed to the member churches, denominations, and ecclesial communities for their reception and is subject to further and future development, as may be adopted by the Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society.

“Vermont Ecumenical Council & Bible Society Trustees revised and approved this Covenant on March 29, 2006.

“Codicil to the Covenant

“This Covenant is adopted to further express and implement the basic purposes of the VEC & BS (Cf. Bylaws, Article II) by subscribing to the ‘Lund Principle’ [Third World Conference of Faith and Order, Lund, Sweden, 1952, the World Council of Churches]:

‘Should not our Churches ask themselves whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.’

“1. GOAL: We continue to recognize that the VEC & BS is a representative body of Christian churches, denominations and ecclesial communities which seeks to respond to God’s love for us, confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit to give us being and inspire our actions.

“Further, we acknowledge and celebrate God’s gift to us, the unity already present among those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and what is revealed to us in Sacred Scripture. Furthermore, we seek the fullness of unity which the Apostle Paul affirmed, ‘there is one body and one Spirit, as there is one hope held out in God’s call to you; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, Who is over all and through all and in all’ (Ephesians 4:4–6). This will be a visible unity, Christ’s body, which is one, but encompasses a diversity of Christian traditions.

“We regret our sins against this unity and understand our present imperfect unity as contrary to the Gospel. It is a source of sorrow for all who proclaim themselves as Christians. We pray that our relationships in the movement toward full unity may deepen and expand toward the day when all Christians will be united as God wills it, visibly loving one another and all God’s children even as Christ has loved us.

“2. MEANS: We now express the means to attain this goal.

“a. Internal Renewal: Each church, denomination, ecclesial body is summoned by the Holy Spirit to its own internal renewal and change of heart. Wounded by sin that causes our divisions and separation, there is continual need for personal and social reform and purification. We must ‘repent and believe in the Good News’ (Mark 1:15). We must not only know well the faith-principles of our own church or denomination, we must live out our faith and celebrate the gifts God has given us. Furthermore, we must know our weaknesses and deepen our concern for full Christian unity.

“b. Prayer: We will increase our private and public prayer for unity. We will pray for one another. Our love for one another and for unity finds its most complete expression in common prayer. Christ is present with us when we unite to pray (Matthew 18:20). The closer we come to Christ in our own communities, the closer we will come to one another.

“c. Dialogue: We will engage in dialogue with one another. Ecumenical dialogue is indispensable. It is the communication of one’s Christian experience in Christ, both speaking and listening to one another in love. It is not merely an exchange of ideas. It is a process by which together we seek to transcend our divisions by clarification of the elements of our faith, the removal of past misunderstandings, the discovery of new language or categories by which we express our unity in faith. Through dialogue we discern the faith, the context, the life and worship of partners. It presupposes prayer and healing of memories through repentance and mutual forgiveness. It requires patience and humility. It is an essential part of the preparation for action together (Lund Principle).

“d. Collaboration: We will engage in practical cooperation with one another. Practical cooperation among all Christians vividly expresses the bond which already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the servant. Unity in faith, though imperfect, leads to unity of action, and unity of action leads to the full unity of faith. Through this cooperation, all believers in Christ are able to learn how to understand and respect each other better. In the eyes of the world, cooperation among Christians becomes a form of Christian witness and a means of evangelization which benefits all involved.

“3. CONCLUSION: The ‘Lund Principle’ which endorses this practical cooperation is essential for our ecumenical life. Yet it does not stand alone in ecumenism. It is the outward sign and effect of renewal, prayer and dialogue. It is the sign and test of our love for all God’s children, Christian and non-Christian.

“Implementing the ‘Lund Principle’ may not be easy. We beg God’s help to give us the wisdom and conviction to do it. We firmly disagree that ‘action unites and doctrine divides.’ We must take great care not to abandon our Christian faith in favor of action. Truly effective social action must have a religious center. It must be rooted in the affirmation of God, centered on the Gospel and radiate from a deep life of prayer. It must be rooted in a spirituality that not only sustains the worker, but also is grounded in true social concern. Guided always by Christian principles, we pledge ourselves to plan and initiate Christian service whenever and wherever our members can, and to reach out our hand in cooperation to all those of good will for the common good.

“This is our covenant. God bless our work together. Adopted by the members of the Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society December 14, 2005. Adopted by the Synod Assembly of the Synod of the Northeast at its stated meeting on October 16, 2009.”

Item 08-02

[The assembly approved Item 08-02 with amendment. See pp. 31, 32.]

On Removing the Confusing and Theologically Incompatible Call for Presbyterians to Engage Other Faiths—From the Presbytery of Yukon.

The Presbytery of Yukon respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to remove (or rewrite) the confusing and theologically incompatible language noted below in the Call for Tolerance and Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, approved as Item 07-01 by the 218th General Assembly (2008) by taking the following actions:

1. In Section three of this item, strike the phrase “celebrate diversity,” to help clarify our understanding that, as Christians, we are called to bring all people into the church. [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]

“3. Build on this understanding by calling for further dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, viewing each other ~~[as equals]~~ [with equal respect], and learning from one another to

- “• promote peace, resolve conflict;
- “• ensure human rights, prevent discrimination;
- “• develop dialogue, emphasize commonality;
- “• recognize differences, ~~celebrate diversity~~ [respect diversity];
- “• advocate justice, oppose bias” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 507).

2. In section four, remove the following bulleted point since it is not our belief that it is possible, or desirable, to share religious holidays with Muslims and Jews, and sustain the faith that each hold dear [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]:

“4. Commend the First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway and other Presbyterian congregations that have initiated dialogue with Muslim and Jewish communities, and to encourage other congregations to initiate three-way dialogues among Jews, Christians, and Muslims consistent with the Presbyterian Principles for Interfaith Dialogue.

~~“• To encourage congregations of these faiths to celebrate religious holidays together, setting aside days of worship during which there can be congregational suppers, and dialogue groups. [To encourage congregations of these faiths to set aside times to come together for meals, dialogues, and to plan ways they can work together” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 507).]~~

Rationale

In accordance with Scripture and our Reformed faith we base this upon the following:

We believe that it is not possible to “...celebrate religious holidays together...” or set aside “days of worship...”. Common worship among these faiths is not compatible, nor do common aims exist to undertake this endeavor since the one triune God, revealed through Jesus Christ is the only true object of Christian worship (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 507).

We further affirm the uniqueness of Christian worship which is centered in Jesus Christ alone as affirmed by the revelation of God in Holy Scripture and attested to in our *Book of Order* and *The Book of Confessions*, that:

Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14:6). See also the following passages of Scripture: Jn. 4:23, Rom. 10:14, Acts 4:12, Jn. 10:1–9, 1Tim. 2:5.

c. Jesus Christ is the living God present in common life. The One who is proclaimed in the witness of faith is:

- (1) the Word of God spoken at creation,
- (2) the Word of God promising and commanding throughout covenant history,
- (3) the Word of God
 - (a) who became flesh and dwelt among us,
 - (b) who was crucified and raised in power,
 - (c) who shall return in triumph to judge and reign” (*Book of Order*, W-1.1003c).

... In Christian worship the people of God

- (1) hear the Word [Jesus] proclaimed,
- (2) receive the Word [Jesus] enacted in Sacrament,
- (3) discover the Word [Jesus] in the world, and
- (4) are sent to follow the Word [Jesus] into the world” (*Book of Order*, W-1.1004).

... In the name of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian community worships and serves God” (*Book of Order*, W-1.1005b).

And those who are such in the Church have one faith and one spirit; and therefore they worship but one God, and him alone they worship in spirit and in truth, loving him alone with all their hearts and with all their strength, praying unto him alone through Jesus Christ, the only Mediator and Intercessor; and they do not seek righteousness and life outside Christ and faith in him. Because they acknowledge Christ the only head and foundation of the Church, and, resting on him, daily renew themselves by repentance, and patiently bear the cross laid upon them (*The Book of Confessions*, Second Helvetic Confession, 5.135)

See also *The Book of Confessions*: 3.16, 5.023–025, and 5.134.

We believe that Jesus is not merely one of several viable understandings of how God has been revealed and how human-kind can approach God in worship. As the Theological Declaration of Barmen states: “*Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death*” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Theological Declaration of Barmen, 8.11).

“*He is the image of the invisible God ... For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross*” (Col. 1:15a, 19–20).

“*He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being ...*” (*Heb.1:3*).

Worship is a central expression of faith and shapes the identity of each religious community. The mode and meaning of worship for each faith, respectively, are determined by each faith’s foundational beliefs, which are not consistent among Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

As Christians we believe:

- that true worship of God is worship in and through Jesus Christ alone (Jn. 14:6);
- the everyday practice of praying “in the name of Jesus” is the foundation of Christian worship;
- it is the exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord of all and the One through whom we have access to God the Father that launched the early church into the discussions that grew into the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds, the standard-bearers for Christian belief;
- that the identity and centrality of Jesus Christ as God incarnate and the only Savior in worship are core beliefs, and these beliefs have distinguished Christianity from both Judaism and Islam.

The encouragement for Christians to worship together with Muslims is particularly troubling because, as a faith tradition, Islam:

- is very self-conscious regarding its beliefs about the person of Jesus;
- through the Qur’an, makes it clear that Jesus, while a prophet, is not and could not have been the eternal Son of God (Allah);
- through the Qur’an, clearly rejects Christian worship (through Jesus) as dishonoring to God (Allah), and is even a form of unbelief;

Given these foundational differences in our faiths, over the last fourteen centuries, since the emergence of Islam, Christianity and Islam have not been able to affirm *common worship*, because we hold very different beliefs about the nature and identity of God, the means of salvation, and what kind of worship honors God.

Nevertheless, in this action, the General Assembly has encouraged Presbyterians and Muslims to worship together. Such worship could only be accomplished by seriously compromising the *Essential Tenets of Reformed Faith*. It would require removing the centrality of our affirmation of the triune nature of God and the uniqueness and centrality of Jesus Christ as the only true Lord and Savior of humankind. Such worship would be contrary to our faith.

While we affirm the value of seeking "... new opportunities for conversation and understanding with non-Christian religious bodies in order that interests and concerns may be shared and common action undertaken *where compatible means and aims exist*" (*Book of Order*, G-15.0104, emphasis added).

Concurrence to Item 08-02 from the Presbytery of Redstone.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 08-02 be disapproved.

Rationale

Item 08-02 asks the 219th General Assembly (2010) to remove or rewrite perceived "confusing and theologically incompatible language" from the *Call for Tolerance and Peaceful Relations between the Christian and Muslim Communities* statement approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008). The rationale presented by this resolution interprets the *Call* as a mandate for Christians, Jews, and Muslims to celebrate worship together and affirms foundational differences in our faiths. The *Call*, in fact, does not mandate but encourages congregations of these faiths to celebrate religious holidays together, setting aside days of worship during which there can be congregational suppers and dialogue groups.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the *Call* statement is consistent with the actions affirmed by the 211th General Assembly (1999) through its approval of the policy statement on *Building Community Among Strangers*. That assembly:

... believing that the Holy Spirit is at work in our interactions with people of other faiths, affirm[ed] that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has no place for arrogance toward people of other faiths ... urge[d] the General Assembly, middle governing bodies, sessions, and church-related entities to encourage witness and evangelism based upon sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with respectful humility toward those of other religions ... (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 404).

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 08-02

Comment on Item 08-02—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The GAMC advises the 219th General Assembly (2010), in response to Item 08-02, to reaffirm *Respectful Presence: an Understanding of Interfaith Prayer and Celebration from a Reformed Christian Perspective* (commended to congregations and governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), by the 209th General Assembly (1997)) as a guide for prayer or celebration with neighbors of other religious traditions.

Some confusion has arisen in light of language that was included in actions taken by the 218th General Assembly (2008) related to Christian-Muslim relations. Acting on 2008 Item 07-01, that assembly affirmed "... that, as children of [a] loving God, we [Muslims and Christians] share the commandments of love for God and neighbor ...," and called on Presbyterians to "... build on this understanding by calling for further dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, ... learning from one another to promote peace, resolve conflict; ... recognize differences, *celebrate diversity*; advocate justice, oppose bias..." (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 507). It also encouraged congregations of the three faiths "... to *celebrate religious holiday's together, setting aside days of worship* during which there can be congregational suppers, and dialogue groups" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 507; language in italic is that quoted in the Item 08-02, an overture to the 219th GA (2010)).

Similarly, in response to 2008 Item 07-07, the 218th General Assembly (2008) acted "... to encourage and provide resources to presbyteries and local congregations to improve good relations and mutual understanding between Presbyterians and Muslims ... Practices might include *participation in sacred and holy observances in each other's traditions*, shared meals" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 526, language in italic is that quoted in 2010 Item 08-02).

It is not clear what actions are intended by these references in terms of worship or mutual participation in sacred observances.

The substantial concerns of 2010 Item 08-02 are addressed in *Respectful Presence (Minutes, 1997, Part I, pp. 435–440)*. This resource is available at <http://www.pcusa.org/interfaith/study/presencesans.pdf>. *Respectful Presence* helpfully outlines how Presbyterians might engage with our interfaith neighbors in a way that is both hospitable to interfaith neighbors and faithful to the God we worship in Jesus Christ. (Numbers relate to paragraph numbers in *Respectful Presence*.)

That document makes clear that participation of any kind in prayer or celebration with neighbors of other religious traditions is not to be confused with Christian worship. It notes that “Christian worship is a gathering within a community committed in response to God’s goodness in Jesus Christ...” (*Respectful Presence*, 138). It makes clear that:

There are limits to interfaith prayer, celebration, and worship for Presbyterians. These have been expressed in very general form in the paper, “The Nature of Revelation in the Christian Tradition from a Reformed Perspective” (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, pp. 437–453)...

- a. We must not bend or trim our faith in God’s revelation in Jesus Christ in order to achieve an artificial agreement with the doctrines of other religions...
- b. We may learn from [other] religions insofar as what we learn can be incorporated into, and enrich, our personal and corporate relationship with the God of Israel who is revealed in Jesus Christ ...
- c. Entering into interfaith dialogue in no way diminishes our calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ with all people, with all due respect for every good thing that God has given them in their religion. Indeed, expressing one’s own faith is a necessary condition of genuine interreligious dialogue.... (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, p. 452, 28.276; *Respectful Presence*, 129)

Apart from Christian worship, however, *Respectful Presence* also suggests that “... there are three forms of interfaith prayer and celebration:

1. when people of other faiths are present in Christian worship;
2. when Christians are present in worship activities of other faith communities;
3. when people of different faiths are together in interfaith prayer, celebration, or worship” (*Respectful Presence*, 140).

In these situations, it recommends that Presbyterians exercise “respectful presence”: “... Christians can be authentically open to the intimations of the Spirit’s presence in the midst of an interfaith gathering and, at the same time, deeply committed to their faith in God through Jesus Christ. They can share with others with integrity, aware that God is present and active in all creation...” (*Respectful Presence*, 139).

This General Assembly might do well to remind the church of the distinctions and possibilities that it has acknowledged in *Respectful Presence*, in order to make clear that the church does NOT recommend “common worship,” or the intermingling or confusion of Christian tradition with other traditions, but does see great potential benefit in the receiving and giving of hospitality that includes the respectful presence of Christians with others in the sharing of prayers, readings, and liturgical expressions of one another’s traditions.

Item 08-03

[The assembly answered Item 08-03 by the action taken on Item 08-09. See pp. 31, 32.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010):

1. Approve for study and reflection the paper, “Christians and Jews: People of God” and distribute it to the church electronically.
2. Commend “Christians and Jews: People of God” to governing bodies and congregations as guidance for the occasions in which Presbyterians and Jews converse, cooperate, and enter into dialogue.
3. Commend “Christians and Jews: People of God” to governing bodies and congregations as guidance for the development of programs and resources.

Rationale

This report is received in response to the following referral: *2004 Referral: Item 06-09. On Re-Examining the Relationship Between Christians and Jews and the Implications for Our Evangelism and New Church Development—From the Presbytery of Hudson River (Minutes, 2004, Part I, pp. 20, 440)*.

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS: PEOPLE OF GOD

A. *Preface*

“A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews”¹ was approved by the 199th General Assembly (1987) as “a pastoral ... teaching document to provide a basis for continuing discussion within the Presbyterian community ... and to offer guidance for occasions in which Presbyterians and Jews converse, cooperate, and enter into dialogue.”

In response to four separate actions by the 216th General Assembly (2004) that created tensions between the American Jewish community and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the assembly directed the “Office of Theology and Worship, the Office of Interfaith Relations, and the Office of Evangelism to ‘reexamine and strengthen the relationship between Christians and Jews and the implications of this relationship for our evangelism and new church development in continuing response to the 211th General Assembly (1999) mandate to guide the church in “bearing witness to Jesus Christ in a pluralistic age”’ (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 20).

In partial response to the General Assembly’s mandate, staff from the offices of Theology and Worship, Interfaith Relations, and Evangelism met eight times with representatives of the National Council of Synagogues. These conversations led to four consultations that included rabbis from the Conservative, Reform, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist branches of Judaism, and Presbyterian pastors, theologians, and governing body staffs. The consultations focused on a review of the 1987 Presbyterian paper, and three central topics: the Land, evangelism, and community identity.

“A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews” noted that “Theology is never done in a vacuum. It influences and is influenced by its context.”² Specifically, four contextual realities were identified that affected the issue in 1987: (1) an increasingly global and pluralistic situation, (2) interpersonal and intercommunal dynamics, (3) the church’s commitment to the living Word as witnessed to in Scripture and tradition, and (4) the church’s own heritage of Scripture and theological tradition. These contextual realities endure, but our post-1987 context also includes a worldwide increase in overt anti-Jewish rhetoric and action, a sustained cycle of violence in Israel-Palestine, repeated breakdowns of the Israel-Palestine peace process, two American-led wars in the Middle East, the increase in worldwide terrorism, and more.

Furthermore, the past two decades have seen a number of statements on Jewish-Christian relations from ecclesial and academic groups. Specifically, “The Willowbank Declaration on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People” (1989), “Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity” (2000), “A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People” (2002), and new attention to the papal encyclical, *Nostra Aetate* (1965) have deepened and enriched Christian theological understanding. In addition, scholarly publications and symposia on the history, theology, and moral dimensions of Jewish-Christian relations have multiplied.³

The current context also includes developments within the PC(USA) that affect Jewish-Christian relationships generally and Jewish-Presbyterian relationships specifically. *Turn to the Living God* (1991), *Between Millennia* (2001), *Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ* (2002), *The Trinity: God’s Love Overflowing* (2006), and *Invitation to Christ* (2006) are signs of renewed Presbyterian attention to foundational theological issues and to the challenge of witnessing to Christian faith in a religiously plural world. The past two decades have also seen an increase in the number of PC(USA) presbyteries, congregations, and ministers who have developed close ties with Jewish organizations, synagogues, and rabbis.

All of these developments indicate that it is time to supplement the teaching of “A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews,” providing Presbyterians with a deeper understanding of the bonds between Christians and Jews, and broader resources for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s relationship with the Jewish community in America and beyond. “Christians and Jews: People of God” is not meant to replace “A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews.” The 1987 study paper represented a significant advance in Christian theological understanding and in Presbyterian-Jewish relations. Its “Affirmations and Explications” remain a valuable resource for discussion within the church. The present paper is intended to refine and deepen the theological understanding of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism as well as to provide a further resource for discussion in the church and for conversations between Christians and Jews.

B. *Theological Perspectives*

“... to share the rich root of the olive tree . . .” (Rom. 11:17).

The relationship between Christians and Jews is not simply a particular instance of “interfaith relations.” The relationship between Christian faith and Judaism is unique, foundational, and enduring. The New Testament bears consistent witness to this relationship—the mercy of God in Jesus Christ embraces both Jew and Gentile; it does not abandon Jews in favor of Gentiles or forsake Jews in favor of the church. Supersessionism, the belief that God’s covenant with the church has replaced God’s covenant with Israel, and that the church has supplanted the Jewish people, is contrary to the core witness of the New Testament and is not supported by the mainstream of the Reformed tradition.

Unfavorable New Testament references to “the Jews” do not refer to all Jews of the first century, and certainly not of the twenty-first. The fact is that many first century Jews and most Jews since then have not placed faith in Jesus as God’s Messiah but it does not cancel God’s continuing fidelity to his people Israel. “... [H]as God rejected his people?” asks Paul; “... [H]ave they stumbled so as to fall?” His answer is clear: “By no means!” (Rom. 11:1,11).

Even when Paul draws the differences between Jews and Christians most starkly, he proclaims God’s enduring faithfulness to Jews: “As regards the gospel they are enemies of God for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors; for the gifts [of God] and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:28–29). Because God remains true to Israel, Christians have confidence that God will remain true to us. Karl Barth asks, “Do you believe that it lies with us to exclude the Jew from this faithfulness of God? Do you really believe that we can and may deny him this?” He then gives voice to the Reformed theological tradition: “God’s faithfulness in the reality of Israel is in fact the guarantee of His faithfulness to us too.”⁴

The relationship of the Christian church to the people Israel is not that of a replacement, but of “a wild olive shoot” grafted into “the rich root of the olive tree” (Rom. 11:17). While the New Testament contains numerous references to God’s “new covenant” in Christ, these cannot be taken to mean that “new” cancels God’s previous covenants. Just as the covenant at Sinai did not dissolve the covenant with Abraham, so the new covenant sealed in Christ’s blood “... does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise” (Gal. 3:17).

Throughout the centuries, the way that Christians relate to Jews has been a barometer of the church’s spiritual health. Too often, persecution and pogroms, forced “conversions,” ghettos, multiple forms of discrimination, and subtle modes of contempt have indicated that Christians have become “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12). Often, these attitudes and events have resulted from uninformed stereotypes of Jews and Judaism. Genuine knowledge is essential, not only for the sake of Jews, but also because Christians can fully understand who we are as people of faith only when we understand who Jews are as people of faith. Understanding who Jews “were” in biblical times is insufficient; we must recover in our time the good news that Christ “has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Eph. 2:14).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called to explore more deeply what it means to affirm that Christians and Jews now worship and serve the same God, and how this differentiates Christian-Jewish relations from Christian relationships with adherents of other religions.

“... [and to remember] his holy covenant” [Lk. 1:72]

John Calvin, devoting an entire chapter of the *Institutes* to an explication of “The Similarity of the Old and New Testaments,” declares that “The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same.”⁵ Clearly, there are differences in “the mode of dispensation” between the two, so that Calvin readily acknowledges that there are differences between the Old and New Testaments. “I freely admit the differences in Scripture, to which attention is called,” says Calvin, “but in such a way as not to detract from its established unity.”⁶

Christian faith is firmly grounded in the faith of Israel, for Christian faith affirms that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the one triune God. Superficial contrasts between “the wrathful God of the Old Testament” and “the loving God of the New Testament” are not only inaccurate readings of both Old and New Testaments, but also denials of the very foundations of Christian faith.

One of the earliest challenges faced by the Christian church came from Marcion’s attempt to detach Christianity from its Jewish heritage. He set out to remove all references to the Old Testament from Christian writings: only an edited version of Luke’s Gospel and edited versions of Paul’s letters remained once Marcion had excised all favorable mention of Israel, the law, and the justice of God. The church rejected Marcion’s assertion that the God who “has spoken to us by a Son” is not the same God who spoke “in many and various ways by the prophets” (Heb. 1:1–2). The early church preserved the truth of the gospel, yet both mild and virulent versions of Marcion’s heresy have endured.

Inappropriate uses of the historical-critical method of studying Scripture can reduce the Old Testament to a mildly interesting account of what people used to believe long ago and far away. For Christians, the Old Testament is more than a record of ancient Israel’s faith; it is “Christian Scripture.” Jesus proclaimed, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill” (Mt. 5:17).⁷ Similarly, Paul says that “Christ is the “telos” of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes [telos—”end”]—not as “termination” of the law, but as the law’s “goal, purpose”]. Christian interpretation of the Old Testament is properly theological while also employing historical-critical tools.

Well-intentioned replacement of the terms “Old Testament” and “New Testament” by “Hebrew Bible” and “Early Christian Writings” can have unintended yet unfortunate effects. They combine to imply that the “Hebrew Bible” is “their Bible,” not Christian Scripture, and that “Christian Writings” are confined to the New Testament. Using the common term “testament” for both indicates the integral, inseparable connection between the two. “Old” and “New” may be retained because the

former does not mean outdated or inferior and the latter does not imply the replacement of the former. (“Older and Newer Testaments” or “First and Second Testaments” are alternatives that also convey this connection.)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called to explore more deeply the singular reality that Christians and Jews share Scripture. At the same time, the church is called to recover the Old Testament as “Christian” Scripture.

“... and has broken down the dividing wall ... of hostility ...” (Eph. 2:14).

Many Christians mistakenly equate contemporary Jews with New Testament Pharisees, and the current state and people of Israel with Old Testament Israel. There is a sense in which the latter is an understandable mistake, for modern Middle Eastern cities and states often bear the same names as they did in the past—e.g., Egypt, Syria, Jerusalem, and Israel. However, biblical realities should not be read into present-day political situations, nor should modern political situations be read into biblical narratives or accounts of the gospel. Twenty-first century Christians do not live with Egyptians under the Pharaohs, Assyrian conquerors, Babylonian captors, David’s Jerusalem, or the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Christians live now with the modern heirs of those peoples, shaped by all of the intervening events and forces of history. Today’s Judaism is not the ancient Judaism that we see in the Bible, but Rabbinic Judaism. It is a faith that is rooted in Scripture, but one, like our own, that has been shaped by centuries of faithful interpretation, change, and renewal. Today’s Jews must be understood in relation to their long history since the time of Jesus, and in light of the faith, ethics, and practice that marks their lives today.

The survival of the Jewish people, in spite of hostility, exile, diaspora, and holocaust, is significant. Karl Barth relates the story about Frederick the Great asking his personal physician for a single proof of the existence of God. The physician replied, “Your Majesty, the Jews!” Barth comments that, “in the person of the Jew there stands a witness before our eyes, the witness of God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and in that with us all.”⁸ It is a witness to the faithfulness of God, and the faithfulness of the Jewish people. The survival of the Jews comes in spite of suppression, separation, and persecution, most lamentably by Christians. Christian teaching of contempt for Jews and the subsequent history of ghettos, pogroms, and even holocaust is not simply a distant memory. Anti-Semitism is a continuing reality throughout the world, including within the Christian church.

The New Testament does not merely encourage toleration of the Jews. The New Testament surprise is not that Jews are encompassed within the grace of God, but that God’s mercy extends beyond Jews to include the Gentiles. It is the people of the other nations, the “Gentiles” (the overwhelming majority of the church) who were “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise.” It is they who have been brought near by the cross of Christ (Eph. 2:12–13) so that “there is no longer Jew or Greek ... for all ... are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). The good news of the New Testament is not confined to the first century; its proclamation has enduring significance. Paul’s affirmation that God has not rejected his people Israel, that the Jews have not stumbled so as to fall, and his declaration that “all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26) is as true today as Paul’s proclamation of our salvation in Christ.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called to examine its interpretation of Scripture, its theology, its educational materials, and its public policy in order to avoid explicit or implicit teaching of contempt for Judaism and Jews. Continuing conversation with Jews should include faithful exploration of inaccurate and offensive characterizations of Jews and Judaism.

C. *The Land*

“... the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land’” (Gen. 12:7).

As the 1987 statement reminded the church, a faithful effort to understand the relationship of Christianity to Judaism, and of Christians with Jews, “cannot avoid the reality of the promise of land. The question with which we must wrestle is how this promise is to be understood in the light of the existence of the modern political State of Israel. ... The State of Israel is a geopolitical entity and is not to be validated theologically.”

Addressing this issue is extremely difficult today, first, because of the unresolved conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and the fact that assertions about the land figure centrally in political debates and determination of policies. The long occupation of Palestinian territory and the suffering of the Palestinian people has sometimes been justified on the basis of the biblical promise. Some Jews, particularly in the settlers’ movement, and some Christians have misappropriated the biblical promise, employing it as a political instrument. Moreover, some see any discussion of the issue of land as de facto part of a position on the Middle East, or on Israeli-Palestinian peace. The positions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on these matters are clear, and are to be found elsewhere.⁹ It remains to explore the biblical promise of land, and how it can be understood in the context of the Christian-Jewish relationship.

In Christian reading and interpretation of Scripture, the concrete particularity of the biblical promise of land has often proved to be a stumbling block, in a manner similar to the particularity of the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18–25). God acts in and through the concrete realities of Jesus’ life and passion. In the same way, the Bible witnesses to God’s election of one people out of many, and God’s promise to one person, Abraham. It is not possible to deny the particularity of God’s gift of a specific land to the people of God’s covenant. At the same time, it is necessary to ask what this

gift means for all the people of the world, and for the people of that particular place, both Israelis and Palestinians, at this time in history.

In the biblical account, the land of Israel is the land given by God to the Jewish people. This land was promised to the descendants of Abraham and Sarah. It is this land that was the promised place in which God's people were to keep God's covenant, live according to God's will, and be a light to the nations. "If you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5–6).

In the scriptural account, the land is integral to the responsibility of God's people. The land is given not just as a place to live, but primarily as the place in which the people Israel can live out the covenant and carry out God's commandments. The concrete gift of land, as presented in the biblical text, comes less with rights than with distinctive responsibilities. The gift of the land is conditional upon the following of God's way. The Scriptures warn repeatedly that failure to do so will result in God casting the people out of the land (cf. Lev. 20:22; Deut. 8:11–20, 30:15–18, etc.). The Scriptures also speak of this land in proclaiming the return of God's people from exile; the land is central to the redemption of God's people. God found this particular people "in a desert land, in a howling wilderness" (Deut. 32:10), and appointed them to be the Lord's people. God gives this particular land to them, in which they are to fulfill His will, in order to establish the Sovereignty of God on earth.

In the words of Christian biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann,

The land for which Israel yearns and which it remembers is never unclaimed space but always *a place with Yahweh*, a place well filled with memories of life with him and promise from him and vows to him. It is land that provides the central assurance to Israel of its historicity, that it will be and always must be concerned with actual roorage in a place which is a repository for commitment and therefore identity. Biblical faith is surely about the life of a people with God as has been shown by all the current and recent emphases on covenant in an historical place. And if God has to do with [the people] Israel in a special way, as he surely does, he has to do with land as an historical place in a special way. It will no longer do to speak about Yahweh and his people, but we must speak about Yahweh and his people *and his land*.¹⁰

While Brueggemann encourages us to acknowledge the concrete reality of the land for biblical faith, other Christian biblical interpreters have understood God's gift of land in more spiritual or metaphorical terms. They assert that with the coming of the new covenant, God is no longer concerned with physical land, but with the human heart, and not solely with one particular people, but instead with all of humankind. God's gift of this particular land to this particular people is seen by these interpreters as a demonstration of God's gift of the potential for life, for fruitfulness, and for the pursuit of holiness and justice to all people.

Historically, a widespread, traditional interpretation of Scripture has argued that, because the Jews rejected Jesus, God rejected the Jews, put the church in the place of the Jewish people as God's chosen ones, and cast them out of the land. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has clearly rejected this supersessionist teaching, affirming that "the church, elected in Jesus Christ, has been engrafted into the people of God established by the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, Christians have not replaced Jews."¹¹

A minority of modern Christian interpreters attributes the creation of the modern state of Israel directly to God, and sees the ingathering of Jews to that state as a fulfillment of prophecy, or as the beginning of the end times. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has rejected such dispensationalist biblical interpretations, which purport to discern the time and order of God's future activity.¹² Presbyterians are also wary of attributing too much theological significance to a state, rejecting with Barmen "the false doctrine, as though the State, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the church's vocation as well."¹³

Reformed and Presbyterian interpreters, however, have usually understood the promise of "land" primarily as an earthly and historical reality. The foundational events of Christian faith also took place in this land; it is here that the Word became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, a Jew who lived in this same land, then under Roman occupation. History and the concrete material world are foundational to our understanding of God's work of salvation. In biblical perspective, life in relation with God always involves actual human communities in concrete places, struggling to live within God's kingdom.

Both the Old and New Testaments are clear that "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it" (Ps. 24:1). The earth is God's creation, and God alone is holy and to be worshipped. Other texts go on to suggest that "in the end" God will create a "new heaven" and a "new earth," in order to accomplish God's own intentions (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; Rev. 21:1–5). No one but God has everlasting ownership of land on this earth, and because God owns the land, no one has ever been "more" than caretakers of the land of Israel, or of any other land. At the same time, God's people, whether we mean the particular Jewish people or are speaking more universally, are "not less" than stewards. God has given the land as a trust for safekeeping, a place for responsibility, and an arena in which to deal justly with one another and with the land (Ex. 19:6).

"... to provide for those who mourn in Zion ..." (Isa. 61:3)

The connection between the Jewish people and the particular land of Israel has been expressed in every generation of Jews, in liturgy and poetry, in daily prayers and charitable giving, and in periodic movements to return. Their connection with this land has been, and remains, a part of Jewish self-understanding, from antiquity through today. Though there are Jews who do not find this connection to either the biblical land or the modern state essential to their self-understanding, for the great majority of Jews the biblical land, the state of Israel, and Jewish identity are inextricably intertwined.

Most Jews understand that the land of biblical Israel and the modern state of Israel are two distinct realities: the state is a contemporary secular and political entity, whereas the land is the geographic place promised and given by God in the Torah, the boundaries of which are not exactly defined. Nevertheless, the two are closely related elements of Jewish peoplehood.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms the ongoing covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people, and the continuing commitment of Jewish men and women to live out God's will in daily life, for the sake of fulfilling God's purpose for all humanity. Yet it is difficult for Christians to understand how the modern state can play a role for Jews, similar to the role of the ancient land, in the fulfillment of this covenant. In light of Christian experience through time, it is difficult for us to accord a contemporary state spiritual or religious significance. Moreover, as citizens of the United States, our thinking about the state is affected by the American understanding of the separation of church and state.

Most Christians find it far easier to understand the modern state of Israel as a haven of refuge for the Jewish people. Their long history of repeated displacement and persecution may remind American Christians of the need for refuge that brought many of our forbears to this country. Some Christians assert that this reality of Jewish history is being used politically in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The church needs careful conversations with Jews in order to come to a fuller understanding of these issues.

It is certain that no clear geographical boundaries of the ancient land of Israel can be established from the biblical text. Thus, it is also certain that no boundaries of a modern state can be established from the biblical text. It is dangerous, and involves ignoring nearly two thousand years of intervening history, to embroil the Bible in the defining of the boundaries of Israel or any modern state.

While we affirm that God's gift of land was, like the incarnation, particular and concrete, we also give thanks God as the giver of the potential for life, fruitfulness, and justice to all of humanity. God's gift of land, and the potential and responsibility that goes with that gift, pertains both to the Jews and to the Palestinian people who live alongside them in what was the ancient, biblical land of promise. Both peoples have claims on the same land. Jews and Palestinians give voice to incompatible historical narratives and political claims, each assumed to be "correct" by its narrators. What is not often clearly said in the midst of the conflict is that both people, in different ways, are recipients of God's gift and responsibility.

The tradition of God's gift of land in the biblical account does not resolve this conflict, or provide any basis by which to settle modern territorial disputes. Neither the Israeli state nor the Palestinian Authority has a divine right to the land. Both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples do have the right to secure homelands in which to live responsibly, and pursue their national and cultural aspirations. Policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict make clear that an end to all forms of violence, together with the establishment of two viable states through a negotiated resolution of this conflict, are desperately needed for peace, security, and justice for both peoples.

However, Presbyterian commitments to justice and peace for Palestinians and Israelis alike can only stand if we base these commitments on strong support for justice for all people. This means that, in our work for Israeli-Palestinian peace, we must be sure to seek justice and security for both peoples. We must also reject and not make use of the history of Christian anti-Judaism and all of the stereotypes and prejudices that accompany it.

Whenever our critique of the Israeli-Palestinian situation employs language or draws on sources that have anti-Jewish overtones, or makes use of classic Christian anti-Jewish ideas, we cloud complicated issues with the rhetoric of ignorance, subliminal prejudices, or the language of hate. This undermines the church's advocacy for peace and justice. Critical questions such as ending the occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel or the future of Jerusalem are complex and difficult. We must not make them more difficult by importing anti-Jewish motifs into our discussions.

Arguments suggesting or declaring that the Jewish people are no longer in covenant with God, or statements that echo the medieval Christian claim that the Jews are to blame for the crucifixion of Christ, employ classic themes of anti-Judaism. Presbyterians should be alert to occurrences of these themes and question any assertions that are based on them.

Characterizations of Zionism that distort that movement can all too easily demonize Jews. When Zionism is presented as monolithic or univocal, or solely as an extension of European colonialism and a result of anti-Semitism, the Zionist movement's history, internal debates, and ethical concerns are distorted. The problems and suffering of the Palestinians are not due solely to Zionism. Many Israelis working passionately for peace are motivated by forms of Zionism. The origins, development, and practices of Zionism and its relationship to the realities of the Israeli-Palestinian situation are much more complex than such a picture presents.

Critique of the state of Israel and its policies is always legitimate and is not, in itself, anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic. It is common among Jews and Christians; Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans. However, critique by Christians can sometimes come close in tone or content to a denunciation of Judaism or the Jewish people. Polemic that identifies Israeli officials with Jewish authorities in the time of Jesus is especially problematic, and clouds an accurate understanding of the current situation. In addition, citizens in democracies such as Israel and the United States are responsible before God for the actions of their governments. The citizens of Israel, not the Jewish people as a whole, are responsible for the conduct of Israeli state policy.

Christian liberation theology embraces the Exodus narrative as a story of God's liberation for all oppressed people. This theology reflects on the experience of an oppressed people and its liberation in light of the experience of ancient Israel. Broad theological use of the Exodus narrative does not abrogate its continuing centrality in the faith and self-understanding of the Jewish people. The biblical stories of liberation, like those of God's gift of land, are at one and the same time particular narratives regarding God's relationship with the Jewish people, and also descriptions of God's intention to free and provide a home for all peoples.

Some expressions of Christian liberation theology tend to describe the Palestinian experience as oppression by "Jews" or "Zionists" rather than by Israeli state authority, or liken the passion of Jesus to the sufferings of the Palestinian people. Responsible theological critique of state policies should not characterize a whole people as oppressors or "Christ-killers." Such a characterization of the situation can easily sound like an echo of the classic anti-Jewish accusation that all Jews everywhere are guilty of killing Christ. For Jews this is terrifying, because the narrative of the passion and crucifixion has been used as a theological basis for the ghettoization, denigration, and killing of Jews for nearly twenty centuries. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is attentive to Palestinian Christians as they speak theologically about what is happening to them. At the same time, Presbyterians are called to discern echoes of the historic condemnation of Jews as "Christ-killers," and to eschew any such anti-Jewish teaching.

Clearly, the relationships of Presbyterians (or any Christians) and Jews should neither depend on, nor dictate, particular positions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian situation or its resolution. Our relationships with Jewish neighbors do not necessitate approval of Israeli state policy. Speaking out respectfully against actions of Israeli authorities and groups, or of Palestinian entities, is to be expected among Christians and Jews. Disagreements about the dynamics and possible solutions of the Israeli-Palestinian situation are to be expected as well. Jews and Presbyterians may be surprised by the similarity of their critiques of Israel's actions as well as by their shared hopes for the aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Questions regarding our understandings of land, and of the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian situation, are central to engaged conversation between Christians and Jews. In order to build relationships of respect and honest understanding with Jewish neighbors, Presbyterians must be willing and prepared to talk with them about our concerns and questions regarding Israel and the land. Presbyterians must also be willing to listen to their expressions of attachment to Israel, their understanding of the biblical promise of land, and the ways that the state of Israel speaks to them of responsibility, justice, and hope.

D. *Evangelism*

"... the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." (Acts 2:39).

Presbyterians share a basic conviction that the church is called to tell the good news of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to all people. In the midst of a world of death and decay, the church witnesses to the reality of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ through its proclamation of the gospel and the character of its transformed life. The church's incarnational witness has both personal and social implications. The community of faith declares the mighty acts of God, pointing others to Christ rather than to itself. "Evangelism is joyfully sharing the good news of the sovereign love of God and calling all people to repentance, to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, to active membership in the church, and to obedient service in the world."¹⁴

The church's evangelistic task is to be witnesses, teachers, practitioners, and sharers, who engage in the struggles of life and extend to others the invitation to become Christ's disciples. Unfortunately, the history of Christian mission includes some examples of evangelization carried out with little regard for the people to whom the gospel was proclaimed, in ways that have been aggressive, disrespectful, and damaging. Even so, Christian proclamation of the gospel has attempted to be faithful to "the Great Commission" that we follow Jesus into all the world, inviting all to become Christ's faithful disciples.

In recent decades, Presbyterians have become increasingly aware of two new challenges to evangelism: the secularization of the culture and the religiously plural character of American society. North America is a mission field, and churches can no longer depend on the natural entrance of people into the community of Christian faith. These realities confront the church with new questions about the appropriate character and means of Christian proclamation.

How should the gospel be shared with Jews? Should Christians assume that Jews are without God, cut off from God's covenant, and so must be converted to Christian faith in order to be restored to communion with God? Or does the God of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob continue to be present with his people? The New Testament makes it clear to Christians that Jews are not empty vessels, without God, who must be filled with Christianity in order to be restored to divine favor. “I ask then, has God rejected his people? By no means! ... So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! ... as regards election they are beloved ... [that] they too may now receive mercy” (Rom. 11:1,11, 28, 31). With Paul, we affirm these things, but we also join our voices to Paul’s to affirm that these things are a mystery, and to confess, “Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ... For from him and through him and to him are all things ...” (Rom. 11:33, 36).

God remains faithful to the people Israel; God remains faithful to Christians. Jews remain faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Christians remain faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whom we know in Emmanuel, Jesus Christ. As two peoples who are known and loved by God and who know and love the one God, Christians and Jews are therefore called to be faithful to one another in bonds of love.

One mark of Christian fidelity to Jews is honest sharing of the faith that is in us. Christians are not called to witness to their faith because Jews are outside the embrace of God’s redemption and must be brought into the Christian church. Rather, Christians bear witness to Christ because brothers and sisters who live together in integrity do not withhold their deepest convictions from one another. Jews and Christians are called to live in open relationships of mutual witness in which beliefs and hopes are shared in love. Christians and Jews speak to one another, listen to one another, and learn from one another. And together, Jews and Christians bear witness to the world, showing in word and deed the faithfulness of the one God.

Mutual witness goes beyond formal dialogue to patterns of shared life in which conversation, cooperation, and collaboration develop between churches and synagogues, rabbis and ministers, individual Christians and Jews. It includes mutual disclosure of the ways God is known in the lives of both peoples, respectful listening to and learning from one another. It embraces both mutual affirmation and, when necessary, mutual questioning and correction.

Christian witness should not target Jews in pointed strategies of proselytism, attempting to convert them to Christianity. Especially to be avoided are attempts to present Christian faith in Jewish guise, duplicating Jewish liturgies and practices while avoiding or marginalizing distinctively Christian sacraments and symbols. Faithful, authentic witness to the gospel must always be both truthful and modest. Christian love can never be a Trojan horse for aggressive proselytism, and words of Christian proclamation cannot be used as weapons to coerce conversion. Christians should always be prepared to give “an accounting for the hope that is in [us]; yet do it with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:15–16).

Yet persons who come to Christian faith from Jewish backgrounds must not be asked to deny their Jewish heritage, even though from a Jewish perspective they are no longer religiously Jewish. In the first century of the church, it became clear that Gentiles did not have to become Jews in order to become Christians. It would also be a denial of the gospel if in the twenty-first century Jews had to become Gentiles in order to become Christians. Yet Christian communities and all who confess faith in Christ should make clear the Lord to whom they belong, and publicly profess their Christian faith in work, liturgy, and life. Because Jews find it difficult to understand how Christian converts from Judaism continue to claim their Jewish heritage, Christians and Jews can engage in careful conversation in order to explore their incommensurate understandings of this matter.

Some Christians and Jews find themselves in “interreligious marriages.” The history of Jewish-Christian separation, suspicion, and antagonism makes it difficult for both Jewish and Christian partners, as well as their families and religious communities, to discover how each partner can live out their faith with integrity. Too often, the difficulties are such that both partners drift into “no religion.” The birth of children presents parents with the dilemma of how they can share religious faith within the family. Too often, the difficulties are such that children are deprived of any engagement with Judaism or Christianity. “Interreligious marriages” pose challenges to synagogues and churches, and especially to Christian and Jewish spouses and their families. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should see this complex matter as an occasion for intensive dialogue with the Jewish community.

E. *Partners In Hope*

“I am about to do a new thing ... do you not perceive it?” (Isa. 43:19).

The relationship between Christians and Jews is not simply a concept. Theological understanding is essential, but theology must never become mere theory, abstracted from life. Paul’s letter to the Romans is not an academic essay, coolly considering the theological question of Jews who have not professed faith in Jesus as Messiah and Lord. Paul grapples with a matter that touches him personally and deeply:

I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (Rom. 9:2–5)

Christians are called to know Jewish brothers and sisters, to listen and learn from them in the sharing of faith and faithfulness, and to give thanks for their living testimony to the enduring fulfillment of God’s gracious promises. In our worship and personal prayers we can join voices throughout the church, praying ...

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
 Father of us all, whose Son Jesus was born a Jew,
 was circumcised, and was dedicated in the Temple:
 thank you for patriarchs and prophets and righteous rabbis,
 whose teaching we revere, whose law is our law fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
 Never let us forget that we, who are your people,
 are by faith children of Abraham,
 bound in one family with Jewish brothers and sisters,
 who also serve your promise;
 through Jesus Christ, our Master and Messiah. Amen. (*The Worshipbook*)

Almighty God, you are the one true God,
 and have called forth people of faith
 in every time and place.
 Your promises are sure and true.
 We bless you for your covenant given to Abraham and Sarah,
 that you keep even now with the Jews.
 We rejoice that you have brought us into covenant with you
 by the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ,
 himself a Jew, nurtured in the faith of Israel.
 We praise you that you are faithful to covenants made
 with us and Jewish brothers and sisters,
 that together we may serve your will,
 and come at last to your promised peace. Amen. (*Book of Common Worship*)

May Jews and Christians join in voicing our foundational affirmation, “The LORD is our God, the LORD alone,” in mutual witness to the world.

Endnotes

1. www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship/issues/christiansjews.pdf
2. Ibid.
3. These and other relevant documents are available in the Office of Theology and Worship Church Issues Series No.7, available at www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship.
4. Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (London: SCM Press, 1949) p. 80.
5. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.10.2. (Philadelphia; Westminster Press, 1960) p. 429.
6. Calvin, *Institutes* 2.11.1, p. 449.
7. Matthew 5:17 is the only New Testament text quoted in the Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 116a–b.
8. Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, p. 75.
9. A new study on the Middle East, with a particular focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will come to the 219th General Assembly (2010). A compendium of the policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding Israel and Palestine can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/gastatements.htm>.
10. Walter Brueggemann, *The Land*, pp. 5–6. The reference is to biblical theology; Brueggemann has made clear more recently that this does not confer a “supernatural right” to land in the midst of the realities of political life today, and amidst the rights of others. He says, “What [Israel] claimed to be supernatural does not and cannot carry weight in the world of political-military reality” (*The Christian Century*, January 2009).
11. “A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews,” Affirmation 2.
12. See the General Assembly Theological Statement, “Eschatology: The Doctrine of Last Things” ((1978) and *Between Millennia: What Presbyterians Believe About the Coming of Christ* Louisville: Office of Theology and Worship, PC(USA), 2001)
13. *The Book of Confessions*, The Theological Declaration of Barmen, 8.23.
14. *Minutes*, 1989, Part I, p. 359.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 08-03 be disapproved.

Rationale

The ACREC believes that this paper should not be approved because of flaws in the process in which the paper was formulated and concerns about the theological bases upon which this paper relies. The ACREC strongly advises that approval and distribution of this paper be postponed until a broader consultation process can be instituted to include other church constituencies who have an interest in this topic.

1. *Process Flaws*

The ACREC is concerned that the National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus (NMEPC) and others, such as the Israel/Palestine Mission Network and the Middle East Study Committee, were not given an effective opportunity to contribute to this paper, resulting in vital contributors being sidelined.

- Consultation process ongoing for six years before NMEPC was asked to comment on the draft paper and was only given approximately three weeks to do so.
- The above constituencies should have been involved in the development of the paper.
- The process appears to have been shrouded in secrecy
 - identity of contributors/ participants/ writers, only recently made known,
 - limited circulation of drafts.

2. *Content Flaws*

The ACREC also has concerns about the following topics discussed in the paper that deserve greater input from a wider and more diverse group of scholars and by those who are affected by the paper, such as the NMEPC.

- The lack of Christology/ the Lordship of Christ
 - Blurring the lines between Christianity and Judaism.
- Theology of the Land
 - Use of Scripture versus international law regarding Israel’s right to exist.
 - Justifying Israel’s use of force through Scripture.
- Endorsing Zionism, a political ideology
- Separating theology from ethics
- Demonization of Liberation Theology

Item 08-04

[The assembly approved Item 08-04 with amendment. See pp. 31, 32–33.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

1. **Approve the report “Toward an Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations” and commend it to the church for study and guidance.**
2. **In consideration of the need for a more intentional and engaged approach to Christian-Muslim relations, call upon the church, through its agencies and governing bodies, to support education for Christian-Muslim relations among Presbyterians, by**
 - a. **developing and making available updated resources for study and reflection on Islam and Muslim life, including case studies of Muslims and Christian-Muslim relationships in a variety of countries of the world, and especially in the United States;**
 - b. **urging presbyteries and seminaries to hold training events in partnership with the Offices of Interfaith Relations and Theology and Worship of the denomination regarding Islam and Christian-Muslim relations, in order to equip congregational leaders and interested Presbyterians to teach others;**

c. continuing to monitor the church's own educational materials for sensitivity and accuracy regarding Muslims and Islam, and to encourage the inclusion of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in curricular materials of the church;

d. encouraging Presbyterians to come to know and befriend their Muslim neighbors, and to talk in-depth with them about matters of shared concern, life and faith, and the questions each has about the other, to implement a program of shared community experiences that might include sharing meals, cultural events, and activities in mosques and churches together, and to develop an educational program that includes inviting a Muslim leader to offer instruction in a church and a Christian leader to offer instruction in a mosque].

3. Call upon the church, through its agencies and governing bodies, to support further theological reflection regarding Islam and Christian-Muslim relations, in company with Muslims and within the Christian family, by

a. providing for a series of consultations between Presbyterians and Muslims to be facilitated by the Offices of Interfaith Relations and Theology and Worship;

b. learning more about Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in various areas of the world through interaction with partner churches and institutions, study centers, mission personnel; and

c. calling for the development, through this process, of a fuller study articulating a theological understanding of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to be presented for consideration of the 221st General Assembly (2014). This process shall include broad consultation including representatives of the national Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus and partner churches in majority Muslim countries [and other significant bodies both Muslim and Christian].

4. Call upon the church, through its agencies and governing bodies, to support Presbyterians in the practice of faithful witness with Muslims, by

a. encouraging presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians to engage with Muslims and to explore ways by which common concerns for justice and community development can be addressed through cooperation between Christians and Muslims;

b. asking appropriate bodies of the church, and individual Presbyterians, to identify and speak out against bigotry[,] ~~and~~ prejudice[, discrimination, and violence] against Islam and Muslim peoples of all cultures, especially in the United States;

c. continuing to work with Christian churches in areas of Muslim majority in their efforts to live freely and openly as Christians, and to work for full religious freedom (including the right to change one's religion) and for equal citizenship for all persons in their societies;

d. continuing to monitor the use of religion in the service of power, in the undergirding of systems of oppression, and in legitimating extreme political agendas, and to act as peacemakers and peacekeepers;

e. exploring missiological issues and the forms of Christian witness in use among Presbyterians, and the forms of Muslim da'wah (invitation, call), in the United States and in other parts of the world, in order to discern and practice respectful, open and honest ways to share faith in word and deed;

f. supporting and doing this work through ecumenical and interfaith partnerships and organizations whenever possible;

g. providing, through a continuing Office on Interfaith Relations, for maintenance and strengthening of relations, formal and informal, with persons and organizations of other faith communities, and in particular with Muslim organizations on behalf of the church, and for support of Presbyterians as they become involved, or continue to work, in building Christian-Muslim relations and other interfaith relationships.

Rationale

This report is in response to the following referrals:

2008 Referral: Item 07-01. On Calling for Tolerance and Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, Recommendation 5. That the 218th General Assembly Commission a Study on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations That Would Have the Same Scope and Authority as the 1987 Study on Christian-Jewish Relations, to Be Carried Out by the Interfaith Relations and Theology and Worship Offices of the General Assembly Council—From the Presbytery of Newton (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 507–10).

2008 Referral: Item 07-07. On Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, Recommendation 2. Instruct the Office of Theology and Worship and the Office of Interfaith Relationships to Undertake a Study of Current and Evolving Presbyterian Theological Understanding of Our Relationship with Our Muslim Sisters and Brothers—From the Presbytery of Chicago (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 526–27).

Toward an Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations

A. Preface

The need to understand Islam and relate to Muslims has only increased since 1987, when the 199th General Assembly (1987) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted a Study on Islam and mandated the development of resources for the church to use in learning more. Since then, complex world events, including the terrorist attacks of 2001, and growing interaction among Presbyterians and Muslims in the United States and other parts of the world, have raised practical and theological questions that require careful consideration.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) instructed the Office of Interfaith Relations and the Office of Theology and Worship to “undertake a study of current and evolving Presbyterian theological understanding of our relationship with our Muslim sisters and brothers” and urged that “such a study be done in a context of relationships and dialogue” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 526, Item 07-07). In acting on a companion overture, the 218th General Assembly (2008) called for a study “that would have the same scope and authority as the 1987 study on Christian-Jewish relations” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 507, Item 07-01).

In carrying out this mandate, careful attention was given to the earlier 1987 study of Christian-Muslim relations, conducted by an appointed task force over four years. That task force, its staff, and consultants included many who had significant experience living as confessing Christians among Muslims. They studied the issues carefully and created the book *Christians and Muslims Together: an Exploration by Presbyterians* (edited by Byron Haines and Frank Cooley) for the use of the church. Long out of print, that volume described Islam and the Muslim community, and identified a number of issues and questions needing attention by Presbyterians. The task force made a brief summary report to the 199th General Assembly (1987) with a number of recommendations.¹

In response to the mandate from the 218th General Assembly (2008), the Offices of Interfaith Relations and Theology and Worship held two consultations in 2009, bringing together a small group of Presbyterians, with Muslim consultants, to discuss the most significant issues. The Presbyterians involved were: Frances Adeney, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary; Marsha Snulligan Haney, Interdenominational Theological Center; Ben Campbell Johnson, emeritus, Columbia Theological Seminary; Damayanthi Niles, Eden Theological Seminary; Margaret Orr Thomas, Presbytery of New York City; and J. Dudley Woodberry, Fuller Theological Seminary. Whitney Bodman, of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, also served as a consultant. Muslim consultants included Ghulam Haider Aasi, American Islamic College; Naeem Baig, Islamic Circle of North America; Farhanahz Ellis, All Dulles Area Muslim Society; Marcia Hermansen, Loyola University Chicago; and Ronald Shaheed, Masjid Sultan Mohammed of Milwaukee. Staff members to the consultative process were Jay T. Rock, coordinator for Interfaith Relations; Victor Makari, coordinator for the Middle East; E. Quinn Fox, associate for Theology in the Office of Theology and Worship; Charles A. Wiley III, coordinator for the Office of Theology and Worship; and Robina Winbush, Associate Stated Clerk and director of Ecumenical and Agency Relations.

This document, written in the light of the rich interactions of those consultations, offers an initial response to the request for a new, theologically grounded study. It represents the beginning, rather than the end, of the longer process of reflection and ongoing engagement that is needed. It offers some initial theological understandings, and points of departure for further consideration. Additional study is needed in order to develop a resource that can adequately describe the changed contexts and dynamics within which Christians and Muslims interact in these early years of the 21st century, and that can deal clearly and at sufficient depth with the theological questions raised by the Christian-Muslim relationship.

B. *What Compels Us Toward Understanding?*

For nearly fourteen centuries, Christians and Muslims have lived together in many parts of the world. If Presbyterians could have ever imagined living separately from Muslims, that time has passed. In the United States, as in Europe, established and growing Muslim communities are our new neighbors, opening doors to relationships and raising questions in ways that cannot now be ignored. “If our immediate circle of neighbors or friends does not reveal the religious plurality of the world, we need look no further than our cities, our nation, and our globally-connected world to see the diverse religious traditions which increasingly intermingle there. In this environment, persons [and] communities affect one another even when they are unaware of so doing.”²

There are an estimated 1.57 billion Muslims in the world today. Large Muslim populations are found in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, with smaller Muslim communities in Europe, Australia, and the Americas. Some 8 to 10 million people in the United States are Muslims.³ Whether through the presence of Muslim children attending local public schools with our

children, through contact with Muslim men and women in medical practice, teaching, and other fields, or in other ways, Presbyterians in the United States find themselves living together with Muslims as never before.

Our Christian mandate to love our neighbors as ourselves impels us to seek greater understanding. The ground of our relationship with Muslims is not simply our common humanity; it is much more the commandment to love that is the basis of our relationships as it is the basis of our lives as disciples of Jesus. “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Mt. 22:37–39).

Because Muslims and Christians have lived side-by-side for many centuries in much of the world, the history of the interaction of the two religious traditions is long and varied. Both Muslims and Christians carry historical wounds that affect contemporary relationships. These need to be understood, and addressed. In addition, we as U.S. Christians know little about the Muslim communities that live on many continents, are of many cultures, and speak many languages, and little about their interactions with Christian neighbors. The history of Muslims in the United States, particularly among African Americans, is itself long and complex.⁴ If we are to understand the contours of today’s “Muslim world,” and learn how to engage with the wide variety of Muslims among us, we must seek a more accurate historical understanding.

In addition, Islam and Christianity each claim that the truth they affirm is universally valid and significant for all human-kind. Both Muslims and Christians understand that part of their religious duty and privilege is to share the truth that they have received. Christian outreach and Muslim *da’wah* (invitation to belief and service of God) share many features; each is also a distinct and distinctive form of witness. In order to remain faithful in our Christian witness, we are impelled to know more than our own affirmations. We need to discover the seriousness of the spiritual quests and commitments of Muslims.

In many passages of the Qur’an, Christian readers encounter individuals, stories, and themes of the Old and New Testaments that are familiar to them, and yet not exactly the same as the biblical accounts or formulations. In order to understand the distinctiveness of Islam and Christianity, as well as their interrelatedness, Christians need a much clearer understanding of the Qur’an and of Islamic tradition. As we gain this understanding in our encounter with Muslims, we have an opportunity to come to a better understanding of our own faith, Scripture, and theological tradition.

Sadly, economic, political, and social factors have led to violent conflicts in many parts of the world in which Muslims live. In a few countries, radical groups that use violence in the name of Islam are active politically. At the same time, large-scale military interventions (from within or from outside) and other governmental actions often inflame and exacerbate local conflicts. Though the root issues of many conflicts are economic or social rather than religious in nature, religion is often used to express and manipulate emotions and to legitimate a wide variety of political and social agendas. The political issues are pressing and give greater impetus for us to seek Christian-Muslim understanding.

Understanding these political and social realities, often magnified and oversimplified in media presentations, requires study as well as honest and open exploration of such questions with Muslims themselves. It is urgent that we as Christians learn how to speak in an informed manner against the misuse of Islam, and of Christianity, in the service of extreme ideological ends, or as instruments of conflict. And it is important that we learn to work with Muslims in speaking out against abuse of religion, and in cooperating for justice and peace in our world.

In the United States, the events of 2001 and the years since have fostered a growing suspicion and antipathy toward Islam, and a readiness to accept stereotypes about Muslims in general. The media often use imprecise and sometimes inflammatory language regarding Muslims, and many books have been published painting an unrelievedly negative picture of Islam. Any instance of violence connected to Islam readily feeds fears and misunderstandings. Unfortunately, this reaction is common among Christians in the United States. Lacking a knowledge of the religion of Islam, and having little interaction with Muslims as persons, many Christians have not been able to distinguish false characterizations from accurate statements, or to replace superficial and sometimes biased impressions of Muslims, with informed, personal knowledge of them. In the place of ignorance, stereotypes, and superficial knowledge about Islam and our Muslim neighbors, Presbyterians seek more accurate information and personal encounter with Muslims.

Many Presbyterians are already engaged in building relationships with Muslims in their local areas. The 199th General Assembly (1987) recommended that Presbyterian congregations and individuals engage with Muslims for dialogue, cooperative service, and witness. That assembly suggested that “as Christians and Muslims work together to discover new ways for the future and as Christians reflect theologically on the meaning of such experiences” clearer answers would emerge about “what faithfulness requires of the church” (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, paragraph 31.324). The fruits of such experience and interaction are yet to be fully considered. A new study is needed (as suggested in the recommendations of this document) that will explore the theological issues in depth, and develop a more substantial grounding for a faithful Presbyterian response in Christian-Muslim relations.

C. *Faithful Engagement*

A fuller understanding of Islam and Muslims will enable Presbyterians to enter more faithfully into the responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities that are before us in living with our Muslim neighbors. Increased cooperation, open and prob-

ing dialogue, joint study, and friendship with Muslims are needed and desirable avenues that can lead us into more knowledgeable, personal, and responsible Christian-Muslim relationships. Members and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are encouraged to engage with Muslims in a renewed process of learning and discernment, to discover more fully how we can live with Muslims as neighbors in faith.

Christian faith invites us into ever-deeper relationship with God and with our neighbors. God's overflowing love, known by us in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit, draws us out of ourselves and into life in right relationship with God and others. To be made in the image of God is to be made for community. God became flesh and dwelt among us; God is present with us, and God's Spirit invites us into deeper engagement with our fellow human beings, each of whom is made in God's image as we are. "We are called to relate to people of other faiths in full humility, openness, honesty, and respect. We respect ... others' God-given humanity and the seriousness of their spiritual quests and commitments. It is our Christian faith in the Triune God and our intention to live like Jesus, not our cultural standards, that require this of us."⁵

Christianity and Islam are lived and living realities. Neither faith can be known fully through the study of ideas alone. We Christians embody our faith in worship, holy days, and practices of discipleship, as well as in our beliefs, spirituality and relationships. Islam likewise comes to life in prayer, holy days, acts of faith, thought, spiritual practices and relationships. Both religious traditions are communal in nature, and can be known more fully in community. Since we will not be able to understand one another unless we become personally acquainted, we need to spend time together, teaching each other who we are.

When Christians interact with Muslims, particular questions about our own faith are brought into focus. This encounter is a challenging opportunity to rediscover what we believe, particularly in relation to such issues as how we understand God and God's revelation, and what it means to live faithfully. Engagement with Muslims can help us learn more clearly how to articulate our Christian faith, both in our words and in our practice.

D. *Toward Theological Understanding*

Theological questions arise for us, and for the Muslims with whom we relate, clothed in issues of culture and context. Our encounters and our thinking are affected by many factors that originate in the realities of our living, and in inherited and culturally conditioned patterns of thought and practice. When we engage others, we learn about the limits of our own assumptions, and realize that our theological reflection is shaped by our own cultural backgrounds and inherited certainties.

For fruitful theological reflection, the integrity and diversity of both the Christian and the Muslim communities of faith will need our attention. Since both traditions are multi-vocal and multicultural, care will be needed to comprehend the richness of Muslim thinking as well as to articulate the fullness of Reformed theology. The task of reflecting theologically on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations is complex and challenging. We confess that we now see but dimly what "faithfulness requires of the church" in relation to Islam and Muslims.

There are many points at which Christian faith and practice is similar to Muslim faith and practice; these can be a basis for cooperation and provide a beginning point for reflection. There are also many points of difference, at which the Christian way and understanding is distinct from Islam. Awareness of such differences can be the basis for even deeper relationships and mutual learning, rooted in the integrity of our separate faith traditions. The following reflections are initial insights that may lead to theological understanding.

1. *God's Revelation*

Christians and Muslims desire to know God. The idea of God's revelation to human beings is central to both Christianity and Islam. It is not unusual to hear Muslims describe Christians as "people of the Book," a phrase from the Qur'an that refers primarily to Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The Arabic phrase ('Ahl al-Kitāb)⁶ is perhaps best understood as people of scripture.⁷ For both Christians and Muslims, faith rests in an affirmation that there is a God who reveals.

For Christians, "Revelation is self-disclosure of God. Thus God is both its source and its content."⁸ Revelation illumines our understanding of ourselves and others, but its primary content is knowledge of the one who is revealing. In the 1987 General Assembly theological statement, "Nature of Revelation," revelation is

divine self-disclosure that is analogous to the way human persons disclose themselves to one another by words and particular deeds. People are disclosed to each other in their characteristic behavior. Such encounters give knowledge, though not total knowledge, of the self of the other person. In the same way, God's self is disclosed in God's dealing with human beings, but God is still more than what is revealed. Reformed views of revelation have emphasized that God's self-disclosure gives knowledge of God's will or disposition toward us, and not only (or even primarily) of God's inner nature, which remains mysterious and veiled in its revealedness. Through God's self-disclosing activity we learn God's purposes and precepts for our lives, God's judgments, and above all God's promises of grace. So understood, revelation is a personal meeting of God with human beings, the experience of which can be reported in language. It is given to bring us, both corporately and individually, into relationship with God, and to open to us a way of life, of reconciliation, peace, and joy, of worship and service, love and justice.

For Presbyterians, an affirmation of revelation is also an affirmation that God is "beyond anything we can ask or imagine" (Cf. Eph. 3:20). What we know of God through revelation is true knowledge, but it is not exhaustive. Revelation is an

initiation into the mysteries of God, though, paradoxically, the more we (truly) know of God, the more we realize how much more there is to know. With real knowledge comes acknowledgement of the ultimate mystery of God.

Islam, like Christianity, affirms that revelation communicates the nature of God, and agrees that this nature is not fully communicable. Limited human intelligence cannot know God's essence fully. Though it can be glimpsed in God's attributes, contemplated in God's names, and is revealed in the Qur'an, God's nature is not revealed in its fullness. God is greater than what can be communicated to humanity in revelation. Thus both faiths affirm the human inability to express or understand the fullness of God.

Muslims also see God's revelation in creation, and through human conscience. Muslims see in creation a "text" that teaches the believer about the ways in which God has ordered, bestowed, and planted love and mercy within all of life. The revelation of the Qur'an is, however, the clearest revelation of God for Muslims, confirming human understanding, and providing definitive guidance for living. All signs and testimonies to God should be studied, but in the Qur'an, Muslims hold, God completes and corrects all earlier revelations, and uncovers the "straight path" that God has given humanity to walk (Qur'an 1.6).

The Qur'an for Muslims is the fullness of revelation. For Christians, the fullness of revelation is found in Christ Jesus. Christians are invited to know "God's mystery, that is, Christ himself" (Col 2:2). Christians believe that God was in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19) and "in [Jesus Christ] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col. 1:19). The Confession of 1967 helps to clarify this:

The one sufficient revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, to whom the Holy Spirit bears unique and authoritative witness through the Holy Scriptures, which are received and obeyed as the word of God written. The Scriptures are not a witness among others, but the witness without parallel. The church has received the books of the Old and New Testaments as prophetic and apostolic testimony in which it hears the word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated.⁹

It is in the person of Jesus Christ that we have the "one sufficient revelation of God." The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are also revelation because through them, the Holy Spirit bears "unique and authoritative witness" to Jesus Christ. Through these writings, the church "hears the word of God."

2. *The Nature of God*

Christians and Muslims together affirm that there is but one God, who is the Creator of all, and Sovereign over all. Nevertheless, there are important distinctions in how we understand God.

a. *God Is One*

The Christian Church's earliest statements of belief—the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds—begin with the affirmation of belief in the Almighty God who made heaven and earth. The Nicene Creed specifies that "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty" (*The Book of Confessions*, 1.1). Later, the Scots and Second Helvetic Confessions specifically state that "God is one":

We confess and acknowledge one God alone, to whom alone we must cleave, whom alone we must serve, whom only we must worship, and in whom alone we put our trust. Who is eternal, infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible, omnipotent, invisible ...¹⁰

... We believe and teach that God is one in essence or nature, subsisting in himself, all sufficient in himself, invisible, incorporeal, immense, eternal, Creator of all things both visible and invisible, the greatest good, living, quickening and preserving all things, omnipotent and supremely wise, kind and merciful, just and true. Truly we detest many gods because it is expressly written: "The Lord your God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). ...¹¹

Muslim understanding of the oneness of God is expressed, for example, in the *Shahada* (testimony), or first "pillar" of Islam: "There is no deity but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God" (*la ilāha illā Allāh, Muhammad (un) rasūl Allāh*). The Qur'an teaches that God is unique—a being of pure oneness and otherness:

Say: He is God, the One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him (Qur'an 112:1–4).

An essential affirmation of faith for Muslims is of God's oneness (*tawhid*). Associating anything or anyone else with God is *shirk*—an unforgivable sin:

God does not forgive anyone for associating something with Him, while He does forgive whomever He wishes to for anything else. Anyone who gives God associates (partners) has invented an awful sin (Qur'an 4:48).

In this assertion, Christians will see a concern similar to the first of the Ten Commandments:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. (Ex. 20:2–3)

For both Christians and Muslims, each in our own way, God is one—unique, infinite, immutable, eternal, and omnipotent—and to deny this in any way is a grievous transgression.

b. *God's Name*

Both Muslims and Christians who speak Arabic call God “Allah.”¹² Christians who are not Arabic speakers often have assumed, wrongly, that because Muslims use the word “Allah,” it means they have a different name for God, or are referring to a different deity than Christians. But Arabic translations of the Bible use the word “Allah” for God.

Although Muslims most often refer to God as “Allah,” and Christians speak of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Islam and Christianity each have a tradition of using attributes of God as appellations. Christians are familiar with names for God such as “Almighty,” “Creator,” “Redeemer,” “Sovereign,” “Holy One,” and “Sustainer.” The Westminster Confession expands the early creeds’ affirmation that God is “almighty” by giving a comprehensive statement of traditional characteristics of God’s nature:

There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty; most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them: ... To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.¹³

Muslims speak of the “Ninety-Nine Most Beautiful Names” of God, and are familiar with names of God such as “All Compassionate,” “All Merciful,” “Creator,” “Bountiful Bestower,” “Judge,” “All Knowing.” Exploration of the similarities and differences of understanding contained in these ways of speaking of God can benefit both Muslims and Christians.

c. *The Three Persons of the One God*

Christian faith has always been clear, and distinct from Islam, in affirming that within God’s unity there is a trinity or “tri-unity”—God is simultaneously one and three. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three “persons” constitute the one God.

It is here, in the understanding of God’s unity as Trinity, that Islam and Christianity are in serious disagreement. In the Second Helvetic Confession, written in the sixteenth century, we find these harsh words:

... we condemn the Jews and Mohammedans[sic], and all those who blaspheme that sacred and adorable Trinity. We also condemn all heresies and heretics who teach that the Son and Holy Spirit are God in name only, and also that there is something created and subservient, or subordinate to another in the Trinity, and that there is something unequal in it, a greater or a less, something corporeal or corporeally conceived, something different with respect to character or will, something mixed or solitary, as if the Son and Holy Spirit were the affections and properties of one God the Father ...¹⁴

The Qur’an, in turn, rejects the Trinitarian understanding of God:

O people of the scripture, do not transgress the limits of your religion, and do not say about God except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was a messenger of God, and His word that He had sent to Mary, and a revelation from Him. Therefore, you shall believe in God and His messengers. You shall not say, “Trinity.” You shall refrain from this for your own good. God is only one god. Be He glorified; He is much too glorious to have a son. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. God suffices as Lord and Master. (Qur’an 4:171)

If the language of The Second Helvetic Confession appears indelicate, the language in the Qur’an can also be sharp:

Unbelievers indeed are those who say that God is a third of a trinity. There is no god except the one god. Unless they refrain from saying this, those who disbelieve among them will incur a painful retribution. (Qur’an 5:73)

According to the Qur’an, Christians are committing “shirk” (association of another being or thing with God) by referring to Jesus as the Son of God and believing in the Trinity.¹⁵ For Muslims, such a confession constitutes a mistaken understanding of Jesus, and compromises the uniqueness and oneness of God.

Christians, on the other hand, affirm that God is known and experienced in the dynamism and interrelatedness of Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. God’s very being is found in the intimate communion of the three persons of the Trinity. “Trinity” is not simply how we speak of God, but who God is: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. *Human Nature, Sin, and Wholeness*

Both Christianity and Islam teach that God confers divine blessings upon human beings and all of creation. Each also, in very different ways, traces the history of God’s seeking and guiding men and women through the figures of Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others. However, the two faiths reflect quite different understandings of the human condition, and how God acts on behalf of humanity.

a. *God's Guidance of Humanity in Islam*

Like Christians, Muslims believe that human beings are responsible before God—humans are called to respond to God in love, worship, and obedience. The purpose of life is to live in the way that pleases God, that is, to live in the way God

wills, and for which the Divine has created humanity. Muslims believe that through the prophets and in revelation, God gives men and women what they need to awaken from forgetfulness, and to return to their created nature, which is to live in accordance with the will of their creator, who is sovereign over all. God forgives humanity's sins, and endows human beings with the ability to live in obedience. A "Muslim" is one who "is submitted" to God's will.

Those who acknowledge God as their sovereign, and stay on God's path through the guidance given in the Qur'an, enjoy peace and right relationship with God and neighbor in this life. Such obedience also leads to a life in paradise after death:

Those are limits set by Allah. Those who obey Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to Gardens with rivers flowing beneath, to abide therein (for ever) and that will be the supreme achievement. (4:13)

Human beings, in the Islamic view, are created "in the best form/stature" (Qur'an, Chapter 95) to recognize, serve, and worship God. Men and women do of course sin, and forget their purpose or lose their way, and therefore God has provided the reminder and guidance of revelation. Faithful humans who sincerely repent receive the forgiveness of their All-merciful Creator, as well as the ability to return to God's service.

b. *God's Salvation in Christianity*

The Christian understanding is markedly different. Christians affirm Paul's statement, "... I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do ... making me captive to the law of sin" (Rom. 7:18–23). In Reformed Christian understanding, human nature is marked by an inclination to sin. Men and women are created in the image of God, but are fallen creatures, in need of rebirth. Human beings need the power of God to break into their lives, in order to free them for obedience to God, and to transform them for participation in the new creation that God is bringing into the world.

The gospels recount the good news of this freeing activity of God through Christ Jesus. For Christians, the salvation story is a Trinitarian drama:

According to the witness of scripture, God's love comes to us in a threefold way: God loved the world and gave the Son for our salvation (Jn 3:16); Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord, loved us and gave his life for us (Gal 2:20); the gift of God's love in Christ has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22). The church's confession and praise of the triune God is rooted in the threefold self-revelation of the one God who is our creator, our redeemer, and our sanctifier.¹⁶

The means of salvation is Christ's life, death, and resurrection: "The cross of Christ is at the heart of our faith, for it is through the Lord's death that we receive new life."¹⁷

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
 Jesus was crucified,
 suffering the depths of human pain
 and giving his life for the sins of the world.
 God raised Jesus from the dead,
 vindicating his sinless life,
 breaking the power of sin and evil,
 delivering us from death to life eternal.¹⁸

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

Thus Christians embrace the good news of the love of God culminating in the transforming acts of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. Our understanding of Jesus and his salvific role is very different from the Muslim understanding of Jesus as a prophet. Traditional Islamic teaching generally holds that Jesus did not die on the cross; the crucifixion is unimaginable for a true prophet of God. God would not subject a prophet to the passion, nor would God require it, since only God's constant and available forgiveness is necessary to restore the way to loving and obedient life.

This difference in understanding regarding human nature, redemption, and Jesus' salvific role, is at the heart of the most critical theological differences between Christianity and Islam. Christians and Muslims will continue to struggle to understand one another in relation to their different affirmations regarding what humanity requires, and what God has done for them.

E. *Toward Faithful Life and Witness*

Resting in the love of God, set free through the love and power of Christ Jesus, and led by the Holy Spirit, Christians respond in faith, hope, and love. We journey in the way of Jesus, and seek to be transformed so that we might more closely live our lives as he did. In all that we do, we seek to be faithful followers of Jesus, who asked his disciples to be his "witnesses" to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). We give witness to what God has done and is doing in our lives, in the ways in which we

live, and through the account we give for the hope that is in us. Witness is the expression of our Christian faith through worship, proclamation, and service.

1. *Stewardship of Creation*

Christians and Muslims share similar understandings of the human vocation in the world. Both the Bible and the Qur'an present a picture of the world as God wills it to be. Christians affirm that Jesus taught the Reign, or Kingdom, of God was breaking into the world, and invited his followers to behave as citizens of that Reign, caring for one another, healing, forgiving, praying, embracing those who had been excluded, and inviting others to join them in living life abundant. To live in the world in this way remains our Christian calling. The Qur'an portrays the world as fundamentally ordered by God, the merciful and gracious sovereign. Human beings have been created, in part, to be God's stewards on earth. Muslims are called to act as God's representatives (Arabic "khalifa"), working on God's behalf. Christians understand that the goal of this calling is to build God's community of love and justice on earth. For Muslims, the goal is to be agents to promote the realization and practice of God's standards for a just and compassionate way of life. Though there are important differences in these understandings of the human role in God's work in the world, the parallels may be the basis for significant understanding and cooperation.

2. *Agents of Justice and Peace*

As part of their lives of faith, both Muslims and Christians are also deeply concerned that the societies in which they live should be just. For Christians, concerns regarding justice are rooted in the teaching and example of Jesus, as well as in the prophetic tradition that clearly shaped his understanding and announcement of the kingdom of God. In the Qur'an, God's concern for justice as well as compassion is stated repeatedly (cf. Qur'an 7:85, 5:8). Although inspired by different religious traditions, Christians and Muslims share many concerns for social justice. Poverty, homelessness, environmental degradation, and violence in media and society are all problems that Muslims and Christians can address together. "We are called to work with others in our pluralistic societies for the well-being of our world and for justice, peace, and the sustainability of creation."¹⁹ In seeking justice, it is possible and becoming for Christians and Muslims to make a joint witness as religious persons. "When all inhabitants of the planet bear joint responsibility for its life (e.g., for the environment or the globalized economy), our role is to cooperate with others in seeking mutually acceptable ethical standards for behavior."²⁰

Human rights and the rights of communities are among the concerns that Christians and Muslims share. In the light of global discussions of such rights, and the difficult situations in many countries, these issues are often sensitive and entangled with particular historical and political struggles, or culturally specific claims. Christians and Muslims can make an important contribution by "affirming that the principles of human rights and religious freedom are indivisible.... Religious freedom does not only imply freedom of conscience but also the right to live in accord with religious values and the recognition of cultural and religious diversity as basic to human reality."²¹

The rights of religious groups and of minority populations in societies are important topics for both Muslims and Christians, and an area in which conversation between the communities is needed in order to clarify misunderstandings and explore shared concerns and possible areas for cooperation.

In such conversations, issues of history require attention. Many Muslims link Christianity and Christians with recent experiences of colonial power and control in various parts of the world, and these associations carry echoes of the Crusades for some. On the other hand, Christians often recall specific instances of violence against, or oppression of, Christians in parts of the world in which Muslims are in the majority. Such wounds are a living factor in Christian-Muslim relations today.

Presbyterians and other Christians live in relation to Muslims here in the United States and in many other parts of the world. In some places those relationships are marked by conflict, mistrust, even violence; in other places by familiarity, understanding, and shared community. Challenges and opportunities present in one place or time are different than those of another place or time, and it is important not to project one specific reality of Christian-Muslim interaction onto all Christian-Muslim relationships in all places.

An essential feature of Christian-Muslim encounter and engagement is the diversity of the communities involved. Muslims in the United States not only come from many different places in the world, but also reflect the diversity of thought that is characteristic of the Islamic tradition. There is significant diversity within Islam, which is manifest in the rich variety and differences in schools of thought, practices, and legal interpretation that Muslims follow. There are lively debates within the Muslim community regarding how certain religious values and commitments can best be lived out, particularly in a country that is nominally secular and does not have a Muslim majority, such as the United States.

In addition, the history of particular groups raises important issues for reflection and possible joint action. For example, the history of African American Christians and Muslims underlines the ongoing need to address issues of racism and marginalization in our relationships. African American Muslims also practice and give voice to an understanding of Islam that is thoroughly rooted both in the essentials of the tradition and in a particular, and particularly important, American experience. Other Muslims in the U.S. come from South and Southeast Asian countries, from the Middle East, or from cultures of Africa,

the Balkans, or the former Soviet Union. Relations among all of these groups, like relations among the diverse ethnic and cultural groups in the church, are often a source of mutual enrichment, but sometimes a source of difficulty. Racism is a reality within the Muslim community, as within the Christian. Perceptions of ethnic backgrounds and cultures, as well as racial prejudice and religious biases, come into play in Christian-Muslim relationships. Since both Christianity and Islam condemn denigration of others based on such factors, Christians and Muslims can work together to eradicate bias and foster reconciliation.

The experiences of women involved in Christian-Muslim relations also deserve careful attention. Historically and still in our own time, many women face difficult struggles in both traditions. It is important to note, however, that Christians often fault Islam about the treatment of women in ways that demonize Islam. A Muslim woman's covering of her head is assumed to be a sign of oppression, even when the situation of that woman is not known. Western Christian reactions may prevent our recognition of the power women may have in particular Muslim contexts. The ways in which Christians and Muslims imagine women and women's lives in each other's traditions needs to be replaced with real knowledge of their lives and of women's efforts to gain authority and voice in each tradition. Christian women may also need to listen with particular care and to consider the need to accommodate different standards and mores when engaging with women and others in the Muslim community.

Youth and young adults in both traditions bring concerns and experience that also deserve the attention of Christians and Muslims as relationships are being formed. These groups often encounter one another using patterns of interaction and ways of learning that are different from those found in more typical Christian-Muslim dialogues. The questions and concerns of youth and young adults are often distinctive, and can raise significant issues of justice.

Another concern for Christians and Muslims is the stereotypes, labels, and terms we use about one another. Stereotyping of one another is a type of false witness; it should be replaced by interaction and knowledge of each other. Christians too often create images of Islam and Muslims out of fears, from scraps of information, or on the basis of simplistic and sensationalistic media presentations, without benefit of direct encounter with Muslim men and women. We inflict harm on one another through uninformed speech and insensitive actions, often without intent. In this relationship in particular, Christians learn, or re-learn, that we live in a society that tends to demonize those we fear or do not understand. We confess that this tendency is alive in our churches. Addressing these concerns is another area for Muslim-Christian cooperation.

Christians and Muslims also share a vocation to come to know neighbors and strangers with whom we live. The teaching and ministry of Jesus, and the witness of the Old Testament, give clear guidance: for Christians, love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable. "Central to the ongoing story of the Bible is God's long-term, patient, merciful purpose of recreating a human community in which the love of God and neighbor becomes a fact of history."²²

We welcome the interaction between Muslims and Christians initiated by "A Common Word Between Us and You," an invitation to Christians from a diverse, international group of Muslim leaders issued in October 2007. This letter has begun an exploration of how Muslims and Christians can come together for understanding and cooperation based on love of God and love of neighbor.²³ Response to "A Common Word" is one of many avenues that can be explored to forge ties between our communities without ignoring our real differences, and live our call to be peacemakers.

3. *Respectful Outreach*

Among all persons of whatever faith or none, Christians are "called to make joyous witness ... in a spirit of respect, openness, and honesty."²⁴ "Turn to the Living God: A Call to Evangelism in Jesus Christ's Way," approved by the 203rd General Assembly (1991), elaborates on this calling:

As our Christian affirmation meets the faith of other, we are not called to respond in judgment but in awareness of the limitless, saving presence, power, and grace of God. The spirit that is to inform our witness among [them]

... presupposes our presence with them, sensitivity to their deepest faith commitments and experiences, willingness to be their servants for Christ's sake, affirmation of what God has done and is doing among them and love for them.²⁵

Our Christian witness should be done in the way of Jesus. It should be marked by a sharing of a people's hopes and suffering; openhearted hospitality and acceptance; a servant love that renounces arrogance, domination, or manipulation; healing; prayer that leads to openness and builds bridges of love; urgency; shared ministry; proclamation in word and deed; and living, and calling others to live a holy life.

When God gives us courage to engage in the giving and receiving—the listening and speaking—of [interfaith] dialogue, Jesus is present. Through the power of God's Spirit, we are enabled to be truly ourselves in authentic relationships. When we interact with others personally, Jesus offers reconciliation, healing, teaching. Through his body, the church, he extends his ministry of love.²⁶

Muslims are also called by their faith to extend a clear witness to the teaching of Islam (Qur'an 2:143; 3:64). Muslims are expected to make the message of Islam clear in the world, and to engage in outreach (da'wah) to share the message of God by word, worship, and deed. Both Christian and Muslim communities affirm the importance of making witness to God in the world, and both believe that their message is for all humankind. Muslims, like Christians, send missionaries. In both

communities, the majority of missionaries serve among their own sisters and brothers to equip and renew them. In many situations of mission and da'wah, both Christians and Muslims recognize the fact that how one behaves or lives is the most appropriate and effective witness.²⁷

As Christians and Muslims witness to one another, we will learn about one another and one another's faith, enjoy occasions of life together, talk about a wide range of topics and concerns, and also share our faiths with one another. The intent among both Christians and Muslims should be to do this in ways that foster the peace and welfare of our life together, upholding the right of each community to exist and to conduct their religious life freely, and guarding against the denial of such freedom, and against harmful uses of the power of either community.

While recognizing that mission and da'wa are essential religious duties in both Christianity and Islam, Muslims and Christians need to uphold the spiritual and the material well-being of all. Many missionary activities, and the methods they use, arouse legitimate suspicions. There are situations where humanitarian service is undertaken for ulterior motives and takes advantage of the vulnerability of people. Thus the clear distinction between witness and proselytism becomes crucial. It is the basis for the recognition that people of faith can enjoy the liberty to convince and be convinced and at the same time, respect each other's religious integrity, faithfulness to one's tradition and loyalty to one's community.²⁸

An important corollary to mutual witness is mutual correction. Though it may be difficult, the interaction of sharing our faiths with one another makes it possible to raise questions about perceived errors in thinking, and harmful attitudes or behaviors. Since mutual correction is also a two-way dynamic of Christian-Muslim relationships, Christians may receive critique as well as give it. This is a welcome, if sometimes uncomfortable, aspect of growing friendship.

In Christian-Muslim relationships in our time, it is clear in new ways that, as human beings, we often fail one another. Muslims and Christians fail to understand one another, and often do not make the effort to do so. Commanded by our faith to love our neighbors as ourselves, and committed to do all in our power to do so, Presbyterians seek fuller understanding of Islam, relationships with Muslim communities, and discernment of what God requires of us in Christian-Muslim relations.

The "Study Catechism" (1998) gives us guidance on interaction with people of other faiths:

As much as I can, [with Muslims] I should meet friendship with friendship, hostility with kindness, generosity with gratitude, persecution with forbearance, truth with agreement, and error with truth. I should express my faith with humility and devotion as the occasion requires, whether silently or openly, boldly or meekly, by word or by deed. I should avoid compromising the truth on the one hand and being narrow minded on the other. In short, I should always welcome and accept these others in a way that honors and reflects the Lord's welcome and acceptance of me.²⁹

The limits to salvation, whatever they may be, are known only to God. Three truths above all are certain. God is a holy God who is not to be trifled with. No one will be saved except by grace alone. And no judge could possibly be more gracious than our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.³⁰

Endnotes

1. See <http://www.pcusa.org/interfaith/pdf/islamicstudy.pdf>
2. *Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 293; Presbyterian Principles for Interfaith Dialogue, section 1, approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999).
3. Global and national figures are from the Pew Mapping the Global Muslim Population survey of October 2009.
4. Cf. Edward E. Curtis IV, *Muslims in America: A Short History*, Oxford University Press, 2009; Jane I Smith, *Islam in America*, Columbia University Press, 1999.
5. *Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 294, Presbyterian Principles for Interfaith Dialogue, section 5.
6. Quran 3.64.
7. Or as "people of revelation," as Dr. Ghulam Haider Aasi suggests.
8. The Nature of Revelation in the Christian Tradition from a Reformed Perspective (199th General Assembly [1987]).
9. *The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.27.
10. *The Book of Confessions*, The Scots Confession, 3.01.
11. *The Book of Confessions*, The Second Helvetic Confession, 5.015.
12. In Arabic the word "Allah" is a compound of al- (the definite article, "the") and ilah (god, deity). Together they signify "God."
13. *The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession, 6.011–012.
14. *The Book of Confessions*, The Second Helvetic Confession, 5.019. It is important to note that the reference here to Muslims as "Mohammedans" is based on a (dated) misunderstanding of Islam and is no longer considered an appropriate, but an insulting, way of speaking.
15. Cf. Qur'an 5:72–75; 5:116.
16. The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing.
17. Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

18. *The Book of Confessions*, A Brief Statement of Faith, 10.1, lines 19–26.
19. *Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 293; Presbyterian Principles for Interfaith Dialogue, section 3.
20. *Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 293; Presbyterian Principles for Interfaith Dialogue, section 3.
21. Striving Together in Dialogue, #31.
22. “Building Community Among Strangers,” a policy statement approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999) (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 405).
23. Cf. <http://www.acommonword.com/>
24. *Turn to the Living God: A Call to Evangelism in Jesus Christ’s Way*, approved by the 203rd General Assembly (1991), p. 19 (also see *Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 676).
25. *Turn to the Living God: A Call to Evangelism in Jesus Christ’s Way*, approved by the 203rd General Assembly (1991), p. 19 (also see *Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 676). The document is quoting an earlier affirmation of the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism.
26. *Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 293; Presbyterian Principles for Interfaith Dialogue, section 4.
27. Jesus said, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (Jn. 13:34f). See also Mark 1:44, where Jesus heals a leper and says, “See that you say nothing to anyone.”
28. “Striving Together in Dialogue: a Muslim-Christian Call to Reflection and Action” commended for study by the 214th General Assembly (2002) (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 400), #32. It is important to note that in Islam “da’wa” or outreach is not a legal requirement for a Muslim that is “essential” in the way in which other practices, like the five daily prayers, or the fast of Ramadan, are. Making Islam clear and present in the public sphere, revival or renewal of the Muslim community, and outreach are all part of the Muslim parallels to Christian witness.
29. *Study Catechism*, #52.
30. *Ibid*, #49.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 08-04 be approved with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“2. d. encouraging Presbyterians to come to know and befriend their Muslim neighbors; and to talk in-depth with them about matters of shared concern, life and faith, and the questions each has about the other; *to implement a program of shared community experiences that might include sharing, meals, cultural events, and activities in mosques and churches together; and to develop an educational program that includes inviting a Muslim leader to offer instruction in a church and a Christian leader to offer instruction in a mosque.*

“4. b. asking appropriate bodies of the church, and individual Presbyterians, to identify and speak out against bigotry, ~~and~~ prejudice, *discrimination, and violence* against Islam and Muslim peoples of all cultures, especially in the United States ...” (Item 08-04).

Rationale

This report is from the beginning of a Muslim-Christian dialogue process. The first amendment is meant to encourage congregations throughout the church to embed dialogues of their own in a variety of communal activities. The second amendment proposed is to help Presbyterians understand the full range of Muslim perceptions and realities, some of which contribute to Christian-Muslim tension.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 08-04 be disapproved.

Rationale

The ACREC believes that this report should not be approved because of flaws in the process in which the report was formulated. We believe the report needs a broader consultation to include the National Middle East Presbyterian Caucus, PC(USA), among other groups.

The National Presbyterian Middle East Caucus of the Presbyterian Church (NPMEC) was not given an effective opportunity to contribute to this paper. The consultation process had been ongoing since the last General Assembly; the NPMEC was given a short period of time (three weeks) to comment on a draft report. We think that the NPMEC, among other groups within the PC(USA) such as the Israel/Palestine Mission Network and the Middle East Study Group, should have been involved in the development of the report, as opposed to being given no opportunity or a marginal opportunity with little or no impact. Why did this process have to be closed off from constituencies within our own church who are so affected by the results of this paper?

Item 08-05

[The assembly approved Item 08-05. See p. 31.]

Invitation to Churches to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following churches be invited to send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 220th General Assembly (2012):

Overseas: Presbyterian Church of East Africa; Church of Central Africa Presbyterian; Javanese Christian Church; China Christian Council; Guatemalan Presbyterian Church; Greek Evangelical Church; Evangelical Reformed Church of Poland; National Evangelical Synod of Syria & Lebanon; the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East; Waldensian Evangelical Church of the Plata River.

Within the United States: Reformed Church in America; Moravian Church (Northern and Southern Synods); Church of the Brethren; Progressive National Baptist Convention; Assemblies of God.

Rationale

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations nominates to each General Assembly churches to be invited to send ecumenical advisory delegates to the subsequent assembly (Standing Rule B.2.g.; *Organization for Mission*, Section IV.C.7.). We recommend ten overseas churches and five churches from within the United States. Of the overseas churches, we recommend at least one church from each area staffed by the World Mission area. Of the churches within the United States, we recommend at least one church from the Formula of Agreement, at least two churches from Churches Uniting in Christ, and at least one church in our conciliar relationship.

Item 08-06

[The assembly approved Item 08-06 with amendment. See pp. 31, 32.]

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following:

1. Affirm that

a. the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in correspondence with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, by virtue of our common membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches;

b. our common membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches is a visible sign of our oneness in Jesus Christ; and

c. as members of the body of Christ, we are all called to treat one another as followers of Jesus Christ.

2. Request the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to create guidelines offering basic protocols for interactions and behaviors between its member denominations.

3. Call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

a. confess to the rich tradition of freedom of conscience that we claim as Reformed, Presbyterian Christians, and

b. recognize that this same tradition causes us to be prone to separation, demonization of those with whom we disagree, and a captivity to insistence on our own rightness.

4. Invite the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to enter into such a season of confession with us.

5. Acknowledge the unique complexity of the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, given the fact that the ecclesial roots of many churches, members, and ministers ~~[now in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church lie in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its antecedent denominations]~~ [are historically interwoven between these congregations].

6. Invite the General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to engage in bilateral dialogue concerning various dimensions of the relationships between the two denominations and its member churches, members, and ministers; and that a report from this dialogue be made to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), with an interim report made to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

~~[7. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to develop resources to support presbyteries with congregations and/or ministers engaged in a process of discernment or undergoing the process of dismissal, in light of denominational learnings in the recent past.]~~

~~[8.]~~ [7.] Acknowledge the deep pain caused by the experiences of congregations departing or going through schism and of ministers departing, and call upon synods to consider developing care teams to listen to people's stories, thereby enabling healing, with presbyteries also urged to extend extra care during such vulnerable times of congregational and presbytery life.

~~[9.]~~ [8.] Encourage presbyteries, congregations, and individual families who experience the pain of separation to recognize that there is more than one way to understand the same event and to pray for one another through our shared faith in Jesus Christ.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: 2008 Referral: Item 07-03. *On Investigating the Actions and Conduct of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church—From the Presbytery of Peace River* (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 512–13).

I. Preface

This report comes in response to an overture from the Presbytery of Peace River to the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the PC(USA) that would have asked the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) to investigate the role of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) in persuading PC(USA) congregations to disaffiliate from the PC(USA) and be dismissed to the EPC. The assembly referred the overture to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations, which appointed a task group to make recommendations.

The task group met with presbyteries in which congregations had departed the PC(USA), with pastors and members of congregations who had departed or were considering departing the PC(USA) including those affiliated with the New Wine-skins Association of Churches, and with leadership of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. In listening to people's stories and in reviewing documents, the task group sought to distinguish between actions of Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and actions of the New Wine-skins Association (which consists of PC(USA) pastors and members, as well as former PC(USA) pastors and members who are now affiliated with the EPC).

The distinction is important in that the actions of the New Wine-skins members can be considered matters internal to the PC(USA), at least at their root. Actions of the EPC, on the other hand, are matters between churches—churches that are both members of WARC. It is this latter category that is the focus of the original overture. The report that follows presents the findings of the task group regarding activities that are internal and external to the PC(USA), and presents recommendations on how the PC(USA) should move forward in its relations with the EPC.

II. Introduction

The 218th General Assembly (2008) received the following overture from the Presbytery of Peace River:

The Presbytery of Peace River respectfully overtures the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to request the Executive Office of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to investigate the actions and conduct of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, as described below, and to take appropriate action.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in correspondence with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) because both denominations are members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church is actively pursuing a strategy to persuade Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) churches to disaffiliate with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and be dismissed to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

08 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church has created a transitional presbytery to facilitate the process. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 512)

The overture received the concurrence of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys.

The overture was referred to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations. The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER), a permanent committee of the assembly, advised that the 218th General Assembly (2008) refer the overture to GACER with the following rationale:

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations is charged with the responsibilities to act on and process recommendations and proposals addressing ecclesiastical ecumenical work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to give guidance to the nurturing of unity among Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the U.S.A., with one another and with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In addition, the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations seeks to work with our ecumenical agencies in addressing issues of mutual concern.

Item 07-03 raises significant issues about our ecclesiastical relationships with another Reformed Church and implications for our ecumenical relationships. Referral of Item 07-03 to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations would allow them to carry out their responsibilities both with another Reformed church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 513)

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations concurred with the advice of GACER to refer the matter to GACER on a vote of 53 yes, one no, and one abstention. The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved the committee's recommendation to refer the matter to GACER on a voice vote.

The GACER determined the need for more information about what was happening and had happened in the affected presbyteries and congregations with regard to the EPC and thus formed a task group to listen to the parties and to formulate recommendations for the committee's consideration based on what they heard.

The task group included: the Reverend Krystin Granberg (Presbytery of New York City), chair and a member of GACER; Elder Ed Chan (Presbytery of Pacific), a former member and past chair of GACER; the Reverend Terry Epling (Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy); the Reverend John Goodman (Presbytery of Coastal Carolina); the Reverend Joy Kaufmann (Presbytery of Huntingdon); and the Reverend Jeff Vamos (Presbytery of New Brunswick). The Reverend George Wilkes (Presbytery of Foothills) served January–April 2009, the Reverend Eugene Turner (Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse) served from January–June 2009.

The Reverend Robina Winbush, Associate Stated Clerk and director of the Department of Agency and Ecumenical Relations for the Office of the General Assembly, served as staff to the group.

III. The Process

The task group first met in January 2009. It reviewed information about those presbyteries that had experienced the loss of congregations to the EPC and outlined the following process for its work:

1. Identify which presbyteries to visit from among those that had congregations that had been or were in the process of being dismissed to the EPC.
2. Schedule visits to these presbyteries—Eastminster, North Alabama, Peace River, Pittsburgh, Redstone, Sacramento, South Louisiana, Wabash Valley, and Western North Carolina.
3. Conduct visits in teams of two task group members and attempt to meet face-to-face for interviews with
 - presbytery officers and staff (stated clerk, executive/general presbyter, moderator, etc.);
 - other presbytery leaders involved, as possible (council members, trustees, committee on ministry members, etc.);
 - persons affiliated with the PC(USA) and who were members of congregations that were dismissed to or joined the EPC or that are considering leaving the PC(USA);
 - pastors, leaders, and members of congregations that have been dismissed to or joined the EPC, are seeking dismissal, or are considering leaving the PC(USA).
4. Report to the whole group findings from each of the presbyteries visited.
5. Meet with leadership of the EPC to hear their perspectives and experiences regarding church relations with the PC(USA);
6. Report to GACER with observations and recommendations related to the task group's assignment.

Between March and August of 2009, teams from the task group made visits and conducted interviews in the nine presbyteries identified and reported on these visits and interviews to the full task group.

On January 15, 2010, the task group met with four EPC leaders who had been designated for such a meeting by the Reverend Dr. Jeffrey J. Jeremiah, EPC Stated Clerk.

IV. Glossary of Terms

“Article 13”—Article 13 of the “Articles of Agreement,” (Appendix B of *The Book of Order*), which, at the time of reunion in 1983, provided a specific timeframe of eight years and rubrics within which congregations from the former Presbyterian Church in the United States could be dismissed from the PC(USA). It offered the possibility for a congregation to take its property with it as it was dismissed.

New Wineskins: A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven—The document produced by the New Wineskins “Strategy Team” of nine persons (eight of whom have now left the PC(USA) for the EPC) giving options for how congregations might respond “faithfully” when they disagreed with various positions taken by PC(USA) General Assembly. The options included remaining as PC(USA) congregations as well as guidance about how to depart from the PC(USA), including advice on departing unilaterally. This publication was adopted at the New Wineskins convocation in 2007.

“Chapter 8/The Trust Clause”—A brief term that references the section of Chapter 8 in the PC(USA) *Book of Order* that has to do with property matters, also referred to as the “Trust Clause” in our Constitution. It describes how, given PC(USA) covenantal theology, the polity reflects that theology. Congregational buildings and other real property represent mission outposts, and therefore are held in trust by and on behalf of the denomination.

Loyalist—This term is used in this document, without association of positive or negative value, to refer to congregational members or ministers intending to remain in the PC(USA).

Disaffiliate—Departure from the PC(USA) by a congregation, usually operating unilaterally, without the advice and consent of the presbytery of which it was a member congregation.

“The Louisville Papers”—In response to requests from presbyteries facing congregations who wished to leave the PC(USA), denominational staff prepared two documents providing ecclesiastical and legal guidance.

- “Church Property Disputes: A Resource for Those Representing PC(USA) Presbyteries and True Churches in the Civil Courts”—This document was considered privileged and confidential attorney work communication.
- “Processes for Use by Presbyteries in Responding to Congregations Seeking to Withdraw”—This document was not marked by denominational staff as confidential. However, subsequent copies of the document appearing in New Wineskins and Presbyterian Lay Committee material bore “privileged and confidential” markings.

These documents outlined a range of possible options and strategies that presbyteries might consider. The documents were subsequently referred to as “The Louisville Papers” by critics of these documents, including the New Wineskins Strategy Team and The Presbyterian Lay Committee.

V. History

The focus of the task group was to listen and ascertain facts around the experiences of those involved with congregations and pastors wishing to leave the PC(USA). These facts provide the context for the report.

1. *The EPC and PC(USA)—Early History*

The histories of the EPC (with its organizing General Assembly in 1981) and the PC(USA) (with its organizing General Assembly in 1983) are deeply woven together, particularly since a large number of the congregations and ministers making up the EPC in its formative years had previously been a part of the PC(USA) or its predecessor bodies. Both the EPC and the PC(USA) lay claim to deep roots within the Presbyterian and Reformed traditions of the larger Christian family tree. Beginning with the reunion that created the PC(USA) in 1983, a process was in place for eight years whereby congregations could leave the PC(USA) with property; many such congregations left, and contributed to the early expansion of the EPC. This process, provided for in “Article 13” of the *Articles of Agreement* (see Glossary), remains a living memory. Further, despite occasional tension between the two denominations, the EPC and PC(USA) generally were able to maintain relatively cordial working relations up through the early part of the 2000s.

2. *The PC(USA) New Wineskins Initiative—Beginnings*

The New Wineskins Initiative began in 2003 by six ministers who were becoming dissatisfied with what they referred to as the “direction” of the PC(USA). At six-month intervals, these PC(USA) pastors met, adding to their number. Anticipating the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the PC(USA), this group began work on a vision statement of what a Reformed and Presbyterian denomination could and should look like according to their opinion. Missional theology, which was gaining popularity, provided a framework for their vision.

3. *The EPC in the Early Twenty-First Century*

As noted above, the EPC was initially comprised of congregations that had been determined not to be connected with the newly reunited PC(USA). From those beginnings, however, the EPC was determined to grow by planting new congregations.

The EPC had developed a denominational understanding of property that is substantively different from the understanding in the PC(USA). The EPC and its leadership see no reason for holding onto congregations, ministers, or real property if those assets will help those persons to be more effective in their mission. In this area, the EPC's ecclesiology differs significantly from the PC(USA)'s.

4. *The New Wineskins Initiative Evolves*

By June of 2005, the New Wineskins movement held a "New Wineskins Convocation" in Edina, Minnesota. The vision statement crafted in 2003 led to a structural design, with working groups formed to craft a statement of faith essentials, a declaration of ethical imperatives, a preliminary version of a new constitution with which to replace the PC(USA) *Book of Order*. The PC(USA) ministers and sessions on behalf of congregations could sign on to the faith essentials and ethical imperatives and thus become New Wineskins adherents.

At the 2006 New Wineskins convocation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, practical issues around property and money came to the fore. Members of the New Wineskins Initiative pondered what leaving the PC(USA) might entail. A nine-member team was assembled to work on a transitional guide as a means to support congregations as they sought to exit from the PC(USA). They issued *New Wineskins: A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven* (see Glossary) as a report early in 2007.

Also at its 2006 convocation, the New Wineskins Initiative voted to become The New Wineskins Association of Churches, an "umbrella organization" that enabled members of other non PC(USA) communions to affiliate with it. This also enabled former PC(USA) leaders who had become EPC to continue to participate.

5. *Reaction Within the PC(USA)*

By 2004–2005, many in the PC(USA) had taken notice of The New Wineskins Initiative and how it was becoming a vehicle for encouraging congregations to depart the denomination. Such developments engendered several reactions within the PC(USA): concern for the mission of the whole church as lived out in local communities; concern over the potential departure of large congregations with large numbers of members; concern about possible property implications; and concern for ruptured relationships within presbyteries.

The property trust provision (see Glossary), a historical tenet of the PC(USA) that bespeaks its connectional identity as a covenantal community, ran counter to the emerging New Wineskins and EPC understanding of property. In the PC(USA), every congregation is understood to be a mission outpost of the denomination. Should any congregation cease to exist, the property devolves back to the denomination through the presbytery, and the property would be used to further the mission of the PC(USA) in the local area. The EPC's contrasting understanding of property ownership is thus stated, "The particular church has ownership of its own property. It may buy, sell, lease, rent or otherwise determine the use of its property...." (EPC *Book of Order*, Sec. 7-4).

6. *Conversations Between the EPC and the New Wineskins Initiative Leaders*

As members of the New Wineskins Initiative within the PC(USA) were casting about for ways to encourage more missional congregations and were expressing increasing disapproval of the PC(USA), an informal conversation between a minister within the New Wineskins Initiative and an elder within the EPC occurred. This led to conversations between other leaders within the EPC and the New Wineskins Initiative.

At the same time, the EPC had entered into conversations among its leaders for some months in the early twenty-first century about how to structure a "missional" denomination, just as the New Wineskins adherents were also entering into similar conversation about how to live out a missional identity. The EPC went so far as to vote one of its geographic presbyteries as a "missional presbytery." Additionally, with increasing numbers of the New Wineskins Initiative inquiring about becoming EPC, leaders in the EPC wondered how they could handle an influx of possibly 200+ congregations into their modest-sized denomination of approximately 185 congregations. They began to explore different ideas.

The EPC Stated Clerk Jeffery J. Jeremiah, in a December 20, 2006, letter to all the EPC congregations, referenced two specific decisions of the 2006 PC(USA) General Assembly as a "result (of which) many churches and pastors who identify themselves as Bible-believing evangelicals are looking to depart from the PCUSA. ... I believe that in this point in our history, God has strategically placed the EPC to respond to the opportunity these changes represent. We are unapologetically confessional and reformed in a moderate way. We are not 'loosey goosey' in our theology, nor do we beat each other over the head over disagreements on the finer points of our theology. ... Two ways we are taking advantage of this opportunity are (1) the transitional presbytery proposal our leadership has been developing since September, and (2) our conversations with the leadership of the New Wineskins. ... The transitional presbytery (or presbyteries—we may need more than one) if approved

at our 2007 General Assembly, will allow churches interested in coming into the EPC to find a safe haven outside their current denomination as quickly and as easily as possible. ... [Rev. Dr. Jeremiah then references several EPC leaders meeting with New Wineskins leadership.] ... Because of the hostile environment evangelical pastors and churches currently face in the PCUSA, at their request we cannot divulge much information about that meeting at this time. ...” (see: Appendix A, which can be found as an attachment, gacer-rec-re-epc-appendix-a-message-from-scjeffjeremiah.pdf).

The stage was set for creation of the New Wineskins Transitional Presbytery.

7. *Creation of the New Wineskins Transitional Presbytery of the EPC*

At its General Assembly in 2007, the EPC voted to create the New Wineskins Transitional Presbytery, a nongeographic, transitional presbytery, effective upon the adjournment of that assembly and with an ending date of June 30, 2012. The purpose of the New Wineskins Transitional Presbytery, as stated in public documents, was to make smooth the departure of congregations that wanted to leave the PC(USA) in order to be received by the EPC. The creation of this presbytery allowed congregations to gain membership in the EPC provisionally. While in this provisional status, the EPC would have opportunity to assess whether the congregation or minister is an appropriate fit for full EPC membership in a geographic presbytery. Thus the geographic EPC presbyteries and their congregations were protected culturally from a large influx of congregations and ministers who might have changed the EPC in a substantial way. And the new congregations and ministers were given the means to sort out what direction to take: either stay at the end of the five-year transitional period and join “regular” geographic presbyteries, or be dismissed.

It should be noted that, although the stated purpose of the New Wineskins Transitional Presbytery was to facilitate the receiving of the disaffected PC(USA) congregations, according to the EPC leaders interviewed by the task group, the EPC did not actively solicit congregations and ministers to join the EPC.

Dismissing congregations to a nongeographic, transitional presbytery of the EPC presented problems for the PC(USA) presbyteries, since PC(USA) polity does not allow dismissing a congregation to independence, nor to a nongeographic presbytery (see VI.3.d below). As noted in VI.3.e, this became an issue when agreement to dismiss to a geographic presbytery of the EPC was not honored by the EPC in certain instances.

8. *Deterioration of the PC(USA)/EPC Relationship*

Inasmuch as some were beginning to name the New Wineskins Initiative a “schismatic movement” within the PC(USA), the creation of an ecclesial body within the EPC whose very purpose and name seemed to aim at absorbing PC(USA) New Wineskins congregations and pastors created a chilling in the relationship between the two denominations. This tension is evidenced by correspondence between the Stated Clerks, Michael Glodo and Jeffrey Jeremiah, of the EPC, and Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) (see: Appendix B, which can be found as an attachment, gacer-rec-re-epc-appendix-b-letters-between-epc-stated-clerks-and-pcusa-stated-clerk.pdf).

VI. The Findings

The task group offers the following findings of fact, themes, and observations, which the task group gleaned from the listening process and site visits, as outlined Section II above. The task group’s conversations with those involved in situations where congregations and pastors departed (or attempted to) revealed varying degrees of conflict, disagreement, misunderstanding, pain, confusion, and, in some cases, grace.

In large measure, the conflict involved leaders affiliated with the New Wineskins Initiative (NWI)/New Wineskins Association of Churches(NWAC), loyalists (see Glossary) wishing to remain PC(USA), while EPC leaders also occasionally entered the scene. Since the NWI/NWAC and the EPC were and are so closely aligned, as noted above, full detail of how these situations unfolded “on the ground” is offered here.

1. *Three main strategies for leaving:* The task group’s visits revealed that congregations desiring to leave generally used one of three strategies. These three strategies are outlined in the Strategy Team report, *New Wineskins: A Time for Every Season Under Heaven*. This book served as a “playbook” for congregations desiring to leave. The suggested strategies are, essentially,

- a. negotiate with the presbytery,
- b. negotiate with the presbytery, but also use civil legal process, or
- c. just walk away (also termed “disaffiliation”; see Glossary).

2. *Nature of conversations within congregations about separating from the PC(USA).* Congregations desiring to explore leaving the denomination usually followed a process of congregational conversation and prayer, generally called “a season of discernment.” Following are some themes and trends the task group encountered in regard to these conversations.

a. The NWI/NWAC often had pastors or elders who provided resources for the congregation. Either through persons, web, or print materials, congregations received resources, many coming from NWI/NWAC, critiquing the PC(USA) and praising the EPC.

b. In some cases, in addition to NWI/NWAC materials, The Presbyterian Lay Committee provided resources or representatives.

c. There were several instances when representatives of the EPC or representatives of NWI/NWAC who were technically still members of the PC(USA) (but were clearly on the “departure track”) were invited in to speak to the congregation.

d. The PC(USA) presbytery representatives involved in these conversations often felt they were “not on a level playing field.” Typically, they were invited to speak as part of a series of speakers in which they were the only presenters representing the PC(USA)’s perspective and interests, while the vast majority of time was devoted to other presenters who spoke against the PC(USA) (and often for the EPC.)

e. In congregations where a significant PC(USA) group within the congregation organized to advocate for remaining in the PC(USA), this group also felt that the conversation was one-sided, and most felt there was, to some degree, manipulation of facts—in some cases over years—aimed at an exit from the PC(USA). In many cases, frustration was expressed over how the pastor or other leaders allowed only one story to be told, and used the “power of the pulpit” on a regular basis to frame the issues and advocate for an obvious outcome that the pastor or other key leaders desired.

f. Several loyalist groups cited also the book *Steeplejacking*, by Sheldon Culver and John Dorhauer, which outlines the means by which outside groups are able to “infiltrate” and lead a congregation out of a given denomination. They found this book useful to explain the painful phenomenon they had experienced.

g. Most PC(USA) presbytery representatives were aware of the use of a chart found in *New Wineskins Initiative: A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven*, p. 14, Copyright 2007 New Wineskins Initiative, available at www.newwineskinsassociation.com/documents/Strategy_Team_Report_book_format.pdf (see Appendix C, which can be found as an attachment, *gacer-rec-re-epc-appendix-c-comparison-pcusa-nwac.pdf*) they believed untruthfully, or over simplistically, compared the PC(USA) with the EPC, and unfairly created the impression of theological unfaithfulness on the part of the PC(USA). These presbytery representatives often believed that “Louisville,” the General Assembly, and sometimes their presbytery had been “unfairly demonized.” These actions created further distrust in situations that were often already tense.

h. When a series of discernment conversations had been held with speakers from various perspectives, invariably the EPC/New Wineskins representatives or pastors committed to leaving the PC(USA) articulated that the processes had been fair, in contrast to PC(USA) leaders and loyalist groups who clearly felt the opposite.

i. Conversations with pastors who have departed the PC(USA) for the EPC generally indicated their understanding that they sought to provide adequate “space” for those wanting to stay in the PC(USA). In many cases, they felt they also provided means and encouragement for those desiring to remain PC(USA).

j. In several cases, both New Wineskins representatives now in the EPC as well as PC(USA) representatives said that when presbytery processes were followed, the outcomes were better than if a congregation entered into litigation against the PC(USA) presbytery. In every instance where the civil courts were involved, representatives of both New Wineskins and loyalist PC(USA) leaders said it became extremely painful.

k. When congregations became quite serious about departing from the PC(USA), the presbytery often required a particularly careful voting process. In every instance, the task group learned, the voting processes were scrupulously detailed and fairly carried out. Such instances generally occurred when an ecclesiological process was followed.

l. There was no evidence that the EPC took the initiative in entering PC(USA) congregations to speak against the PC(USA), for the EPC, or about affiliation with the EPC. However, there was ample evidence that when invited by a session or pastor, EPC representatives went in without consultation with the appropriate judicatory within the PC(USA) and spoke freely.

3. *Observations about relations between PC(USA) leaders and EPC leaders in local situations involving departing congregations.* Differing understandings of ecclesiology, as noted above, also played out at the local level. Often, these differences in assumptions led to very different interpretations of what the actions of the various parties involved meant. The same stories were heard from representatives from all perspectives, but the interpretation of events varied with the person’s ecclesial perspective.

a. In various conversations with PC(USA) presbytery representatives, their expectation that normal, standard ecumenical courtesy would be extended by local or national EPC judicatory leaders was repeatedly frustrated.

b. There were instances of PC(USA) stated clerks from presbyteries attempting to contact their counterparts in the EPC, and return contact was not made in a timely fashion.

c. Further, there was evidence that the interference of one denomination in the other denomination's affairs had a deleterious effect on the conversation between the PC(USA) presbyteries and the congregations involved.

d. There were consistent instances of misunderstanding between local EPC and PC(USA) leaders about their respective ecclesiology regarding dismissal of congregations by the PC(USA) and the reception of congregations by the EPC. As noted above, the differences in each others' assumptions about how the two communions ought to behave toward one another provided fertile ground for such misunderstanding—namely, the fact that PC(USA) polity does not have a specific process for dismissal, and does not include a provision for a presbytery to dismiss a congregation to either independence or a temporary judicatory.

e. In some instances, PC(USA) presbyteries negotiated settlements with departing congregations that stipulated that the congregation would be dismissed to a geographic presbytery in the EPC. In several cases, the dismissing PC(USA) presbytery later discovered that the congregation had, in fact, been received into the EPC transitional presbytery.

f. Instances were observed of PC(USA) pastors, who were about to be disciplined by their presbyteries for their actions, transferring into the EPC by renouncing jurisdiction of the PC(USA) and then being easily received into EPC membership. In no instance were the PC(USA) presbyteries consulted as to the circumstances of the pastors' departure. In every instance, the former PC(USA) pastor's version of the story was believed without question or investigation by the EPC. More often than not, no reference check of any sort was conducted by the EPC officials with their PC(USA) peers.

g. There were instances of PC(USA) congregations declaring themselves "disaffiliated" (see Glossary) from their "voluntary affiliation" with the PC(USA), and thus declaring themselves independent congregations. This action is not provided for in the Constitution of the PC(USA). Nevertheless, the EPC received these congregations as if they were independent churches.

h. The tension resulting from the situations outlined above often resulted in a great deal of bitterness, and difficulty for parties to relate to each other as Christian brothers and sisters.

4. *How PC(USA) presbyteries dealt with departing congregations.* The following section describes findings that for the most part involved the actions of PC(USA) leaders as they dealt with leaving congregations. They are offered to the extent they shed light on the larger process and context, described above, involving the relationship between the EPC and the PC(USA).

a. Presbyteries in most cases struggled to deal with these situations as they arose and often felt caught off guard, especially in circumstances that involved multiple congregations leaving at the same time.

b. The size of the congregation was often a driving factor in the approach to discussions and the process for departure. Smaller congregations with fewer human and real property assets were often more easily resolved. In other cases, especially when the congregation was larger, the presbyteries recognized the need to be immediately engaged, and the situation often led to civil litigation, resulting in very large costs—emotionally and financially—for all involved.

c. In general, those congregations that followed an ecclesiastical process (option "a" and to a lesser extent, option "b") fared better. Although it depends upon the state, courts generally have sided with the PC(USA)'s understanding of Chapter 8, Sections G-8.0200, G-8.0300, and G-8.0400 (see Glossary). In some cases, departing congregations relying on a legal strategy alone or in concert with an ecclesiastical one, lost additional money or property, and would have been much better off without civil action. Situations that involved a higher degree of trust and communication usually resulted in a negotiated settlement with which all parties could live and still feel respect for one another. Some of these situations even seemed to result in what was perceived by many as a "grace-filled" process.

d. In those situations where matters went to civil court (options "b" and in many cases, option "c", from the *New Wineskins: A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven* strategy book), the time, energy, and money expended on both sides was enormous. Some New Wineskins leaders who sought membership in the EPC expressed that if they had it to do again, they would likely follow an ecclesiastical process with the presbytery. Likewise, the presbyteries that had to respond to civil action, or that chose to initiate it, regretted the court costs and intervention into the life and work of the presbytery. Court proceedings were universally perceived as draining of the financial and other resources of the presbytery. Also, what trust might have been present prior to legal proceedings was often ruptured once those proceedings began.

e. Presbyteries tended to deal on a case-by-case basis with each process, as each presbytery bears responsibility for the care and oversight of all the congregations and ministers in its membership. The situations in the presbyteries were often highly dynamic, so presbyteries often felt like they were dealing "on the fly" with negotiations and legal matters for which they were unprepared and lacked capacity, both human and financial. Often presbyteries were less than agile in their

ability to negotiate, sometimes on account of their own PC(USA) structures or processes they have developed to provide oversight.

f. Denominational staff prepared two documents, “Church Property Disputes: A Resource for Those Representing Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Presbyteries and True Churches in the Civil Courts,” and “Processes for Use by Presbyteries in Responding to Congregations Seeking to Withdraw,” which provided ecclesiastical and legal guidance to presbyteries. These documents were subsequently dubbed “The Louisville Papers” (see Glossary). The documents outline a range of possible options and strategies that presbyteries might consider, ranging from arranging for listening teams, to appointing an administrative commission; and from freezing of assets (particularly in congregations that are divided), to releasing the property, if doing so would “advance the mission and government of the church.”

g. Legal actions taken between congregations and presbyteries tended to make communication between parties tense and difficult. Departing congregations often cited their fears that PC(USA) presbyteries would “come and padlock our doors” as their reason for taking preemptive legal action in the form of a restraining order against the presbytery, in spite of presbyteries stating they had no intention of doing so. It should also be noted that taking legal action before even approaching presbytery, as a way to assert congregational ownership of property, is one of the options presented in *The New Wineskins Strategy Team Report*, “*New Wineskins: A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven*” and *A Guide to Church Property Law: Theological, Constitutional and Practical Considerations* by L. Lunceford, both of which were often used by departing congregations.

h. Presbyteries often tried to delegate work to small groups, but sometimes then overrode the work of the small groups. This added to the frustration for all involved, especially for the session and pastor of the departing congregation.

i. When the parties acted under different theological and ecclesial frameworks, it created an impasse in mutual understanding. Presbyters who thought they were loyally upholding the Constitution of the PC(USA) often felt they were viewed by those seeking to depart as “punitive and retributive.” On the other hand, those seeking to leave for matters of conscience often felt there was a “hostile environment” among their colleagues.

j. The PC(USA) presbytery leaders and members often expressed anger and disappointment that those seeking to leave were “breaking their ordination vows.” The PC(USA) loyalists appeared to have in mind the vow to be, “... governed by our church’s polity,” and to “abide by its discipline ... [to] be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God’s Word and Spirit” (PC(USA) *Book of Order*, W-4.4003e).

k. In some cases, PC(USA) presbyters claimed that pastors wishing to leave the denomination had broken a clear promise not to lead their congregation out of the denomination.

l. On the other hand, those leaving defended themselves against the charge that they were violating their ordination vows by claiming that “I haven’t left the denomination. The denomination has left me.” This line is found in *New Wineskins: A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven*. They claimed the theological center of the PC(USA) that governed their original vow had shifted such that their conscience allowed them to be released from their original vow. This statement and line of logic is also noted in the book, *Steeplejacking*, cited above, as having been in frequent use in similar situations occurring within other denominations.

5. *Theological differences and the desire for theological clarity*: The task group’s findings in local situations regarding a desire for “theological clarity” mirrored the language of the New Wineskins Initiative’s national spokespersons. Two EPC pastors interviewed expressed great relief now that they are in a denomination where the theological parameters are clear and nonnegotiable on the topics of ordination standards, the authority of Scripture, and Christology.

a. The task group noted one significant area of theological incompatibility—at least in some instances—between the EPC and NWI/NWAC leaders. Some NWI/NWAC leaders expressed to the task group that disallowing women’s ordination was “a deal breaker” for them. Some congregations leaving for the EPC seemed not to fully understand that the EPC has a “local option” for women’s ordination—that is, each presbytery can decide such a question in the case of ministers, and the congregation can decide in the case of elders and deacons. Their conversations on the topic have moved the EPC to create a task force to consider “Women’s Ministry.”

b. During the task group’s visits, the issue that garnered the most theological—and legal—disagreement was that of the PC(USA)’s property trust provision in Chapter 8 of the *Book of Order*. What was debated among the NWI/NWAC’s national leadership played out “on the ground” in local congregations regarding property. Those desiring to leave saw this as a violation of their conscience, and their understanding of the nature of the church. The PC(USA) loyalists defended the ownership of property under the trust provision as biblical and held in Presbyterianism long before the explicit *Book of Order* clause.¹ The different ecclesial understandings of the two denominations led to disagreement not only around ordination standards, property, and theology, but also around the meaning of congregational independence and connectionalism/congregationalism.

6. *Leadership of the New Wineskins Initiative/Association and the EPC Intertwined*

The leadership of the EPC and New Wineskins had become, to some extent, intertwined. New Wineskins pastors, sometimes before and sometimes *after* they made the move into EPC membership, were willing to speak in PC(USA) congregations that had invited them as part of their conversation over whether to depart from the PC(USA). On a few occasions, other leaders from within the EPC were also willing to speak to PC(USA) congregations, when a session had invited them in, often showing the PC(USA) in a less than flattering light.

7. *Ecumenical Etiquette*

The task group observed that normal ecumenical etiquette that dictates courtesies and behaviors between communions was not followed in the following ways. In addition to such violations of ecumenical courtesy that were observed “on the ground,” already noted above in IV.2.1. and IV.3.a., there was no conversation between the EPC and the PC(USA), by stated clerks or at the level of national leadership, around the creation of the “New Wineskins Transitional Presbytery.”

8. *Questions About the Future*

Leaders within the EPC indicated they are unsure of what the long-term impact of PC(USA) congregations affiliating with the EPC will be. These leaders indicated that approximately forty-six churches have been received into geographic EPC presbyteries and a like number into the transitional presbytery, with future projections of numbers being unknown.

VII. Theological and Biblical Reflection

The task group sought to be guided by biblical and theological understandings of the unity of the church.

At the core of Presbyterian theology and polity is the claim that Christ alone is head of the Church; it is Christ who calls the church into existence. The authority of the church is not based on tradition or any human council, but on conformity to the Word of God alone, with the marks of the true church being the gospel rightly preached, the sacraments rightly administered, and church discipline rightly administered (*The Book of Confessions*, The Scots Confession, Chapter XVIII, 3.18; and The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.143). Created in the image of God, all that we are and all that we have belongs to God. Thus our allegiance is to Christ, who calls us to be followers and disciples.

As Reformed, Presbyterian Christians, ours is a particular expression within the one, holy catholic and apostolic church. We are an interdependent body called into communion not only by and with Christ, but with all Christians in every time and place. Despite our varying expressions and understandings of the faith, through baptism we are bound together as one church and inheritors of the Kingdom of God, united as brothers and sisters in Christ. We are interconnected and intertwined like branches on a vine. Christ is the vine, in which we abide and are nourished as a community of people; cut off from this source of life, we “can do nothing.”

The unity of the church is not a human work; it is a gift of God. We find our call to unity in the prayer of Jesus in John 17:21: “That they all may be one.” This is the gift of unity bestowed upon us by God. In Ephesians, Paul understands that the very nature of the church is unity, to which believers are called to respond: “[make] every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all ...” (Eph. 4:3–6). With this gift comes mutual obligation that is part of our corporate identity in Christ.

We recognize that some of the principles that are formative to Reformed theology can predispose us toward disunity. Fundamental to our Reformed understanding is that, “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship” (*Book of Order*” G-1.0301). Ironically this premise also contains the seeds for continuing separation. Our identity has been shaped to some degree by the need to separate in order to be faithful, but the faithfulness has had a cost in the fullness of faith.

To be clear, we need to differentiate, theologically, the terms division and separation. Division connotes dissent, derision, disruption, distrust, and distancing. Division breaks apart the body, and creates disunity where Christians unintentionally become inwardly focused, and no longer first seek God in worship and praise. Such disunity disrupts the peace, purity, and unity of the church. Intentional division, creating disunity, is marked by emotive responses that, due to our broken nature, take the form of corruption, self-justification, self-preservation, and distrust, obscuring God’s gift of unity.

Separation, distinct from the division that attends disunity, is painful and unfortunate, but may also be seen as a necessary and even faithful act if it seeks to maintain unity within the body of Christ. In that light separation can even be seen as potentially fruitful. Division and separation, two sides of the same coin, are not born of the same spirit of Christ. Separation requires humility and trust in Jesus Christ, and not in our own “rightness.” But if separation can be seen in any sense as faithful, we must also acknowledge the complexity, and competing values, that weigh against this. Because of our highly covenantal and connectional understanding of ecclesiology, separation (as does division even more so) rubs against the covenant

and vows that bind us together as a communion. Separation, if it is to be faithful and potentially fruitful, must also account for the integrity of such covenants and promises that bespeak the very nature of our biblical understanding of God's intention for the church.

Separation in itself is not an end. When acted upon in faith, attended by the spirit of Christ, and absent the seeds of division, separation can lead to new life. Given the space, time, and means to share perspectives, attitudes, and experience, separation can often provide the spur for growth and understanding and can be a way to live in the unity of the spirit in new and refreshing ways.

Several biblical stories illustrate how separation is difficult, but also can transform relationships, e.g. Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, and Peter and Paul. Our understanding of the Trinity or Triune God also contains the dual notions of separateness, and unity. The Triune God is dynamic, maintaining a unity without being uniform or identical, each member to the other. There is room for all of us, even as Jesus reminds us there are many rooms in my father's mansion (John 14).

Even in our separateness, Paul, in his letter to the Church in Corinth, states that we are one body with Christ as the head. Different and distinct parts are bound together so that one cannot say to another that "you are not needed." "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Cor. 12:21).

Underlying the PC(USA)'s ecumenical commitment is a calling to express the visible unity through the work of reconciliation. While we may not always agree on biblical interpretation, ecclesiology, or how to be in fellowship with one another, reconciliation and visible unity are possible through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ. "[In] Christ God was reconciling the world to himself ... and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us" (2 Cor. 5:19). Further, The Ecumenical Stance of the PC(USA) reminds us that "the church must consider how our ministry of reconciliation is compromised if we are not reconciled among ourselves."

God has entrusted us with a ministry of reconciliation that seeks to give visible expression to God's gift of unity. It is this reconciled unity that allows us to be in full communion with, for example, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, without requiring merger or uniformity of theology and practice we can aspire to live as faithful Presbyterians as one part of the body of Christ.

Just as unity is a gift of God so is reconciliation, to which we have been called. The Confession of 1967 affirms, "... This community, the church universal, is entrusted with God's message of reconciliation and shares [God's] labor of healing the enmities which separate [human beings] from God and from each other. Christ has called the church to this mission and given it the gift of the Holy Spirit. The church maintains continuity with the apostles and with Israel by faithful obedience to his call" (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.31). We are called into mission in Christ's name proclaiming the visible unity even as we stand as our distinct and separate members within the body of Christ (*Book of Order*, G. 3-0300).

VIII. Conclusion

The task group's observations around congregations separating from the PC(USA) during these past few years brought to light many immensely painful experiences for all involved. Such circumstances have been painful for congregations and members who have chosen to leave the PC(USA), for members who have stayed with the denomination, and for presbyteries where congregations have departed.

The task group would submit that the presenting cause for this struggle originates in an internal conflict within the PC(USA). On one side are ministers and members of the PC(USA) who believe that they cannot in good conscience stay within this denomination. On the other side are ministers and members of the PC(USA) who believe that unity of Christ's body, made clear through the Constitution that binds us all together in a covenantal community, should be honored and preserved. Members on both sides have advocated for their positions, created resources, developed legal strategies in order to act out of their own sense of faithfulness to Jesus Christ, all indeed consider themselves to be faithful Presbyterians. The task group notes that individuals on both sides have indicated that they, at one time or another, have used language or taken actions that they later regretted as inappropriate. The entire body of Christ suffers when Christians sacrifice keeping faith with one another, even in the attempt to remain faithful to Jesus Christ.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in receiving congregations and ministers who were dissatisfied with the PC(USA), has now inserted itself into our own internal struggle. The creation of a transitional presbytery as a mechanism for receiving congregations is seen by the EPC as a means to prevent a large influx of PC(USA) congregations from changing the EPC's culture. However, it has been seen by some in the PC(USA) as inappropriate interference in our internal conflict and a clear breach of ecumenical protocol. Further, since New Wineskins members who have left the PC(USA) for the EPC should now be properly under the discipline of the EPC, actions by New Wineskins EPC members and by the New Wineskins Transitional Presbytery with regards to PC(USA) congregations should also be governed by ecumenical protocol between the PC(USA) and the EPC.

The relative lack of communication between the PC(USA) and the EPC has been identified by both PC(USA) and EPC members as being problematic—leading to misunderstanding and lack of trust on all sides. This lack of communication is symptomatic of a deeper problem in the relationship between the two churches. There has not been evidence of a relationship that articulates and respects our differing ecclesiologies. This has contributed to circumstances where presbyteries of one body feels the other body has acted out of turn by acting too slowly or too quickly, or through secular legal proceedings. We must find a way to improve the quality of our relationship and improve our communication, in a way that will enable both communions to be faithful to our mutual and primary mission: to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

While the immediate temptation may be to address only the operational details of transferring pastors and congregations, far more critical is the state of the relationship between the PC(USA) and EPC. Situations in which congregations are separating from the denomination will always be painful and will never be ideal. But in observing the situations noted in this report, we believe they could have entailed much less rancor had the two communions engaged in conversation based upon mutual respect for each other's ecclesiology. The task group recognizes that attempts to have conversations were made, and also recognizes that such attempted conversations were often quite difficult. The task group also recognizes that the history of the relationship between the EPC and the PC(USA) contribute to a potentially awkward conversation over such matters. It is precisely the complexity of the relationship that makes dialogue essential. It is time to understand one another for who we are, not for who we perceive the other to be.

The story of Christ's church has been one marked by separation, beginning with the separation between the Eastern church and Western church nearly 1,000 years ago, followed by the Protestant Reformation nearly 500 years ago, to say nothing of subsequent schisms that are too many to count. And yet, the story of the Church has also been marked by reconciliation: reunion in the Presbyterian family among northern and southern denominations after more than a century of separation; full communion between churches offering recognition of one another's sacramental practices and one another's ordained ministries, as well as a commitment to mutual cooperation short of merger. Reflections on the Protestant Reformation and the ecumenical journey of the past 500 years have shown that at times separation is both "necessary, but unfortunate" and "unfortunate, but necessary." It is in the pain of separation that we are dependent upon the grace of God to heal the schism and show us the way toward reconciliation and unity.

We do not know how long the conversation between the PC(USA) and the EPC will take, or how difficult it may be. We do believe it is a critical conversation to begin. The PC(USA) and EPC owe it to each other as members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to engage in such a conversation. Our commitment to those congregations whose transition to the other's care suggests it to be of great value. But most importantly, our faithfulness to Jesus Christ, the Savior whom we all serve, demands it.

APPENDICES

- A. Copy of "OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: A Message to the EPC Family from Stated Clerk Jeff Jeremiah" dated December 20, 2006; see the attachment [gacer-rec-re-epc-appendix-a-message-from-sceffjeremiah.pdf](#) on page 650a.
- B. Correspondence between the EPC Stated Clerks and the PC(USA) Stated Clerks; see the attachment [gacer-rec-re-epc-appendix-b-letters-between-epc-stated-clerks-and-pcusa-stated-clerk.pdf](#) on page 650c.
- C. Chart comparing the EPC and the PC(USA) *New Wineskins Initiative: A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven*, p. 14, Copyright 2007 New Wineskins Initiative, available at http://www.newwineskinsassociation.com/documents/Strategy_Team_Report_book_format.pdf; see the attachment [gacer-rec-re-epc-appendix-c-comparison-pcusa-nwac.pdf](#) on page 650q.

Endnote

1. *Brief History of Property Trusts*

Prior to 1981 in the UPCUSA and 1982 in the PCUS, the two major Presbyterian church denominations did not have express property trusts in their constitutions. They did not need them. The 1871 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Watson v. Jones* referred to property held by trustees of a particular Presbyterian church as in trust for the persons who by the Presbyterian Church Constitution, usages, and laws are entitled to that use. The *Watson* court then went on to hold that, as a hierarchical church, once the highest governing body of the Presbyterian church had ruled on the matter, the civil courts would enforce that ruling as to the property control. *Watson's* hierarchical deference rule did not require or even suggest an explicit property trust provision; it upheld the traditional polity of review by successive governing bodies of the Presbyterian church.

In *Mary Elizabeth Blue Hull* in 1969, the U.S. Supreme Court announced the neutral principles doctrine but did not define it. In 1979, in *Jones v. Wolf*, the Supreme Court defined the neutral principles doctrine and instructed denominations and others on how to meet this new standard: "Alternatively, the constitution of the general church can be made to recite an express trust in favor of the denominational church And the civil courts will be bound to give effect to the result indicated by the parties, provided it is embodied in some legally cognizable form" (443 U.S. at 606). Both the UPCUSA, effective 1981, and the PCUS effective 1982, followed the Supreme Courts instructions to the letter, adopting express property trusts in favor of the denomination and in language that could be clearly and simply applied by courts. Where opponents point out that the property deeds contain no express trust language and/or the

local church was formed prior to the trust language being expressly set out in the *Book of Order*, one can point out the chronology of U.S. Supreme Court decisions and the clear instructions presented by the court in *Jones v. Wolf*. The property trust clauses did not create new rules. They simply codified the Presbyterian church practice into the Constitution. An affidavit may be helpful in this regard. *Church Property Disputes: A Resource for Those Representing Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Presbyteries and True Churches in the Civil Courts*, 2005 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; Louisville, Ky., p. 11.

Item 08-07

[The assembly approved Item 08-07. See p. 31.]

Dialogue with the Seventh-day Adventists.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

- 1. Authorize the participation in the Seventh-day Adventist-Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) dialogue, which will begin in the fall of 2010, for a period to last four years, and request a report to the 221st General Assembly (2014);**
- 2. Appoint the Reverend Dr. Sheldon Sorge, the Reverend Dr. Eileen Lindner, Elder Dr. Barbara Wheeler, and the Reverend Dr. David Cortez as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) representatives to this dialogue.**

Rationale

For many years the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has conducted dialogues with many churches, most of these churches could be considered “main stream” churches. As affirmed in our churches’ Ecumenical Policy, one of our priorities is to engage in conversation with churches that have not been traditionally involved in the ecumenical movement. For many years this church was viewed by many as a Christian cult or sect. During the last ten years, the Seventh-day Adventist church has been more widely accepted as a “main stream” evangelical denomination in our country.

From 2006 through 2008, representatives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists met for a series of church-to-church conversations. Through exchange of scholarly papers and hours spent in discussion, the two churches reached a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other’s beliefs and practices, removed many false stereotypes, and explored possible areas of cooperation. A deep level of friendship and fellowship developed as we acknowledged one another as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. Based on the positive results of these initial gatherings, both groups recommended to their respective churches the desire to continue into a deeper dialogue.

In order to fully understand each other’s perspectives, the dialogue will commence by laying out our respective approaches to Scripture, that is, our particular hermeneutics.

The specific topics that the dialogue will address are:

1. *Sabbath-Sunday*

The topic of Sabbath and Sunday is primarily a Seventh-Day Adventist concern, rather than a Reformed one. The Reformed delegation will approach this topic from the perspective of the “Law and Gospel,” with Sunday and Sabbath being a subset of that larger topic. This larger category is certainly a significant concern for the Reformed. Under this category we will address at least these topics:

- How both testaments function as norms for Christian faith and life.
- The shift from Sabbath to Sunday worship in Scripture and Christian history.
- The three uses of the Law in the Reformed understanding.
- The benefits and blessings of following the Law, with special focus on Sabbath-keeping.
- How Jesus Christ both fulfills and supersedes the Law, and how this shapes the Christian Gospel.

For the Sabbath-Sunday topic, the Adventists will take up at least the following topics:

- The Sabbath in Scripture in history.
- Sunday in Scripture and history.
- Theological implications of the Sabbath.

- Theological implications of Sunday.
- Implications of Sabbath/Sunday observance: practical aspects and benefits.

2. *Religious Liberty and Justice*

Reformed churches tend to talk more about “Church-State” issues, rather than “religious liberty,” even though many of our churches are also actively involved in “religious liberty” issues. This difference, itself, might be an important beginning point of dialogue and engagement. The Reformed delegation will address at least these topics:

- Advocacy for religious minorities abroad—How do we each view the idea of American Christians seeking to influence American policies of aid and trade to foster better treatment of religious minorities (or perhaps only Christians) in other nations.
- Religion in the Public Square—Matters ranging from the place of prayer in the public schools to the issue of Christmas displays on public property.
- Charitable Choice—How does each community view the use of public moneys by church agencies who offer services such as soup kitchens, tutoring, job training, addiction recovery, etc.
- Civic Engagement and Christian Faithfulness—How does each community view discipleship responsibilities in the light of Christian teaching.
- Religious Liberty in a Pluralistic Context—With growing religious pluralism in the U.S., we face new challenges to matters of religious liberty we thought were settled. Schools, government, and banks, etc., tend only to observe Christian and sometimes Jewish holidays. How will our cultural life show equal respect for myriad other faiths now living within the culture.

For the area of Religious Liberty and Justice, the consultation (Adventists) will take up at least following topics:

- The biblical basis of religious liberty.
- Justice as a biblical principle and responsibility.
- Defending religious liberty in today’s world
- Justice in today’s world: individual and corporate aspects.
- Adventist/ Reformed cooperation in advocating and defending religious liberty and justice.

Item 08-08

[The assembly approved Item 08-08 with amendment. See pp. 31-32.]

Review of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches/Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

1. Affirm support for the historic commitments and core callings (e.g., bilateral dialogue, full participation of women and youth, mission, justice, etc.) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) as essential to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s life and witness.

As WARC has affirmed these callings, [~~they are to~~] [the PC(USA) is to]

2. Prepare to participate fully and constructively as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches transitions to become the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). This includes prayerful and disciplined consideration of the deeper fellowship implied in the move from being an “alliance” to becoming a “communion” with its call to greater unity in the Spirit.

3. Continue its commitment of human and financial resources to the work of WARC and Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC) of WARC now, and to the WCRC and CANAAC in the future.

4. ~~[Integrate and interpret]~~ [Encourage a study of] the Accra Confession and the historic commitments, along with the life and work of the WCRC/CANAAC, throughout PC(USA), its congregations and presbyteries.
5. Partner with WCRC/CANAAC and their distinctive communities as a unique laboratory for contextualizing theological inquiry faithful to the Reformed ethos and the Word of God.
6. Confess that mission has too often been a source of division within the Reformed family and participate in developing new approaches to mission for a contemporary world in an age of empire. Call upon the General Assembly Mission Council's Office of World Mission to give priority in mission co-workers placements in countries in which we have WCRC/CANAAC partnerships and to acknowledge these relationships in all interpretative materials.
7. Maintain the broadest possible participation and representation of cultural and regional diversity, gender, youth, and young adults. This includes helping to create the next generation of ecumenical participants as a reflection of global diversity by supporting scholarships, exchanges, and support for on-going pastor education and the Global Institute of Theology. Additionally, recognizing that use of technology may exclude those without access to various means of advanced technologies, develop methods of communication that are inclusive with regards to race, gender, and culture.
8. Improve interpretation and visibility of WCRC/CANAAC by doing the following:
 - a. Make greater use of WCRC and CANAAC delegates between assemblies as a resource for informing congregations and presbyteries of the ongoing work of WCRC/CANAAC and the need to participate fully in global partnerships. This includes creating a structure for PC(USA) delegates to share their cross-cultural experiences with one another and to communicate with the Office of Ecumenical Relations and the CANAAC Steering Committee between assemblies.
 - b. Highlight WCRC/CANAAC at major church-wide events and celebrations, including conferences and various training events throughout presbyteries and synods.
 - c. Encourage celebration of Reformation Sunday and our Reformed heritage as a major annual event. Resources for such observances might be made available through Presbyterian News Service, *Thoughtful Christian*, *Presbyterians Today*.
 - d. Highlight the work of WCRC/CANAAC on the PC(USA) website at least quarterly.
 - e. Request the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) to provide a special briefing for the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (CO-GA) on WCRC/CANAAC work and ministry on an annual basis.
 - f. Request the director of the General Assembly Mission Council's Mission Interpretation to dedicate pages in the *Mission Yearbook* to prayer for the ministry of WCRC/CANAAC staff and member churches.
 - g. Work in partnership with WCRC/CANNAC in developing resources to enrich Reformed worship traditions with cultural gifts of music, visual and performing arts, and liturgy while recognizing that this is also essential to our own spiritual and worship renewal amidst the diversity of today's world.
9. Request the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations to contact the coordinator for the Committee on Theological Education and seminary organizations to provide briefings on the new realities of WCRC/CANAAC, and to ask PC(USA) seminaries (including seminaries in covenant agreement with the General Assembly) to include the Accra Confession as a study document.
10. Ask the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) to include at least one seminary professor or seminary student as a member to WCRC/CANAAC delegations.
11. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to implement these recommendations.
12. Direct GACER to monitor the implementation of these recommendations.

Rationale

The 212th General Assembly (2000) requested the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) "to design a process for review of councils and other ecumenical alliances to which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) belongs" (*Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 108). The previous report of the "World Alliance of Reformed Churches/Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC/CANAAC)" was received by the 214th Gen-

eral Assembly (2002). This review of the “World Alliance of Reformed Churches/Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC/CANAAC)” is presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010). The team that conducted and edited this review included: Jerrod Lowry, Raleigh, N.C. (chair); Ruy O. Costa, Boston, Mass.; Catreli Steele Hunter, Cleveland, N.C.; Jeanne Choy Tate, San Francisco, Calif.; Eileen W. Lindner, New York, N.Y. Staffing was provided by Carlos Malavé.

1. *Memorial for the Reverend Dr. Lewis S. Mudge*

A Dedication Honoring the Legacy of Those Who Kindle the Call to Ecumenism

In gratitude to God, the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations dedicates this report to our brother and friend, the Reverend Dr. Lewis S. Mudge, who returned to the Lord on September 11, 2009. A tireless servant of Christian unity, Lew S. Mudge defined ecumenism for a generation. As teacher and colleague he inspired others to the quest for a greater expression of unity and served with distinction as staff to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches from 1957 until 1962, and as a faithful participant thereafter. His example, his faith, and his devotion to the church and its mission inspires us still.

And there shall be one fold and one shepherd. That is, that all the children of God may be gathered and united into one body; as we acknowledge that there is one holy universal church, and there must be one body with one head. There is one God, says Paul, one faith, one baptism. Therefore we ought to be one, as we are called into one hope (Eph. 4:5).

“Each time we read the word ‘one,’ let us be reminded that it is used emphatically. Christ cannot be divided. Faith cannot be rent. There are not various baptisms but one, which is common to all. God cannot be torn into different parts. It cannot but be our duty to cherish holy unity, which is bound by so many ties. Faith and baptism, and God the Father and Christ, ought to unite us, so as almost to become one human being” (John Calvin’s Commentary on Ephesians 4:5).

2. *WARC/CANAAC and the Reformed Quest for Unity*

“As an expression of the one holy catholic and apostolic church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has never been able to live in comfortable detachment from other churches. Instead, we search for diverse patterns of the visible unity of Christ’s church, seeking concord in essential things: faith, sacraments, mission, and ministry. Such forms of communion are both signs of the church’s unity and means by which the church’s unity is achieved. ... The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in gratitude for God’s grace and mercy, commits itself to faithful use of God’s gifts in the search for fuller expression of the visible unity to which we are called” (*Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 107, The Ecumenical Vision Statement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). Among the ways by which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to express Christian unity are membership in councils of churches such as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), soon to become the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), is a unique expression of ecumenism that seeks both to foster visible unity in Christ and deepen the fellowship among the churches that are heir to the theological legacy of Calvin, Knox, Hus, and other reformers who have shaped this particular strain of Christian thought and life. The extended family of the Reformed tradition as expressed through WARC is comprised of some 75 million Christians in 214 churches in 107 countries.

The WARC is committed to bringing churches together, seeking theological clarity that unites churches for social action and has taken great initiative to stand and interject a voice of faith in the face of injustice. The WARC has spoken: concerning religious freedom for minorities, for those enslaved by others, for racial equality, for equality in the eras of Nazism and apartheid, for women’s rights in church and society, for a voice for young people when they are silenced, for the human rights of oppressed persons, and for justice in sharing and managing the resources of the earth in an age of neoliberal economic globalization.

Furthermore, WARC does not address social issues as tourists on the precipice of injustice. Between general councils, WARC implements its seven core callings through its five regions: Africa (ARCA), the Caribbean and North America (CANAAC), Europe, Latin America (AIPRAL), and Northeast Asia (NEAAC). In these regions, the policies, priorities, and directives of the general council are contextualized to live out a regional expression of WARC directives. In turn, delegates within each region gather to study the Bible, to reflect theologically on WARC preparatory materials, and to provide input to the next general council.

The CANAAC is the regional expression of WARC in the Caribbean, U.S.A., and Canada. The CANAAC is comprised of twenty member churches; however, the formation of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) will add the Christian Reformed Church of the Dominican Republic to CANAAC, creating a presence in the Dominican Republic.

What is more, CANAAC calls the PC(USA) into a global witness of mutual partnership and cross-cultural dialogue. It provides the PC(USA) with a living laboratory for building relationships of trust and integrity between northern and southern neighbors. One participant recalled a time when racial issues divided two churches of different ethnicities in the same coun-

try: “CANAAC was a place of common ground. We quickly moved those groups toward healing.” The CANAAC offers an unparalleled opportunity to engage in study where perspectives of the one-third and the two-thirds world interact. In the words of another participant: “At CANAAC we discovered an ‘uninvited’ unity among those present. Our pains and struggles were too similar to distinguish us from each other; and our joys and achievements were too similar to separate us.”

Moreover, CANAAC presents PC(USA) with innovative models for connecting theology with praxis, including an exploration of the ways that position and privilege influence interpretation and theological perspective. The CANAAC has developed a contextual model to ensure that its Bible study and theological reflection express the full diversity of the Caribbean-North American region. The host country for each CANAAC assembly becomes a resource for theological reflection on socioeconomic and political issues as delegates learn about the host country’s culture, history, and ways of being church. Delegates also worship in local congregations to explore how Reformed worship takes on cultural forms as well as how it is interpreted by young people of the region. Thus, CANAAC provides opportunities to enrich Reformed worship traditions by expressing culture creatively in musical, visual, and liturgical forms to honor the fullness of God in diverse congregations and communities.

Both WARC and CANAAC are faithful attempts by its member churches to proceed with intentionality to “maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1–6). The WARC/CANAAC are essential vessels for encouraging, nurturing, and maintaining Christian unity as no one communion/denomination can be the Body of Christ unto themselves. Instead, it is our unity and the collaboration of the many that transforms a cacophony into a resounding chorus of praise to God who places us on this earth to live as families despite the many boundaries and barriers that might divide us. It is this enduring sense of our own longing to reclaim the unity demonstrated in our baptism that continues to provide the purpose for PC(USA) participation. In a new age and as the institutional transition to the WCRC unfolds, new patterns of participation and service to a broken world will emerge and once again lay claim to Reformed Christians.

3. *The PC(USA) and the Call to Christian Unity*

The question of why the PC(USA) participates in WARC and CANAAC properly precedes the question of how the church participates. In an era in which interfaith relationship and ecumenism across the many Christian traditions require time and attention from the church, the question can be fairly asked, “what is the priority in the life of the church for an ecumenical expression confined to the Reformed tradition?” The response to this question turns on our understanding of the PC(USA) as an expression of the Reformed tradition and as a faithful vehicle for God’s engagement in the life of that tradition.

Throughout the history of WARC, the PC(USA) has been disproportionately represented among the leaders and staff of the alliance reflecting the high priority the fellowship of the Reformed family has held within the ecumenical commitments of the PC(USA). Such an investment by the church has provided dividends of experience and insight that have enriched the life of individuals and the church as a whole. Only through the gathering of Reformed Christians are we able to learn of our tradition’s capacity to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ in cultural, economic, ethnic, and linguistic contexts quite unlike our own. It has been the encounter with the valiant faithfulness of Reformed Christians in contexts of repression, poverty, and suffering that has enabled us to know who we might become and how we might more fully witness to the risen Christ.

The WARC has enabled the Reformed churches to engage together in bilateral ecumenical dialogues with diverse Christian traditions, has provided a unique laboratory for Reformed theological inquiry, and has offered a venue in which our relationships with Reformed global mission partners can find common life and witness. Here in WARC and CANAAC the longing of Jesus’ pastoral prayer “that they might be one that the world might believe” is given concrete and tangible expression. And through the words of the Declaration of Debrecen, WARC gave voice to the tangible and Reformed call to Christian unity: “We are not our own. With Christians for the Reformed faith through the centuries, and with the whole people of God, we join our voices to proclaim *Soli Deo Gloria!* We are called to be built into a new community in the Spirit of God.”

The Reformed theological enterprise has been particularly enriched by the work of WARC and CANAAC. Shared statements such as that of Accra and the rediscovery and exploration of historic Reformed confessions such as Belhar have deepened the understanding of the tradition’s specific approach to faithfulness and its requirements in the twenty-first century. Gatherings of younger theologians in rich diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, and sociopolitical context have been productive of fresh leadings of the Spirit and hold promise of hastening the way toward healing deep human rifts of race and clan. In particular, calls to humbly acknowledge and address economic injustice and ecological degradation have brought an invigorated vitality to a new generation of Reformed Christians. The PC(USA) has been fully present in each of these aspects of ecumenical sharing and continues to learn, teach, and be challenged by these encounters.

4. *The Birth of WCRC and Its Implications*

In the year 2010, the Uniting General Council for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) will convene in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is expected to merge with the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). Members of the two uniting groups trace their roots back to the 16th century Re-

formation. Founded in 1875, Geneva-based WARC has 75 million members in 214 churches in 107 countries while the Michigan-headquartered REC was founded in 1946 and has 12 million members belonging to 41 churches in 25 countries.

A joint WARC/REC executive committee has drafted a constitution and proposed a new structure for WCRC, along with a plan to eliminate the budget deficit by 2011. A 2008 deficit, due primarily to a drastic fall in the exchange rate, is expected to extend into 2009 and carry forward into the new organization, leaving WCRC little core provision for its beginning. The issue is not one of over-expenditure. In fact, expenditure of the organization has decreased each year. The reality is that income does not keep up with expenditure despite the fact that WARC has taken pride in its lean and modest lifestyle.

The new global grouping of WCRC will represent 80 million Reformed Christians worldwide. Though twenty-seven of the REC member churches also belong to WARC, there is symbolic value in healing divisions between these two major branches of the world Reformed community. In a world filled with fragmentation, the union offers a more global witness as a faithful response to Christ's call to unity.

The union has also created an opportunity for WARC to rethink its identity as a "communion" rather than an "alliance" of churches. To move from being an alliance to being a true communion of churches is consonant with the biblical image of the Church as the Body of Christ, where all are organically connected to one another under the leadership of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the Church. Use of the word "communion" also implies that member denominations of the new organization will accept the ordination of each others' clergy and respect the rites of each tradition.

While the union of WARC and REC has its share of positives there are certainly some impending concerns that this review committee also acknowledges. Several of those concerns will be shared in the next section of this document (4. *Sustainability of Our Ecumenical Hopes*) as issues that must be addressed to assure the sustainability of WCRC. However, it is essential that we mention here the presence of WARC members and staff who express some apprehension because REC has historically been less ecumenically inclined and less active on justice issues—such as women's ordination and apartheid—the prophetic voice of WARC may be diluted. Nevertheless, both WARC and, more recently, REC are to be commended on the integrity of their separate decisions to continue the status of "suspended member" with the Netherdutch Church of Africa, a minority denomination of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, until that church expresses its conviction that the theological defense of apartheid constitutes heresy. The WARC's general secretary, Setri Nyomi, responds to such justice concerns with the following comments:

This radical unity does not give us room to ignore injustice of any kind. In such a relationship one part of the body cannot be content because it has in abundance while another part is languishing in suffering and want. We belong together. ... If our unity is integral to who we are, we cannot help but sharpen our resolve to speak and act against anything that breaks the bond of peace—including all forms of injustice.

The WCRC/CANAAC presents the PC(USA) with an unparalleled opportunity to view itself through a global lens, to discover what it means to function as partners in global mission and to develop cross-cultural resources to aide us in fulfilling the mission to which Christ calls us in our own increasingly diverse nation. We conclude that it is essential that the witness and resources of this partnership with WCRC/CANAAC more fully inform our own mission and witness as the Presbyterian church in the United States of America and permeate the culture of PC(USA).

5. *Sustainability of Our Ecumenical Hopes*

An essential component in identifying WARC sustainability would be review of both the governance and financial viability of the organization. The WARC is governed by general councils that establish policies and programs, consider matters brought by member churches, and give oversight to the life of the organization. These general councils assemble consistently with adequate representation from a significant number of member churches. And since 1989, the bylaws have been strengthened to assert that delegations will be as representative as possible of the diversity within member churches: women, men, youth, ordained, and lay people.

The general council is also responsible for the election of officers (president, three vice-presidents, and moderators of departments) and an executive committee consisting of the officers, twenty-five other members, and the executive staff as corresponding members. The executive committee meets annually between general councils to carry out the program decided by the general council, elect executive staff members, supervise finances, and act whenever necessary in the name of the alliance.

The review committee would like to raise particular awareness that often WARC serves as the only opportunity for wider-church participation for many of the smaller churches. In light of this knowledge, WARC has been careful to ensure that these small member churches are able to be full participants in governing sessions. Many of these small member churches are in countries of the global south where the Reformed presence is a minority. For these special considerations, WARC has been willing to subsidize delegates' travel.

Furthermore, the review committee finds that WARC finances are well-managed, and the accounts are audited annually. A very large amount of programs and service is delivered from a very modest budget. The WARC serves more than 200 Reformed churches around the world, with more than 75,000,000 members, with an executive staff of five persons and a sup-

port staff of seven persons. The WARC has always enjoyed a very professional and dedicated team of staff. Due to recent deficits, however, WARC now functions with minimum staff who are faced with major challenges of overwork. Together with the proposed smaller executive committee, staff will need to stretch to ensure that the expanded membership feels adequately heard and represented. Though financial challenges remain, it would not be wise to further reduce the number of staff.

Shifts in international currency exchange rates complicate WARC's finances. Total expenditures in 2008 were about US\$1,889,566.47. In 2009, the expenditure budgeted was approximately US\$2,365,571.34. The PC(USA) provided approximately US\$232,731 for the 2008–09 budget year and the same US\$232,731 for the 2009–10 budget year.

In 2008, administrative costs ran about 16.5 percent of the budget. Salaries and related costs amounted to approximately 78.5 percent, while programming and the executive committee took the remaining 5 percent. (See Appendix C for details.)

The review committee recognizes that giving patterns to WARC have demonstrated a decline in the number of churches contributing financially to the ecumenical organization. As WCRC begins to shape its approach to financial stewardship within this very difficult economic climate, especially among developing nations, emphasis upon participation in financial support rather than the amount of that support should take precedence.

Consider the charts in Appendix C for a reflection of the finances reported in the 2008 audit. That chart reveals the financial data of member churches that supported WARC from 2004 to 2008.

The review committee is concerned with member denominations' financial support. Appendix B shows a decline in the number of member churches that supported WARC from 2004 to 2008. As WCRC begins to shape its approach to financial stewardship in these times of economic challenges, emphasis should be placed on member denominations' participation in financial support as a demonstration of commitment to WCRC, regardless of the amount each member church is able to contribute.

6. *Interpretation and Visibility of WCRC/CANAAC*

The PC(USA) has played a vital role in WARC over the years and is in full support of the WCRC goal of giving witness to the unity of the body of Christ through the union of WARC and Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). In the review process, several issues came to the forefront as areas in particular need of support and encouragement in WCRC's future. Our best ecumenical hopes will find fulfillment as PC(USA) delegates to WCRC and CANAAC bear in mind the following priorities:

a. *For the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)*

In these times of economic and ecological crises, covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth is more crucial than ever. The new global economy exacerbates the growing gap worldwide between the rich and the poor while taking a heavy toll on the earth. The WARC vision calls Reformed churches to respond to the injustice of massive poverty and environmental degradation as a witness to the fullness of life God intends for all creation. A key WARC focus has been the dissemination of the Accra Confession so churches can use it to affect their local contexts. Through study of the biblical and Reformed perspective on economic life and justice, as well the study of how economic processes work locally and globally, the Accra Confession creates space for a healthy debate and for hearing the voices and concerns of women and men, young and old, people from the Global South and the Global North. The hope is that member churches will act as agents of transformation in a manner that goes far beyond the church by:

- Developing strategies and establishing priorities that apply the Accra Confession and Covenanting for Justice in the Economy to address economic and environmental injustices in today's global economy and lend support to the development of alternative life-giving models.
- Creating more unified approaches to partnership in mission that recognize the need for new forms that unite divisions in the global church and are relevant to contemporary times.
- Continuing to build theological consensus faithful to the Reformed ethos and the Word of God to ground social justice.
- Supporting the development of contextualized models for Reformed Theology and Bible study that use local and global contexts as a resource to address issues of economic and environmental justice.

Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth is only possible through the renewing winds of the in-breaking of the Holy Spirit. However, churches planted during the period of colonial mission are still using nineteenth century European and North American models of worship rather than models that reflect their own cultures and times. Around the world, many WARC churches feel overshadowed by the free style of worship offered by Pentecostal, charismatic, and evangelical churches.

Worship that emphasizes head over heart, mind over body, grows increasingly stale in the diversity of today's world. A church that is always reforming needs the diverse gifts, including cultural gifts, of all the people who make up our churches. Profoundly affected by worship experiences in Ghana, WARC was led to acknowledge that "using drums is not a sin; clapping and dance are not disrespectful ... [and] also we affirm the role of silence and meditation, of chanting." It is the hope of this review committee that WCRC will continue to do the following:

- Acknowledge that spiritual renewal and renewal of worship are urgent priorities if Reformed churches are to grow, to reach out to new generations, and to have the power to engage in the prophetic witness to which Christ calls us. Develop a theology of worship and spiritual renewal that enriches Reformed worship traditions through musical, visual, and liturgical forms to honor the fullness of God in culturally diverse congregations and communities.
- Maintain the broadest possible participation and representation of cultural and regional diversity, gender representation, youth and young adults, even within the context of diminishing funds and a smaller WCRC executive committee.
- Ensure that all members understand their responsibilities as they relate to making WCRC effective.
- Build commitment to continuing the tradition of bilateral dialogue, historically associated with WARC, in the new WCRC. This is particularly important because REC has less history of bilateral involvement.
- Address financial viability and the need for strategic fund-raising to bring in new resources to support the mission and work of WCRC/CANAAC. It is particularly important to ensure adequate staffing for this ongoing work.

b. *For Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC)*

The CANAAC has developed an innovative contextual model to ensure that its Bible study and theological reflection express the full diversity of the Caribbean-North American region. The host country for each CANAAC assembly becomes a resource for theological reflection on socioeconomic and political issues as delegates learn about the host country's culture, history, and ways of being church. Delegates also worship in local congregations to explore how Reformed worship takes on cultural forms as well as how it is interpreted by young people of the region. It is the hope of this committee that CANAAC will consider ways to:

- Sustain and enhance the theological focus that has been the hallmark of Reformed gatherings. This is of particular concern since responsibilities previously lodged with a theology committee and a pool of trained theologians has been taken on by the steering committee. Some interviewees expressed concern that "CANAAC's theological focus could become M.I.A." or that dialogue could become "politically-laden and politically-driven."
- Develop structures for ongoing Bible study, reflection, and analysis among CANAAC delegates between assemblies and, recognizing that not all members have access to technology, develop ways for members to hear from and give input to the work of the steering committee.

Appendix A

Update on WARC Programs to Implement Its Core Callings, 2005–2010

WARC Core Callings (Mission): The purpose of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches is to enable its member churches individually and collectively to make real Jesus Christ's promise that all might have life in fullness (John 10:10) through achieving seven core callings:

- To covenant for justice in the economy and the earth.
- To search for spiritual renewal and renewal of Reformed worship.
- To foster communion within the Reformed family and the unity of the church ecumenical.
- To interpret and re-interpret the Reformed tradition and theology for contemporary witness.
- To foster mission in unity, mission renewal, and mission empowerment.
- To promote inclusivity and partnership in church and society.
- To enable Reformed churches to witness for justice and peace.

The WARC communicates about the work of its numerous programs through a quarterly newsletter, *Update*, regular news releases, and the WARC website (www.warc.ch). It offers analysis of the theological issues at the heart of the Reformed family in its quarterly journal, *Reformed World*. It also publishes many other studies.

To covenant for justice in the economy and the earth.

In these times of economic and ecological crises, covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth is more crucial than ever. The new global economy exacerbates the growing gap worldwide between the rich and the poor while taking a heavy toll on the earth. The WARC vision calls Reformed churches to respond to the injustice of massive poverty and environmental degradation as a witness to the fullness of life God intends for all creation. The WARC's Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth Project mobilizes member churches and other partner churches to address economic and ecological injustices. Together with Church World Mission (CWM) and

World Council of Churches (WCC), WARC is developing Oikotree as an ecumenical web site to monitor economic and ecological issues, respond to current crisis, and strengthen ecumenical partnership. The hope is that member churches will act as agents of transformation in a manner that goes far beyond the church.

A key WARC focus has been the dissemination of the Accra Confession so churches can use it to affect their local contexts. Through study of the biblical and Reformed perspective on economic life and justice, as well the study of how economic processes work locally and globally, the Accra Confession creates space for a healthy debate and for hearing the voices and concerns of women and men, young and old, people from the Global South and the Global North. In addition to a resource book produced for 2006 Reformation Sunday celebrations (*Renewing the Church: Resources for Celebrating Reformation Sunday*), CANAAC recently published an Accra Confession curriculum available at its Web site: <http://www.canaac.org/>.

To search for spiritual renewal and renewal of Reformed worship.

Spiritual renewal and renewal of worship are urgent priorities if Reformed churches are to grow, to reach out to new generations, and to have the power to engage in the prophetic witness to which Christ calls us. Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth is only possible through renewing winds. However, churches planted during the period of colonial mission are still using nineteenth century European and North American models of worship rather than models that reflect their own cultures and times. Around the world, many WARC churches feel overshadowed by the free style of worship offered by Pentecostal, charismatic, and evangelical churches. Worship that emphasizes head over heart, mind over body, grows increasingly stale in the diverse cultures of today's world. This hampers both their celebratory worship and evangelism.

The WARC seeks to develop a theology of worship and spiritual renewal that understands worship and spiritual life are expressed through cultural forms of music, visual arts, and liturgy that enrich Reformed traditions. Profoundly affected by worship experiences in Ghana, WARC affirms that Reformed congregations no longer need to be "God's frozen chosen." "[U]sing drums is not a sin; clapping and dance are not disrespectful. . . . [A]lso we affirm the role of silence and meditation, of chanting." To this end, WARC has conducted a survey of spiritual renewal in Reformed and Presbyterian churches worldwide to assist member churches in their journey towards life in fullness. It is working with REC to develop a paper on spiritual renewal and renewal of Reformed worship.

To foster communion within the Reformed family and the unity of the church ecumenical.

The WARC is strongly committed to Christian unity. In addition to the newly formed union with REC, WARC engages in dialogue with Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Lutherans, the Orthodox, and others. The WARC also provides a healing presence by working to overcome divisions in Reformed churches and mission fields in countries like Korea, Nigeria, Chile, and Brazil.

To interpret and re-interpret the Reformed tradition and theology for contemporary witness.

A classical function of WARC has been the fostering of theological reflection faithful to the Reformed ethos and the Word of God. If WARC member churches are to be faithful witnesses to our Lord Jesus Christ in the contemporary world, Reformed themes need to be interpreted in relation to the issues of our time (i.e. the sovereignty of God, sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura, the church as covenant community, election—not just for salvation but also for service).

The WARC has as its objective the formation of Reformed theologians with a global perspective and the training of future ecumenical leadership. It is currently discussing how its office of covenanting for justice and its office of theology can more fully integrate their work. One possibility is a theological course for pastors in the field that would equip them for work in justice.

Many students from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, who would not have the opportunity to pursue further theological studies in their own countries, have benefited from the WARC scholarship program. A Global Institute of Theology (GIT) in Accra 2004 and a smaller GIT in conjunction with the 2008 CANAAC meeting in Guyana were so successful that another GIT will be held in conjunction with the 2010 Uniting General Council. Here theological students will gather for academic courses focused on theological reflection around the theme of the Uniting General Council "Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Out of the seventy students expected, 60 percent will come from the Global South and 40 percent from the Global North.

To foster mission in unity, mission renewal, and mission empowerment.

The WARC Mission project provides opportunities for mission studies, reflections on international mission relations, and networking to strengthen mission today. The Theology Department is seeking new understandings of mission for an age of empire and a contemporary world, specifically through the ecumenical Edinburgh 2010 study on "Mission and Power" around changes or lack of changes in our understanding and practice of mission and unity since 1910.

The WARC dialogues with economists, agriculturists, jurists, theologians, ethicists, etc., to analyze issues related to justice in the economy and the earth and to search for alternative life-giving models. Its Mission in Unity project has focused on how to overcome ways mission has been used to create divisions in the Reformed family. The Making a Difference Program (MADIP) and the WARC Mission Project's intercultural Pilot on Mission Today provide opportunities for innovative mission experiments whose lessons of concrete life-giving alternatives to economic globalization could be shared with WARC member churches.

The WARC also responds to mission and development challenges, devastating disasters, and emergencies through the Reformed churches Partnership Fund. The Partnership and Youth Programs focus on empowering those who are often excluded from mission leadership.

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To promote inclusivity and partnership in church and society.

Though building a church truly inclusive of all God's people ought not be necessary at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the reality remains that the need still exists. Women, youth, people from minority backgrounds in different cultures, new immigrants, and people of disabilities still need to be welcomed into full participation and leadership. To that end, WARC organizes programs and develops written resources that challenge church and society on issues related to gender, leadership, and power. Addressing the status and participation of women in the church, a number of studies and events have explored theological, cultural, and other issues concerning women's ordination to challenge churches that do not ordain women. A theological education scholarship fund for women in the south aims to support women's theological studies and their preparation for the ordained ministry.

The WARC also facilitates a space to support the work of its Youth network, including those in the area councils. The CANAAC, for instance, sent youth delegates to the 2009 CANACOM-sponsored Young Adult Mission Work Camp in Jamaica, and is assisting in the planning of the Pre-Council Reformed Youth gathering slated for the 2010 Uniting General Council. It provided scholarships for Caribbean delegates to the July 2009 consultation on John Calvin's 500th anniversary at Montreat. In addition to holding its own GIT for theology students at its Guyana assembly, CANAAC will send participants to the GIT held at the 2010 Uniting General Council, to the pre-Uniting General Council Youth Forum, and will provide scholarships for delegates from Caribbean churches to the Uniting General Council.

To enable Reformed churches to witness for justice and peace.

The WARC has a dynamic history of making a difference by bringing churches together, to seek theological clarity that unites churches for social action while struggling for economic, ecological, and gender justice. The WARC works alongside its member churches in countries where conflicts and human rights violations compromise the lives of people. This has been particularly evident in the powerful witness of WARC and its member churches when life and justice are at stake: for religious freedom for minorities; for those enslaved by others; for racial equality; for equality in the eras of Nazism and apartheid; for women's rights in church and society; for a voice for young people when they are silenced; for the human rights of oppressed persons; for justice in sharing and managing the resources of the earth in an age of neoliberal economic globalization.

Actions from the last four general councils offer dramatic demonstration of WARC's actions for justice and reconciliation:

- The 21st General Council at Ottawa in 1982 declared that apartheid was a sin and its moral and theological justification a heresy. This was a watershed moment for WARC with it gaining major international attention for its courageous stand.
- The 22nd General Council at Seoul in 1989 affirmed the commitment of the alliance to address injustices experienced by women in church and society by launching a new program with full-time staff for this work. It also questioned the disunity in the manner in which Reformed churches engage in mission, laying the background for the Mission in Unity Project that came a decade later.
- The 23rd General Council at Debrecen in 1997 took very seriously the suffering caused by economic and environmental injustice and called on member churches to commit themselves to a process of recognition, education, and confession concerning economic injustice and ecological destruction.

Appendix B

Member Churches Contributed Financially to WARC 2004–2008

	#of Churches	#Churches in 2008	2004 or 2005 but not in 2008
Africa	59	16	21
Latin America	24	6	8
N. America & Caribbean	20	11	4
Asia	61	26	13
Pacific	14	5	6
Europe	42	24	9

Appendix C

A Concise Summary of Income and Expenses, WARC, Fiscal Year 2008

(A conversion rate of .99 CHF per U.S. dollar was used; numbers are rounded up)

Income

Regular Contributions

Member Churches in Africa	53,824
Member Churches from Asia	69,089
Member Churches from Europe	612,713
Member Churches in Latin America	6,252
Member Churches in North America and the Caribbean	287,564
Member Churches from the Pacific	<u>10,610</u>
Total Contributions from Member Churches	1,040,052

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Designated Subsidies for specific programs:	481,401
Designated Subsidies for Core Expenses:	209,689
Other:	<u>85,796</u>
Total	1,816,938

Note: The PC(USA) contribution in 2008 was: \$232,731

Expenses

<u>Core Expenses*</u>	
General Secretariat	112,844
Theology and Ecumenical Engagement	66,467
Finances	17,325
Church Renewal/Justice Participation	24,646
Communications	111,409
Mission Project	<u>17,067</u>
Total	349,758

*Core Expenses include: rent, office expenses, mail, computer network, database, search and settlement, travel, hospitality, accounting, regional work, consultations, delegations, president's expenses, constituencies, special help, office meetings, computer equipment, publications, allocated by departments.

<u>Personnel Costs</u>	
General Secretariat	422,972
Theology and Ecumenical Engagement	119,873
Church Renewal/Justice Participation	261,986
Communications	220,892
Mission Project	<u>161,334</u>
Total	1,178,057
<u>Executive Committee</u>	13,887
<u>Total General Expenses</u>	1,889,566

Appendix D

CANAAC, Fiscal Year 2008

A Concise Summary of Income and Expenses and Change in Net Assets

INCOME

Unrestricted contributions from member churches	
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	\$30,000*
Presbyterian Church, Canada	3,000
Cumberland Presbyterian Church	1,000
Contributions deferred to 2008	<u>11,613</u>
Total Contributions from Churches	\$ 45,613
Interests	892
Bequest income	15
Total Income	\$ 46,520

DISBURSEMENTS

Bank charges	106
Foreign Exchange Loss	2,173
General Assembly – Guyana 2008	21,018
Office	443
Professional Fees	1,545
Telephone	2,412
Travel	985
Total Disbursements	28,682
Excess Revenue Over Income for 2008	17,838
Unrestricted net assets at the beginning of 2008	117,730
Unrestricted Net Assets at end of 2008	135,568

* Note: PC(USA) contribution to CANAAC is above the contribution to WARC.

Appendix E
List of Survey Respondents

Cliff Kirkpatrick
C. Christopher Epting
Patricia Sheeratan-Bisnauth
Neal Presa
Oliver Patterson
Doug Chial
Setri Nyomi
Perryn Rice
Gradye Parsons
Jerry Lowry
Jane Dempsey Douglas
Robina Winbush

Appendix F
Mayor References and Reports Used

Covenanting for Justice and the Economy of the Earth
Accra Assembly Final Report
Accra Assembly Message from the Youth
A Letter for Accra

Appendix G
Membership of WARC

A list of the WARC member churches can be found at the following web address: http://www.warc.ch/list/church_list.html

A printed list can also be requested from the OGA/GAMC staff.

Appendix H
Membership of CANNAC

Christian Reformed Church in North America
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America
Dominican Evangelical Church
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Guyana Congregational Union
Guyana Presbyterian Church
Hungarian Reformed Church in America
Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada en Cuba
Korean Presbyterian Church in America
Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church
Presbyterian Church in Canada
Presbyterian Church in Grenada
Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Presbytery of Guyana
Reformed Church in America
United Church of Canada
United Church of Christ
United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

Item 08-09

[The assembly approved Item 08-09 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 31, 33.]

[Comment: The committee endorses the intent of “Christians and Jews, People of God” enhancing Christian and Jewish relationships. We also encourage PC(USA) congregations to employ *A Theological Understanding of the Relationships Between Christians and Jews* (1987, OGA-88-071) as a resource until a better resource is perfected.]

On Referring “Christians and Jews: People of God” and “Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations”—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

The Presbytery of San Francisco respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. ~~[Postpone the reports]~~ [Refer the report] from the Offices of Interfaith Relations and Theology and Worship entitled: “Christians and Jews: People of God[^s]” ~~[and “Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations” until such time as funding is provided by the General Assembly for the appointment of a special committee of the church, to be appointed by the moderator, back to the Office of Interfaith Relations and Theology and Worship]~~ to rewrite ~~[both]~~ [the] report[s] after broader consultation to include the National Middle East Presbyterian Caucus, PC(USA) partner churches and agencies in the Middle East, relevant mission networks of the PC(USA), the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy.

2. That correspondence about ~~[these two]~~ [this] report[s] between the National Middle East Presbyterian Caucus and the General Assembly Mission Council, and between the Israel-Palestine Mission Network and the General Assembly Mission Council be sent to ~~[this special committee]~~ [these offices and committee working on the revised paper].

Rationale

In 2009, the Office of Interfaith Relations (OIR) contacted certain entities and individuals in the PC(USA) asking them to read and make comments on these papers. Those receiving these early drafts were asked not to share them, even with members of the groups they represented, because they were considered drafts and therefore confidential. At least some of the groups and individuals asked to review the papers were told that the OIR had reached out to other PC(USA) entities for the same kind of input.

An unknown number of these groups and individuals submitted comments and suggestions. In at least one case (regarding the Israel-Palestine Mission Network), the moderator of the IPMN contacted the OIR months later to learn the status of the report, and request a copy of the final draft that was soon to be presented to the General Assembly Mission Council.

In the case of the Israel-Palestine Mission Network, there was evidence in the final draft that a number of its comments about problems with “Christians and Jews: People of God” were taken seriously and addressed.

What also became evident was that there were many important Middle Eastern entities and individuals in the PC(USA) who had not been contacted at all. They were unaware that these papers were being written—meaning that those who will be most affected by these reports were shut out of the closed and secretive process of writing and vetting these reports.

The leadership of the Israel-Palestine Mission Network, upon learning that such entities had not been invited to participate in this process, expressed its concern to the Office of Interfaith Relations. The issues raised in the following critique of “Christians and Jews: People of God” by the IPMN in its memo of February 18, 2010 to the General Assembly Mission Council have not yet been addressed, and need to be—in a substantive manner. (*See attached background materials for text of this memo.*)

It has been the traditional practice of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with regard to important theological and ecclesiastical papers impacting the future practice and policy of this denomination, that the vetting process be open to the whole church before final approval is given by a meeting of the General Assembly. The purpose of this overture is to make sure that the Offices of Interfaith Relations and Theology & Worship abide by these standards with regard to these important papers.

[Background material, specifically the IPMN memo referenced above, is found as an attached letter to this overture. [See p. 647.] The two referenced reports, “Christians and Jews: People of God,” Item 08-03, and “Toward an Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations,” Item 08-04, are coming to this General Assembly and available elsewhere.]

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 08-09 be approved.

Rationale

Please see Advice and Counsel on Items 08-03 and 08-04.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 08-09

Comment on 08-09—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 08-09 and approve the two reports, “Christians and Jews: People of God” and “Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations” that they may serve the church as the basis for study by congregations and individual Presbyterians, and as grounding for further conversation and consultation among the many constituencies of the PC(USA) and its partners.

1. The mandate for a new report on Christian-Jewish Relations was given by the 216th General Assembly (2004) to staff of the Theology and Worship, Interfaith Relations, and Evangelism Offices. The mandate for a new report on Christian-Muslim relations was given by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to staff of the Theology and Worship and Interfaith Relations Offices. These requests for documents to be created by staff for review and action by a future assembly are not unusual, as this overture suggests, but are increasingly common in this era of limited funds. The fact that these reports were to be written was made known to all in press reports, through summaries of General Assembly actions, as well as in the *Minutes* of the assemblies involved.

2. The process of consultation undertaken by staff in relation to both documents involved many Presbyterians of varying perspectives. Those Presbyterians and Jews involved in the more formal consultations that informed the writing of “Christians and Jews: People of God” are noted in Appendix A. The request for discretion re: the sharing of drafts, while suggesting an untoward “secretive process” to the writers of this overture, was intended as a means to keep drafts of the documents from public scrutiny before they were completed.

3. The General Assembly Mission Council must approve reports written by GAMC staff before sending them on to the General Assembly for action. Both GAMC approval and General Assembly consideration are public processes, with agendas and papers posted on the Web in advance of the meetings. Advisory Committees and other bodies of the church will make the comments they deem appropriate during this process. The General Assembly is itself representative of the whole church, but it is able to hold hearings if its commissioners deem more input is needed for responsible decisions to be made.

4. The GAMC considered the concerns of the National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus, and the letter from the Israel/Palestine Mission Network when it voted at its February, 2010, meeting to forward these reports to the General Assembly for approval. On February 10, the GAMC Executive Director requested the Caucus to provide its critique of, and input to, “Christians and Jews: People of God,” but no comment has been received from them to date. World Mission sent this document to partners in the Middle East on March 16, asking for comment and critique of it, but has not yet received any responses.

5. In regard to “Toward an Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations”, which calls for further study by the denomination, the GAMC took specific action to ensure that this process included broad consultation including representatives of the national Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus and partner churches in majority Muslim countries.

6. The reports in question provide an urgently needed and clear basis for further discussion of issues involved in Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim relations. They can serve well as grounding documents for any further consultation deemed necessary, and can be clarified by future assemblies.

Appendix A

The following persons were involved in one or more of the consultations between Presbyterians and Jews that informed the staff writing team of “Christians and Jews: People of God.”

Presbyterians and other Christian participants

Fahed Abu-Akel, Atlanta Ministry with International Students

P. Mark Achtemeier, Dubuque Theological Seminary

Deborah A. Block, Immanuel Presbyterian Church

Robert Brashear, West Park Presbyterian Church

Anna Case Winters, McCormick Theological Seminary

Cecil Corbett, Scottsdale, Arizona

William Borrer, Media Presbyterian Church

Sherri Hausser, Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

Pauline Haynes, New York, New York

Stephen Haynes, Rhodes College

Jin S. Kim, Church of All Nations

Christopher Leighton, Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies
Eugene March, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Emeritus)
Jerry Tankersley, Laguna Presbyterian Church
James Thomas, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (former staff)
Michael Trice, Ecumenical Formation and Interreligious Relations, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Leanne Van Dyk, Western Theological Seminary
Byron Wade, Davies Street Presbyterian Church
Rebecca Weaver, Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education
Rob Weingartner, The Outreach Foundation
Doug Wilson, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (former staff)

Jewish participants

Fred Benjamin, Milton, Massachusetts
Alvin K. Berkun, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Harold J. Berman, Columbus, Ohio
Steven M. Cohen, New York, New York
Barry Cytron, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Lewis Eron, Cherry Hill, New Jersey
Ronne Friedman, Boston, Massachusetts
Reuven Hammer, Jerusalem, Israel
Richard Hirsh, Wyncote, Pennsylvania
Vernon Kurtz, Highland Park, Illinois
Shira Lander, Houston, Texas
Joel Meyers, New York, New York
Jonathan Miller, Birmingham, Alabama
Dan Polish, Poughkeepsie, New York
Gil Rosenthal, Needham, Massachusetts
David Sandmel, Chicago, Illinois
Robert Slosberg, Louisville, Kentucky
David Straus, Wynewood, Pennsylvania
Jeffrey A. Wohlberg, Washington, D.C.
Shawn Zevit, Wyncote, Pennsylvania

Staff Assigned to write paper:

Ray Jones, Office of Evangelism
Jay T. Rock, Office of Interfaith Relations
Joseph D. Small, Theology Worship and Education Ministry Area
Charles A. Wiley, Office of Theology and Worship

Item 08-10

[The assembly approved Item 08-10. See p. 31.]

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following:

- 1. That the PC(USA) become a full participant in Christian Churches Together (CCT) for a period of four years, at which time a review of participation will be done by GACER and reported to the 221st General Assembly (2014).**
- 2. That, in its capacity as a participant in CCT over the next four years, the PC(USA) take the following steps toward strengthening CCT's response to racism and gender inequality by doing the following:**
 - a. Request that CCT add "racial injustice" and "gender inequality" to the rotation of annual discussion topics at the CCT gatherings (currently the topics are limited to poverty and evangelism).**
 - b. Request that CCT include race and gender in their ongoing conversations of poverty and evangelism.**
 - c. Request that, as CCT expands its conversations around race and gender, CCT issue statements of common Christian agreement and conviction about racial justice and gender equality, as has been done by CCT regarding poverty.**
 - d. Expect and help to ensure that these conversations recognize the ongoing effects of historic racial divisions that have been promoted by churches, and in which churches in the United States continue to be complicit, wittingly or unwittingly. As we in the PC(USA) continue to wrestle with and repent of our own complicity in racial injustice and division along racial lines, we will call upon CCT to also take seriously words and actions of repentance and commitment that would help us together build bridges across the racial divisions of all our churches.**

e. **Expect and help to ensure that these conversations recognize that our differing theologies and understandings of the roles of women and men in churches and society are a source of real and painful division within and among the churches. Further, for some of our churches, including the PC(USA), these divisions are not merely cosmetic but confessional, and thus must be fundamental to our ecumenical conversations.**

f. **Request that CCT review its leadership models and structure in order that they would more fully reflect biblical values that promote equality and justice in the church and society, especially in relation to race and gender. To that end, the PC(USA) will continue to send a diverse delegation to CCT, and encourage change in CCT structure as necessary.**

3. That the steps listed above, and CCT's response to them, form a foundation for the review of our participation in CCT for the 221st General Assembly (2014).

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2006 Referral: Item 07-05. On Becoming a "Provisional" Participant in Christian Churches Together—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) (Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 574ff).*

The 217th General Assembly (2006) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) authorized the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to become a provisional participant in Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT) for a four-year period (Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 574).

At the time of this action, the General Assembly received a Rationale that recognized the "unique vision that informs Christian Churches Together is that a hospitable space for growing together must be inclusive of the diversity of Christian families in the United States, including Evangelicals, Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, historic African American churches, and other racial and ethnic churches" (*Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 575*).

Over the past four years, CCT has formalized organizational structure, acquired staff, held annual gatherings and regular steering committee meetings, and been actively engaged in building fellowship and addressing core commitments of evangelism and poverty in the context of the United States. Over these four years, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has actively participated, sending representatives to the annual CCT gathering, steering committee, and other forum meetings of the CCT.

The CCT has created a meeting place for a wide range of churches and organizations. While the diversity of organizations in CCT may not be unique to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), it is certainly unique to many of the participants. In a series of interviews, it became clear that an overwhelming percentage of participants appreciated CCT as a place for worship, fellowship, and some limited action among people who had rarely if ever worked together before. Meetings of CCT have focused upon the topics of evangelism and poverty.

The 217th General Assembly (2006) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) authorized provisional participation in CCT (*Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 574*). The current bylaws of CCT do not recognize the status of "provisional participant." To remain connected to CCT, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) would need to formalize its participation or address the provisional nature of its presence by requesting observer status.

In consideration of next steps in the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and CCT, the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations appointed a review committee. Interviews were conducted with representatives from CCT participant bodies and with representatives of churches that have been ecumenically engaged but are not participants. Interviews were also conducted with leadership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and an open call for comments on the matter was made through the Presbyterian News Service.

The review committee found that participation in CCT is consistent with the policies of the church, including the policy statement, "The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)." However, the committee also noted that some of the concerns about CCT that existed in its formation remain today, specifically about whether women can be fully represented in its leadership, and CCT's ability to address and place a priority on combating racism in the church and in the larger society.

The CCT is organized into five historic Christian families (Evangelical/Pentecostal, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, historic Protestant, and Racial Ethnic), and the five presidents of CCT are drawn from these families. All the presidents to date have been male. In addition, more than 80 percent of the Steering Committee members have been male. This is primarily due to the design of CCT that places a premium on the involvement of heads of communions or organizational executives, positions that are by design or by practice filled by men in many participant churches and organizations.

Though there are some exceptions, few of the historic African American churches are actively participating in CCT, especially those that have held membership in the National Council of Churches. In interviewing those familiar with CCT,

there were many who expressed disappointment that CCT has not taken up addressing the history of racial relationships and division within the church and explicitly addressing racism in the larger society.

In assessing our ecumenical commitments and partnerships, the review committee and the full General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations spent significant time reflecting on the PC(USA)'s own struggles with race and gender, and with power and leadership in our denomination and in our relationships with other churches. We are aware that our internal history and division have an effect on how we view our external relationships and commitments, and how we make choices about them.

The limited success of CCT in explicitly addressing racism and in creating a structure that limits the possibility of greater inclusion of women in leadership has the potential of undermining the very goal of CCT, to "offer a space that is inclusive of the diversity of Christian families in the United States." In its own life, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) struggles with concerns for empowerment of women and building a multicultural church community, and while CCT holds potential for being a forum where such concerns could be claimed, that potential has not yet been realized. Nevertheless, GACER does not believe it is yet time to withdraw our support and participation from CCT. We believe our commitment to ecumenical partnerships calls us to continue to engage and be active in CCT despite our concerns, and to work to strengthen CCT as we are called by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

[Financial Implications: Christian Churches Together has a scaled dues table based on the churches' membership totals. Based on that table, our church is responsible for a yearly contribution between \$5,000–6,000.]

Item 08-11

[The assembly approved Item 08-11. See p. 31.]

Commissioners Resolution. On Celebrating the Dedication of Clinica Tzeltal Manos de Christo in Chiapas, Mexico.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) celebrates with our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Tzeltal Synod of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, our partnership in the gospel, and the dedication of Clinica Tzeltal Manos de Christo, giving thanks to God through our Lord Jesus Christ for the faithful response of all who answer God's call to serve where the need is great, wherever the Holy Spirit directs, and the love of Christ is at work to heal and restore.

Rationale

In the same way that Jesus introduced the kingdom of God to the poor of Galilee through his healing love and attention to people in need, the church has long sought to convey God's love through medical ministries. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a particularly strong record of building hospitals and sending medical missionaries to serve Jesus Christ in the world.

By the grace of God, over the past fifteen years a partnership has emerged between Presbyterians from throughout the United States and the Tzeltal Synod of the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico to identify the spiritual and materials needs of the indigenous people and churches of central Chiapas, the southernmost state in Mexico. The Presbytery of Arkansas formed a covenant relationship with one of the synod's presbyteries, The Lacandon Presbytery, in 2003. The Presbytery of Salem in the Piedmont of North Carolina formed a covenant relationship with the Tzeltal Synod in 2009. Additionally, congregations from Arkansas, North Carolina, Virginia, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Washington, Texas, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Kansas have shared in the ministries that have grown out of the partnership.

In 2005, the Tzeltal Synod crafted a vision and plans to build a medical clinic in Ocosingo, Mexico, to serve the indigenous population of central Chiapas. More than 1 million people in the state of Chiapas do not have access to basic health care primarily due to limited resources and language issues. The medical clinic will provide Christian medical care to indigenous people (primarily Tzeltal Bachajon, Ch'ol, Tojolabal, and Tzeltal Oxchuc people). While indigenous people represent the target population, the clinic will serve people without regard to race, creed, nationality, or religion.

Mexico has more than 300 indigenous language people groups with twelve of those groups represented in the state of Chiapas and eight in the county of Ocosingo. Most indigenous people speak their native language but do not speak Spanish. Most of these people are farmers living in outlying jungle villages, often miles from the nearest medical facilities. When they are able to access government sponsored health services, language differences and prejudice often prevent them from receiving appropriate and adequate care. The indigenous people of Mexico have suffered years of prejudice and maltreatment resulting in political, spiritual, medical, educational, and environmental damage. A Christ-centered medical clinic is a novel idea in this area of Mexico. A Presbyterian clinic will be a beacon of evangelism and will be an opportunity to demonstrate Christian principles in a medical setting devoid of the prejudice and barriers to quality medical care experienced by indigenous people in the past.

The Ocosingo Medical Clinic, named by the Tzeltal Synod “Clinica Tzeltal Manos de Christo,” will provide a variety of medical and dental care services. The clinic will also provide a service site for medical volunteers (both local and foreign); provide an opportunity and a location for surgical services not available elsewhere; provide a base for visiting medical groups, who will work in the clinic or travel to villages to provide on-site medical care; and provide a place where referrals to outside hospitals can occur and provide assistance with comprehensive case management.

An important component of the project is the training and support of “*Barefoot Doctors*” or “*Paramedicos*.” Begun in the 1950s by a missionary nurse, selected native individuals are trained in basic health-care skills, allowing them to bring some level of health care to remote villages. The new clinic will provide a site for training, opportunities for physician-supervised internships (not currently available), and a base of ongoing support for barefoot doctors. While not licensed physicians, these individuals represent an important component in the health-care delivery system in the indigenous communities, and the quality of their care to patients can be improved by having access to better training and physician consultation at the medical clinic in Ocosingo.

Ground was broken in March of 2006 for Clinica Tzeltal Manos de Christo and the footing were dug by pastors, elders, and bare foot doctors of the Tzeltal Presbyterian church. Members from many of the local churches have worked alongside American Presbyterians to complete Phase I of the clinic. A dedication is planned for October of 2010.

The above recommendation is offered to the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for its approval, as a means to convey to the Tzeltal Synod our joy in our partnership in the gospel, our gratitude to God for the completion of Clinica Tzeltal Manos de Christo, and our commitment to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Tzeltal Synod, especially as they seek to serve Jesus Christ and his people in central Chiapas.

The National Presbyterian Church in Mexico faithfully serves our Savior Jesus Christ in its proclamation of the gospel in both word and deed, calling men and women to repentance and to faith in Jesus Christ, teaching God’s Word, and advancing the kingdom of God through the demonstration of justice and compassion.

The Tzeltal Synod of the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico, with its three constituent presbyteries—Ebenezer, Maya, and Lacandon—representing the 35,000 Presbyterians of central Chiapas, discerned the need for a medical clinic to serve the indigenous people of central Chiapas and God’s call to build it, and dedicated itself to its construction at the Alpha-Omega Bible School in Ocosingo, Chiapas.

The Tzeltal Synod invited the partnership of others in its holy endeavors, calling brothers and sisters in faith to participate with them in the realization of God’s will, principally calling on congregations and presbyteries of the PC(USA), reaching out to Presbyterians in Arkansas, North Carolina, Virginia, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Washington, Texas, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Kansas.

Whereas God has been faithful to provide the vision and the means to fulfill it through the obedience of the Tzeltal Synod and its partners both in Mexico and in the United States;

The work of the clinic will be a continuation of the Christ’s healing ministry, in which the very name of the clinic, “The Hands of Christ,” will bear witness to God’s love in Jesus Christ, touching people in ways that the Holy Spirit directs and empowers.

Mindy Douglas Adams, Presbytery of Salem
Nanette Sawyer, Presbytery of Chicago

Item 08-Info

A. *Report of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches Covering 2008 and 2009 to the PC(USA), Setri Nyomi (General Secretary)*

1. *Introduction*

The May 2009 joint executive committee meeting of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) was one of the symbolic moments in the unfolding of history. It is significant that it took place during one of the high points of celebrating the Calvin 500 jubilee year in Geneva. Steps along the way of fulfilling the desire expressed by our Lord Jesus Christ in the High Priestly Prayer, “that all may be one” are important markers of the desire of the Reformed family to be faithful to the sovereign Lord to whom we belong.

In his commentary on the biblical passage from which the WCRC General Council theme was chosen, John Calvin writes:

Each time we read the word “one”, let us be reminded that it is used emphatically. Christ cannot be divided. Faith cannot be rent. There are not various baptisms but one, which is common to all. God cannot be torn into different parts. It cannot but be our duty to cherish holy unity, which is bound by so many ties. Faith and baptism, and God the Father and Christ, ought to unite us, so as almost to become one human being.¹

It is this Unity of the Spirit that we are called upon to maintain in the bond of peace. This radical unity does not give us room to ignore injustice of any kind. To be in Communion beckons us to truly be one with God and one with one another. In such a relationship one part of the body cannot be content because it has in abundance while another part is languishing in suffering and want. We belong together. This is even more critical as we see what the global economy continues to mete out to millions of people. While those who have been victims of injustice for decades continue to suffer, recent failings in those who have held the purse strings of a system that has resulted in such suffering have been rewarded with massive rescue packages. If our unity is integral to who we are, we cannot help but sharpen our resolve to speak and act against anything that breaks the bond of peace, including all forms of injustice.

As the contents of this report will show, the work we have been doing through the Mission Project, covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth, gender justice, theology and ecumenical engagement, and youth are all aimed at living out our core callings. They all foster our sense of Communion and justice. These programs have been effectively undergirded by what we have been doing through our Communications office and Finance office in communicating the actions and commitments of the Reformed family and resourcing what we do. The full reports of all these engagements have been written by my colleagues and are available to all participants in the executive committee meetings. In this report, I give the main highlights.

2. *Theology and Ecumenical Engagement Office (TEE)*

Douwe Visser took office as the executive secretary for Theology and Ecumenical Engagement on 1 June 2008, bringing to an end a long period of transition. One of the first things he initiated was to have us form an editorial advisory board for *Reformed World*. Issues of the *Reformed World* published in the period under review have focused on John Calvin, the theme of the Uniting General Council, Reformed identity, and reflections in a time of crisis.

The Theology and Ecumenical Engagement Office carried out a series of eight regional consultations on Communion and justice, and a global one that brought together representatives of the eight regional consultations. As WARC and REC journey towards becoming the World Communion of Reformed Churches, these consultations provided a good forum for church representatives and theologians to reflect on what this means in a manner that informs us on who we are becoming.

The office is also preparing for a Global Institute of Theology as a part of the Uniting General Council.

From 3 to 8 October 2008, the Lutheran Reformed Commission took place in Buenos Aires. This was the third meeting in this round of Lutheran Reformed dialogue. A final meeting took place in January 2010. Taking into consideration that it was already said in an earlier round that theologically there are no major differences between Lutheran and Reformed churches, it seems to be time for courageous steps concerning unity.

The WARC’s other bilateral dialogues with World Communions are in various stages. There was a meeting of the Reformed Pentecostal dialogue in Scotland in May 2008. Discussions are in their preliminary stages on preparing a new round of Reformed-Roman Catholic dialogues after 2010. Our Executive Secretary and other WARC representatives were involved in a discussion of the Vatican “Harvest Document,” which is a report of the recent dialogues in which the Vatican has been involved. Exploration on a new round of the Orthodox-Reformed dialogue will be started.

Given all the comings and goings in the Theology and Ecumenical Engagement office, our scholarship program has had limited operation. It is our hope that this will pick up again this year after the Uniting General Council.

3. *Church Renewal, Justice and Partnership Office (CRJP)*

This office has carried out the vision and coordination of three core callings of WARC very effectively—Covenanting for justice in the Economy and the Earth, Gender Justice, and Youth. Our gratitude to the Executive Secretary, the Reverend Sheerattan-Bisnauth, for all the work she has led in these three core commitments of WARC. In the next paragraphs, we will report the work of this office under the different core calling headings.

a. *Gender Justice*

Since launching the Scholarship Fund in 2001, WARC has supported sixty-five women from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific, with a total amount of CHF400,000. During the reporting period twenty-four women from fifteen countries were awarded scholarships amounting to about CHF153,000. The awards are in support of their theological studies in preparation for the ordained ministry. We hope that our worldwide network, including the Executive Committee will help to promote the fund in churches, which have low numbers of women in the ordained ministry.

The CRJP Office carried out a survey on former and current scholarship awardees and is currently preparing for an assessment of the project and to measure its benefits and impact on churches and the lives of the beneficiaries.

In 2008, the Executive Secretary for CRJP visited theological colleges and churches in North East India, listening to them, and exploring ways in which WARC could be more involved in them. These visits were important as well for discussing issues of gender justice.

A survey on women in the ordained ministry is being carried out. The data received will be compiled and posted on the website. The last time such a survey took place was in 1998. The Executive Secretary participated in a Lutheran World Federation Consultation on Women's Ordination and shared with them WARC study documents and the situation regarding women's ordination in WARC.

Following the Limuru 2007 Consultation on Gender, Leadership and Power, a proposal for a global study was developed and shared with the Gender Network and participants of the Kenya consultation. The study has five themes: Bible study, Globalization, Cultural Identity, Leadership, and Racial/Ethnic Identity. The findings will be shared at the WARC Women's Pre-Council gathering at the WARC General Council in Grand Rapids, U.S.A., June 2010.

The Reformed Church of the Canton Argovia in Eastern Switzerland has established a prize to support and encourage women in church leadership and has invited WARC to be a partner in the management and implementation of the prize. The prize is in honor of the Reverend Sylvia Michel, who was ordained in 1964 and served as the first woman president of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches. The Sylvia Michel Prize was launched at the WARC Consultation on Gender, Leadership and Power in Limuru, Kenya, (July 2007) and awards a prize of USD5,000 every two years to outstanding women from the WARC constituency who have made significant contribution to church and society. The 2008 prize was awarded to two Kenyan women theologians, Professor Dr. Esther Mombo, deputy vice chancellor of St Paul's University and Dorcas Chebet Wamalwa of the Reformed Church of East Africa.

A workshop on "Machismo to Partnership" was held in Malawi (11 to 18 September 2008) in collaboration with the WCC Women's Desk and WARC member churches in Malawi. Participants were two-thirds male. The workshop provided space for sharing about masculinity and gender.

In the Caribbean, a workshop on "Men as Partners: Promoting Positive Masculinities" was held in Guyana (18 to 24 January 2009). It brought together thirty-five participants (with two thirds being male) from various denominations, ecumenical organizations and nongovernment organizations. The main aims of the workshop were to support the development of church leaders by increasing their awareness of gender concepts and issues; and to equip, motivate and encourage them to be agents of change. It is hoped they will be catalysts in working with their churches and communities in promoting positive masculinities, building partnership between women and men and addressing pressing gender issues, such as gender based violence.

The CRJP Office is grateful to the PC(USA) Presbyterian Women for their support for the Gender justice work of WARC.

b. *Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth*

The Covenanting for Justice Project is even more crucial in these times of economic and ecological crises. The challenges of life today require a radical transformation of the logic undergirding the prevailing economic system, which is centered on capital accumulation and competition as means to wealth and prosperity. Not only has it exacerbated the economic crisis to alarming proportion; it also takes a heavy toll on the earth, worsening another grave crisis—that of global warming, which will be of catastrophic dimensions for millions of people. We are already experiencing consequences in varying degrees. There is urgency for a vision, which puts people at the center, supporting social well-being, racial, ethnic, and gender justice, exercise of freedom and cooperation among people, and which honors creation.

During the reporting period a key focus has been on mobilizing people's engagement with the Accra Confession, especially at the grassroots. The regional Covenanting for Justice processes are progressing. These were coordinated by the following persons: Puleng LenkaBula (Southern Africa), Collin Cowan (Caribbean), Germán Zijlstra (Latin America), Martina Wasserloos Strunk (Europe), and Gretel Van Wieren (North America).

The International Ecumenical Conference, "Abolished, But Not Destroyed: Remembering the Slave Trade in the 21st Century." took place in Runaway Bay, Jamaica (10 to 15 December 2007). It was organized in collaboration with WCC and CWM and brought together fifty theologians, church leaders, social scientists, and social and cultural activists from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and North America. The conference marked the 200th anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. Participants called on churches that were complicit in the slave trade to name the trade and other modern forms of slavery a sin. Some papers were published in *Reformed World*, March 2008, coordinated and edited by Robina Winbush.

A Workshop on "Spirituality of Resistance, Liberation and Transformation" was held in Matanzas, Cuba, in May 2008. The main goal of the workshop was to provide an essential foundation for the covenanting for justice movement with the

understanding that justice movements require strong solidarity among people of faith communities. This was an excellent example of theology connecting with people's struggles and hopes.

The Feminist Discourse on "Economy, Ecology and Empire" was held in Bangalore (12 to 17 August 2008). The discourse was designed to engage in north/south and ecumenical dialogue on issues regarding economy, ecology, and empire. The Feminist Discourse was seen as an opportunity to include feminist/womanist thinking into the current debate and to flesh out the issues of economy, ecology and empire and their links. Following the Bangalore Feminist Discourse on Economy, Ecology and Empire, a proposal was developed for a resource book that would be aimed at understanding economy, ecology, and empire and interrogating their links from various womanist/feminist perspectives. This book will be a theological resource for churches, seminaries, and social and ecumenical movements.

Oikotree, created by WARC, CWM, and WCC, continues to develop as the ecumenical space in which participants, who are seeking to live faithfully in the midst of economic injustice and ecological destruction, can raise their voices and demonstrate their actions for alternatives to the current unjust systems. It is a space in which a covenanting for justice movement can form itself and grow in strength. The term Oikotree is derived from Revelation 22 with its reference to the tree of life "and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." The WARC was the main organizer for the Oikotree launch event, which took place in Manila, Philippines, in December 2008. The movement was launched with a website, www.oikotree.org. It is an open invitation for people of faith communities to build an ecumenical platform as a global witness for peace with justice.

Together with Oikotree, WARC co-organized two events prior to the World Social Forum held in Belem, Brazil (25 to 30 January, 2009). The World Forum on Liberation Theology took place from 22 to 24 January: one seminar (up to 500 people) put justice at the heart of faith in local contexts tackling economy, ecology, and empire, and the other workshop was on justice spiritualities.

The executive secretary of CRJP represents WARC on the Alternative Globalisation Addressing People and Earth (AGAPE) reference group on Linking Poverty, Wealth and Ecology. She has participated in staff function group meetings and has brought closer partnership with WCC's Linking Poverty, Wealth and Ecology. The executive secretary helped to organize the Women's Hearing on Poverty Wealth and Ecology and served on the Central Planning Committee. In February 2008, she presented a Bible Study on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology.

Significant processes and meetings took place in Africa, Caribbean and North America, Europe, Latin America, and other places in connection with the Accra Confession.

Twenty-five women and men from the Reformed family in Africa met in Pretoria, South Africa, from 18 to 21 April 2008 for a Consultation on the Accra Confession. The main purposes of the consultation were to critically analyze, reflect, and discuss key issues regarding economic justice and ecological concerns in Africa, to discern the signs of today, and to plan further steps in churches' engagement with the Accra Confession. In Maputo, Mozambique, (2 to 6 December 2008) an Accra Confession workshop was organized around the Assembly of the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa (ARCA). The Africa consultant, Puleng LenkaBula, published an Accra Confession Study Guide for Africa.

Reformed churches from the Caribbean and North America regions participated in an Accra Confession workshop in Guyana from February 25 to 28 2008. Delegates were engaged in analysis, reflection, and discussion on critical issues regarding economic justice and ecological concerns. The workshop focussed on Caribbean perspectives on the world economic order and its impact on the livelihood of people. Participants were also engaged in analyzing the link between poverty, wealth, and ecology and lifting up threats and challenges. It remarked that CANACOM/CANAAC would not be effective in leading a process of transformative justice unless the issue of power was discussed. From the Caribbean context, a Christian education book on the Accra Confession with a Reformed theological perspective was developed.

Many local churches in Europe have been discussing the theological and economic dimensions of the Accra Confession. Some churches in Germany have been engaged in dialogue with partners in the South (one example is a project of the German Evangelical Reformed Church and the Uniting Church in Southern Africa on economic globalization). Some are also engaged in analysis and reflection on the topic of globalization, including theological positions. They have also been looking at motivation and support for communities and church members, as well as how to influence politics on the issues of poverty, trade, environment, and development by the values of justice, peace, and sustainability.

In Germany, "empire" was discussed in synods, academic institutions, and church leaders' conferences. Although it is seen as a controversial issue, the impression is that this discussion is helpful. It advances the debate on the structure of globalization and challenges the churches to sharpen critical theological thinking.

The AIPRAL and CLAI held an integrated forum in May 2008 in Guatire, Venezuela. The main outcome of this forum was an Open Letter on the Financial Crisis, which called for renewed energy in recognizing the prophetic role of the alliance in denouncing the neoliberal system that is having such a devastating impact on the lives of millions of people—condemning them to exclusion, while at the same time destroying the environment for economic gain. In Cartagena, 4 to 7 November

2009, AIPRAL organized a Faith and Economy Meeting entitled “Unjust Commerce and Human Dignity.” This meeting drew out commitments of Spanish-speaking Caribbean churches to promote study, reflection, and action on the Accra Confession. Churches made commitments to work in partnership with social and popular movements that seek alternatives for a just economic model and that preserve creation and protect the weakest of our world.

The Accra Confession Pamphlet (North America), developed under the leadership of Gretel Van Wieren, has been well received. It has been translated into Spanish. The North America Covenanting for Justice Working Group has developed a web-based workshop for congregational and educational resource. It includes workshops around the following issues in order to help groups engage and live out the Accra Confession in a variety of ways and according to particular contexts: sweatshops, farm workers, environmental justice, climate change, and incarceration. Each topical workshop is structured according to the organization of the confession itself (reading the signs of the times, confessing our faith, covenanting for justice) and includes a video component.

A global dialogue on covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 3 to 8 September 2009. It brought together churches and partners who have been active in their engagement with the Accra Confession. It included representatives of churches, which have responded to the Accra Confession, theologians, economists, and activists who have participated in studies, consultations, and workshops on the Accra Confession. The Johannesburg statement developed at this gathering will be a key document that will be tabled in the Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids, U.S.A., in June 2010.

c. *Youth*

The youth moderator continues to lead our youth work, coordinating with our Church Renewal, Justice and Partnership office. A youth newsletter was produced in 2007. It was well received. We have been intentional about involving youth in a number of consultations.

The Youth have been working hard to plan for the Reformed Youth forum just before the Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids.

4. *Mission Project*

In the period under review, two impulses contributed significantly to the shaping of and emphases in the programs prioritized by the Mission Project Advisory Committee: The Edinburgh 2010 study process and the Making a Difference Project.

The Edinburgh 2010 study process is an ecumenical action-reflection process around different themes. The Edinburgh 2010 question on changes or lack of changes in our understanding and practice of mission and unity since 1910 adds special impetus to the WARC Mission Project’s Intercultural Pilot on Mission Today. The Edinburgh 2010 theme of “Mission and Power” informs the study on Partnership in Mission. As a broad-based ecumenical process, Edinburgh 2010 also provides new opportunity to develop programmes with other denominations.

The development and coordination of the Making a Difference Project (MADIP) (2006 to 2009) became a major undertaking of the Mission Project, as it was possible to incorporate several programmatic foci into one mission empowerment project that would serve as a test model. This served the focus of mission study, reinterpretation, and empowerment of the Mission Project. Transforming international relations, searching for new expressions of mission in unity, immigrant issues, and rethinking mission are all built into the MADIP programmes. The MADIP was designed with three WARC churches—the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, and the United Protestant Church of Belgium—which already had some experience of working together. The aim was to deepen these relations by developing new ways of engaging together in mission at different levels of the church. The MADIP’s overall focus was peace, reconciliation, and justice action with special reference to dealing constructively with ethnic and racial differences.

Under the same theme of mission study, reinterpretation, and empowerment focus, the Mission Project began work on a survey of contemporary mission statements. This is an attempt to draw out convergences but also the specific insights that our Reformed tradition brings to the ecumenical discussion on mission, evangelism, and unity today. The findings will be a contribution to the Edinburgh 2010 study process. The Mission Project also facilitated an Intercultural Pilot Project on Mission Today as part of the Edinburgh 2010 process. The LWF has joined WARC in facilitating this programme programmatically and financially.

The Mission Project is coordinating the development of an ecumenical pilgrimage on foot during the Edinburgh 2010 event (2 to 6 June 2010). The pilgrimage will bring to life untold mission history between 1910 and 2010 as lived out by Christians in different places and of different traditions, and engage the pilgrims in reflection on their own mission commitments today. The Mission Project also coordinated a study on Partnership in Mission as a contribution to the Edinburgh 2010 theme “Mission and Power”. It included a process of gathering partnership studies of member churches. In the latter part of 2009 an expanded working group met to interpret the findings and to develop the global contribution for the Edinburgh 2010 study process.

The focus “Relations and Cooperation of Historic and Immigrant Churches in the North”, is incorporated into the MA-DIP project. In addition this continues to be a focus through ongoing work on a case study of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and through networking with different groups in Europe which seek to enable greater cooperation between different immigrant churches and the older churches.

Between November 2008 and March 2009 we had an evaluation of the Mission Project. The process recommended that the Mission project be continued after 2010.

5. *Communications Office*

We said “Good bye to John Asling in December 2008, and welcomed Kristine Greenaway to the office in Geneva in January 2009.

The Communications Office continues to issue timely news releases. The WARC’s quarterly newsletter, *Update*, is produced in French and English and published in print, email, and web editions. Selected articles are translated into Spanish by the Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in Latin America (AIPRAL) for publication in their magazine *La Voz*. The Alliance of Reformed Churches in Germany translates and publishes about six articles per issue in *die reformierten* on a pro bono basis. We continue to make better use of information technology. We have tried to make our website more responsive to the needs of our member churches. The office also continues to facilitate the publication of books and flyers.

The ecumenical news agency, ENI, continues to be a vital mechanism for distributing news stories about the ecumenical movement. The WARC is one of four founding member organizations

6. *Finance and Fundraising Office*

The Finance and Fundraising Office continues to play the leading role in faithfully managing the limited financial resources we have. We continue to face major challenges in our finances. Our auditors, Compagnie fiduciaire de révision S.A., have carried out the audit of the 2008 and 2009 accounts and recommended that they should be approved by the Governing Body of WARC.

We continue to be good stewards of the resources that come to us. However, we have had to face constant deficits. The deficits were primarily due to the reduction in income on account of the drastic fluctuations in the exchange rates. The May 2009 Executive Committee meeting took steps to ensure that beyond 2010 we do not experience deficits any more. The main element of these steps is to design the staff structure of WCRC to be smaller than the staff complement we have had until 2009. This is a painful but necessary step to lead us to a balanced budget.

We thank God for the churches and agencies that give towards program expenditure. This is what we depend on to carry out programs. While the bulk of income for programs comes from special fundraising, there is, however, always a small element of program expenditure that is borne by the core budget—in 2008 around CHF16,000.

We continue to be grateful to our member churches whose contributions form the core of our income. We are grateful to the PC(USA) for your commitment to what we do together to make a difference in the world. Some of our member churches have increased their membership contributions during the period under review. Sadly, a few have also reduced. The president and general secretary’s visits, as well as visits of executive secretaries, have been important instruments for discussing WARC’s financial challenges with our member churches. In the past we discussed block grants with German agencies and also with CWM. We continue to explore these.

7. *Partnership Fund*

The Reformed Churches Partnership Fund continues to be an important instrument that strengthens the mission our member churches engaged in the Global South. Given the human resources’ limitations we have, administering the Partnership Fund has been through more challenges than we expected.

8. *Endowment Fund*

We have established a WARC Endowment Fund. Thanks to the generous contributions of executive committee members—led by our president—we opened the Endowment Account with USD26,000. We initially wanted the Presbyterian Foundation to manage this for us, but this did not work out. We have now transferred those funds to the Barnabas Fund.

9. *WARC—REC Relations: Process Towards the WCRC*

The Joint Working Group set up by both WARC and REC executive committees has been working very hard as WARC and REC journeys towards union. They led the process of drafting a Constitution, formulating Articles of Union, crafting the staffing structure of the WCRC and preparations towards the Uniting General Council.

The strongest expressions of our togetherness have been our joint governing body meetings. A joint officers' meeting between WARC and REC was held in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in October 2008 and joint Executive Committee meeting in Geneva in May 2009

Shortly after the October 2009 joint officers' meeting, the draft Constitution was sent to all member churches. Some responses came in and have been processed.

In view of the challenging financial situation, the Joint Working Group established a task force to explore relocation of the office in a more cost effective venue. At the end of the process it was decided that for the time being the office needs to stay in Geneva.

10. *Uniting General Council—June 2010*

Preparations for the Uniting General Council are proceeding steadily. An Expanded Planning Committee meeting was held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in February 2009. This was necessitated by the desire of the Joint Working Group to make sure that in the planning of the council all voices in the WARC and REC families (regional, gender, and age-wise) were given space to contribute. It was a very good meeting during which various aspects of the Uniting General Council were planned.

The Worship Committee for the UGC is being coordinated by the Institute of Christian Worship of Calvin College. They held meetings in January 2009 and January 2010 and are planning some great times of worship at the UGC. They were also charged with developing a statement on worship renewal in readiness for the Uniting General Council.

In March 2009, a temporary website was launched to serve as a source of information about the Uniting General Council and to allow on-line functions related to it, including registration and delegate sponsorship. The WARC and REC are grateful to the Reformed Church of America for creating and maintaining this site.

Preparation materials have been prepared. Most are on the www.reformedchurches.org website. Some have been mailed out to participants.

11. *Relations with the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC)*

The WARC and DECC held a joint meeting in July 2008 in Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A. We reaffirmed our commitment to being in partnership towards the unity of the church. We also discussed our relationship in view of the uniting process of WARC and REC. The decisions include redefining the associate member provision for WCRC. The DECC has decided to come into the WCRC as an associate member. This is a key step in the closeness of the relationship between the Disciples and the Reformed.

The DECC leadership also made some helpful suggestions to the WCRC draft Constitution. We have also agreed to deepen our programmatic collaboration in a number of areas, including our dialogues with the Roman Catholics.

12. *John Calvin 500 Anniversary Celebrations*

The WARC, the Protestant Church of Geneva, the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, the Faculty of Theology of the University of Geneva, and the John Knox International Reformed Center in Geneva jointly engaged in planning the activities and processes of the Calvin jubilee commemorations.

In 2008, WARC and the John Knox International Reformed Center co-published *The Legacy of John Calvin: Some Actions for the Church in the 21st Century*, in time for the 499th birthday anniversary. The book was initiated by the late Lukas Vischer and is available in English, French, German, and Spanish. The WARC also sponsored the republishing of the French edition of André Biéler's *La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin*, published by Editions Georg, Genève.

The president and general secretary were guests at numerous seminars and public events connected with the Calvin jubilee in a number of countries. Other WARC staff members have also given lectures in connection with the Calvin celebrations. Groups visiting the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva regularly request meetings with WARC staff to learn about our work in the context of Calvin's legacy.

On Pentecost Day 2009, there was a special celebration in the St Pierre Cathedrale in Geneva. This was televised and it reached many countries. Prior to it, WARC brought together seventy participants from different countries to participate in a Calvin study tour. We thank Kathy Reeves of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and our intern, Merve Rugenstein, for their diligent work in organizing the study tour. We called on WARC member churches to set aside time to celebrate the jubilee the weekend of July 10 to 12, 2009. Many did. The focus on these celebrations was not so much on Calvin as a person, but on how his legacy inspires us into life-giving actions today.

13. *Area Councils*

Our area councils were all active in 2008 and 2009. The Caribbean and North America Area Council (CANAAC) had its assembly in February 2008. It focused on covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth. It also laid the structures for a vibrant youth movement for the area, and strengthened its ties with CANACOM. Dr. Kirkpatrick and the Reverend Sheerattan-Bisnauth attended on behalf of WARC.

14. *Visits to Member Churches*

In 2008 and 2009, the president and general secretary visited many member churches and encouraged them in the challenges they were facing. We visited churches in the following countries: Indonesia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Kenya, South Africa, Scotland, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Canada, Ghana, Brazil, Thailand, Malawi, Botswana, Jamaica, Madagascar, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Hungary, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Australia, and Germany.

Throughout the year different colleagues also visited member churches on behalf of WARC—especially in connection with programs and meetings they had in those areas or in connection with a special invitation. All these constitute direct contacts that we have with our constituencies.

15. *South Africa*

Following discussions in the officers meeting in Utrecht on the stalemate between the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and the Dutch Reformed Church in the reunification of the Dutch Reformed family, as well as the lingering issues around the readmission of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (Dutch Reformed Church), a team was set up to visit South Africa. This team visited in March 2009. Our visits to both processes were not very easy. Regarding the unification process, we heard both sides. We were encouraged because both agreed that what is needed includes a process towards reunification that is based on truth, restorative justice, and reconciliation. It was also agreed to put in place a process of studying the Belhar Confession. We commissioned Dr. Jerry Pillay, the ARCA president, to follow up on this.

On the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (Dutch Reformed Church), our discussions showed a deep division in the church around moving beyond apartheid. It was our determination that they were not ready for readmission to WARC or to the WCRC when it is formed. They remain under suspension.

16. *Gratitude and Conclusion*

We thank all my current colleagues for their dedicated professional service to the alliance—especially now that we are fewer. Thanks to Pat, Jet, Douwe, Kristine, Maureen, John, Penny, Franziska, Ming, and Veronika who carried the work in the two years under review. We are grateful to God for our ever-faithful volunteer, Hartmut Lucke, who is a real asset to the alliance, and to the faithful interns who were with us. Without this team, we could not have done much.

We thank God for the president, Dr. Kirkpatrick. We have been inspired and strengthened by his leadership. His visionary and pastoral leadership has brought us through many challenging times. We thank God for the president and all other Officers as well as other executive committee members. I am very grateful to the leadership of REC for our cooperation throughout the two years, 2008 and 2009.

Fundraising is a very demanding task that requires not only careful and profound proposal writing and follow up, but also many reports. We are grateful to all agencies, churches, and persons who have provided support to enable us to raise the funds needed to carry out our programs, and for all those who gave gifts of all kinds to ensure we worked well 2008 and 2009.

Yes, we are called upon to make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We in WARC continue to fulfil this calling. We pray that the emerging World Communion of Reformed Churches when formed in June 2010 will be an effective body that understands its calling to communion as including the commitment to justice.

The Reverend Doctor Setri Nyomi
WARC General Secretary

Endnote

1. Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians 4.5, Calvin Opera (CO) LI, 191, reproduced in the *Legacy of John Calvin*, p. 12.

B. *World Council of Churches Annual Report (2008)*

1. *The General Secretary's Introduction*

Looking back on the early days of 2008, we rejoice that Christians joined in worldwide celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This exercise in shared spirituality bears living testimony to how good

and pleasant it is when believers demonstrate that we are truly one in Christ. I was privileged to represent the World Council of Churches (WCC) at the Vatican for a service of common prayer and commemoration of this milestone in the quest for full Christian unity. This event coincided with a meeting of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, a consultation of representatives drawn from many traditions who even now are exploring new opportunities for dialogue among the churches and their cooperation in mission to the whole creation.

Throughout the year, the World Council of Churches observed its sixtieth anniversary. In a February celebration, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, reminded a near-capacity crowd at Geneva's St Pierre Cathedral that the WCC has accomplished much during the past six decades. "The council has provided an ideal platform where churches with different outlooks and a great variety of theological and ecclesiological traditions have been able to engage in dialogue and promote Christian unity," he said. The sixtieth anniversary gave us pause to reflect on how far the ecumenical movement has come since the council was born in 1948 and where the Holy Spirit is leading as we proceed into the uncharted territory of the twenty-first century.

This annual report reflects some of the initiatives we have taken as a council and shares some of the ways in which we have joined in partnership with others. We have endeavoured to confront the economic upheavals of our time, threats to our planet, offences against human rights, and the proliferation of violence and warfare. We have travelled far and wide to stand in solidarity with the poor, the oppressed, the physically exhausted, and those who mourn. We have also promoted greater visible unity among Christians through theological consultation and the experience of life together. In 2008, we wept with those who weep, yet we also found cause for joy in many opportunities given us by God. I visited the 2008 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland to speak frankly with political and financial leaders; at the same time, the council was instrumental in preparations for the 2009 World Social Forum and related events in Belém, Brazil. Concern over climate change has taken me and many ecumenical partners from conference rooms in Helsinki, to talks with indigenous leaders in Latin America, to encounters with the people of Pacific island churches.

We have stood in solidarity with Christians and their neighbours caught up in conflict, from Gaza to Sri Lanka, and we have borne witness to Christ's will for peace with justice in tense cities on every continent. This past year saw tragic scenes of internal turmoil in too many places, north and south, including my home country of Kenya. We have worked with international bodies and national churches to address the roots and consequences of such troubles. As you will see in these pages, there is reason for hope, despite the many challenges that face us. Young people are demanding fuller participation in finding solutions to the problems of this age. New conversations are opening up between factions within divided churches. Inter-religious discussions and understanding are more and more in evidence, with a proposal for a United Nations "Decade" for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation for peace. Ecumenical efforts, particularly in Africa, are yielding results in the establishment of HIV-competent churches and defining the role of congregations as they support local healthcare and sustainable communities. I am grateful to have been able to play a part in these ecumenical activities and in so many others.

In May 2008, Desmond Tutu visited the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva to honor the council and its sixtieth anniversary. Before becoming an archbishop, he served on the staff of the WCC. Watching him interact with a group of schoolchildren who were also visiting the World Council of Churches that day, one could sense both the history and potential of Christian fellowship lived within the providence of God. Archbishop Tutu reminded an audience made up of the children and members of the Ecumenical Centre staff, "We in South Africa would not be free if it had not been for the support of the WCC." He added, "Evil, injustice, oppression, all of those awful things, are not going to have the last word. Goodness, laughter, joy, caring, compassion, the things that you do and you help others do, those are going to prevail." We hope that the information presented in this report will leave you with the sort of enthusiasm and determination exhibited by Archbishop Desmond Tutu during his visit. And may the grace, communion, and love of God be with us all throughout the coming year.

The Reverend Dr Samuel Kobia
General Secretary
World Council of Churches

2. *2008 Highlights*

a. *"Living Letters" Carry Hope*

Eleven ecumenical delegations traveled to locations around the world where Christians strive to overcome violence. These "Living Letters" teams, composed of WCC member church representatives, visited Kenya, Sudan, Germany, Indonesia, Uganda, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Nicaragua, South Africa, Pakistan, Haiti, and Colombia. In the first such visit in 2008, a "Living Letters" delegation to Kenya witnessed the country's fragile return to peace after disputed elections sparked devastating violence along ethnic lines. For Rev. Canon Peter Karanja, general secretary of the National Council of Churches of Kenya, Kenyans "... need to understand that the interests of any ethnic community are linked to all the others and that the country is large enough for all of us to have a place."

b. *Forging Religious Encounters among Young People*

During three weeks in July, twenty-two young people from four continents and three religious backgrounds lived, ate, and reflected together on religious prejudices, differences, and common values at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. The

intense inter-religious dialogue, facilitated by Geneva-based and international Christian, Muslim, and Jewish experts emphasized the importance of encountering and understanding more about other religions. Participants were encouraged to carry these experiences back to their home communities.

c. *Witnessing to the Peace of God in Oceania*

Churches around the world prayed for the peoples of the Pacific as the 2008 regional focus of the Decade to Overcome Violence. Prayers and worship resources from a variety of denominations in the region were collected and shared, particularly for the International Day of Prayer for Peace on September 21, 2008. A Stories of Peace competition invited children and young people to depict through art what “peace in the Pacific” meant to them.

d. *Exploring the Promised Land*

Exploring the Promised Land, a conference held in Bern, Switzerland, aired different theological approaches to this key issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A key result of the discussions by church leaders and theologians was a better understanding of the question of land in the Bible, in theology, and in the conflict. The Bible “must not be utilized to justify oppression or supply simplistic commentary on contemporary events,” the final declaration states.

e. *A Need for Water Is Shared by All*

The first Ecumenical Water Network Summer School was held at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey bringing more than twenty young men and women from eighteen countries together for eight days of intense learning about the global water crisis. Participants came from privileged countries where a constant supply of clean water is taken for granted and from countries where water scarcity is a daily fact of life. The summer school generated enormous energy among a new generation of Christian leaders. The participants committed themselves to take up water issues in their home churches and youth networks.

3. *The World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Movement in the Twenty-first Century*

a. *Young Leaders Bring New Energy to Ecumenism—WCC Interns*

“You have the entire world in one single place,” states Henrik Hansson of the Church of Sweden, describing what drew him to work for one year with the WCC in Geneva as an intern. “I thought of this as a way to experience how worldwide the church is.”

For the three young people who worked within the WCC during 2008, it was definitely an “eye-opening” experience. Ginger Porter of the Congregational Christian Church, American Samoa, reflects. “It was something brand new to me—the WCC, the ecumenical movement.”

The WCC internship program is one way youth contribute their ideas and gain experience in the worldwide ecumenical movement. Their active participation in program areas like the Decade to Overcome Violence, youth, communication, and member relations gives them an opportunity to work and learn in an international, multiconfessional setting. “I recommend it for everybody,” says Antsa Rakotoarisoa, from the Anglican Church in Madagascar, “during one year you can learn much about the churches, ecumenism, and Jesus Christ.” The involvement of young people also gives the WCC valuable ideas and energy. As Martin Robra, director of the program on the WCC and the Ecumenical Movement in the twenty-first century states, “This is not token youth participation; this is strong engagement and full contribution to the work of the WCC.”

“Youth have always had a role in this whole movement, since the beginning,” emphasizes Porter. “It was a youth movement that spurred the ecumenical movement, and I think it has always been a nudge, not necessarily a powerful one at certain points ... but it has always been there and it will always be there.”

Following the WCC’s Ninth Assembly in Brazil, young people are increasingly involved throughout WCC activities. In addition to the internship program they act as stewards for major WCC meetings. A new youth commission, ECHOS, also enables young people to develop their visions of the ecumenical movement and strengthen their role in the decision-making mechanisms of the WCC.

“I think the WCC has a lot to offer youth,” says Ginger Porter. “I think the churches in the world open up a lot of opportunities for youth. It is a matter of actually implementing them and actually giving the youth the opportunity to rise again and to do things.”

If there is one recurring characteristic young people bring, it’s the sense of action. “I think youth are more ‘let’s take some action’ rather than just taking time, ‘let’s discuss this,’” says Porter.

Or, as Hansson puts it, “Most young people are quite pragmatic and we haven’t gained so much status and power—we don’t have so much to lose and so we are more action oriented.” Hanson says that being action oriented is also connected to

“thinking outside the box” and not feeling so bound by institutional memories. “You can’t live on old merits” he states, and this gives an opportunity for a “fresh start” for the ecumenical movement in the twenty-first century.

b. *Nurturing the Growing Fellowship of Churches—New Member Churches*

Two church communions from opposite sides of the globe were welcomed into full fellowship of the World Council of Churches (WCC) by the central committee in February 2008, increasing the membership of the WCC to 349.

But membership of the WCC is not just about numbers. It is about expanding and strengthening the sense of fellowship among Christians worldwide. Each member contributes to, and receives inspiration from, the vast and diverse expressions of faith and witness to Jesus Christ.

The newest members of the WCC are the Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil and the Lao Evangelical Church. Under the WCC’s new membership guidelines, both churches were received for an interim period at the September 2006 central committee meeting, allowing for a time of interaction and further evaluation.

The Lao Evangelical Church is the first WCC member from Laos, a nation of some six million people. Growing out of mission work from the late nineteenth century, it was formally established in 1956 and today has approximately one hundred thousand members in three hundred congregations. It is the largest denomination in the country officially recognized by the government.

“Ecumenism is not new to us,” says the church’s president, Mr. Khamphone Kounthapanya. In addition to being members of the Christian Conference of Asia, the church works with the other officially recognized churches in Laos, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Seventh Day Adventists. “We have no problems. We always come together,” he states, and continues pragmatically, “If we fight, the government is going to close down all of us.”

The Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil has about ninety-five thousand members and five hundred congregations. It formally organized in 1903, developing a variety of mission projects, social work, and education programs over the next century. It is the sixth WCC member church from Brazil, which hosted the WCC’s Ninth Assembly in 2006.

Their membership has been long in development. “As a matter of fact, our church participated in all WCC assemblies since New Delhi (1961), always as an observer,” says Rev. Assir Pereira, president of the church. But “only in our last assembly was the decision taken, almost unanimously, to request full membership with the council.”

Pereira reflects that while some were frustrated over such a long delay in joining the WCC, it was crucially important to bring the whole church together in the decision. “Today I understand that a sensitizing process was needed, a gradual growing up of our church, before we could achieve it. And it is important that the decision was made with such broad support, without a split, with the awareness that the moment was ripe to make this commitment to contribute to the ecumenical movement through the World Council of Churches.”

Through involvement in WCC programs, visits to member churches, participation in governing body meetings, reflection and prayer, and actions of solidarity in times of crisis, the WCC member churches live out Jesus’ prayer of unity, “so that the world may believe.”

4. *Unity, Mission, Evangelism, and Spirituality*

a. *Celebrating a Century of Prayer for Christian Unity*

After one hundred years of prayers for Christian unity, there are still unprecedented opportunities. From new local initiatives and special global events, to a venture into cyberspace, the 2008 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity lived out its theme, “Pray without ceasing,” as new energy and recommitment were gathered for its next century.

In Rome, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia joined Pope Benedict XVI in praying for Christian unity at a vespers service presided over by the Pope—a tangible sign of the spirit of cooperation between the WCC and the Vatican that has marked the forty years of joint production of the liturgical materials for the week. There was also a celebration in Geneva organized by the WCC and local churches with testimonies of ecumenical involvement in different parts of the world.

While bringing greetings in Rome from the WCC fellowship of churches, Kobia underlined the importance of “a church that is one and united in its witness” in a world marked by violence and disunity.

New and rising leaders in the churches and the ecumenical movement also contributed energy for unity. For the first time, the major global Christian student and youth organizations, including the WCC youth desk, issued a joint call to prayer and action to encourage young people worldwide to come together and express Christian unity at local and national levels. A page on the social networking Web site Facebook connected young people around the world in sharing plans and prayers for the week.

Towards the end of the week, in a letter to church leaders, the youth organizations reaffirmed the need "... to focus on that which unites us and work together in a spirit of openness and respect." They said their organizations "... affirm the importance of this expression of unity and celebrate that young people have always been pioneers of the movement for ecumenism." The letter expresses the hope that people around the world will continue to build on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity through "concrete actions."

Such concrete actions are often the fruit of local celebrations. For worshipers in Yealand, a small village in the northwest of England, their first celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity had a significant impact.

Catherine King Ambler, clerk of the local Quaker meeting, acknowledged that despite several attempts, it had been difficult for the Church of England, Catholic, and Quaker communities to come together in a joint service. The one hundredth anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, though, provided an opportunity that "enabled some deeper spiritual contact with each other." The three churches conducted a prayer pilgrimage, drawing on the theme and prayers in the materials produced by the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It "felt much more sincere and participatory," reflected Ambler. The activities of the week have led to a longer-term joint project. "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity really facilitated a good opportunity for getting to know each other," says Ambler. "Barriers have been broken down."

b. *Indigenous Peoples: Exploring Ancient Theological Roots in New Ways*

"Just as all Christians are brought together in the one body of Christ, so too are the indigenous Christians who are crying out for their rightful place in the mainstream churches," says Evelyn Parkin of Australia.

Parkin was one of more than thirty participants from sixteen countries representing indigenous communities in a WCC consultation on the "Ecclesial and Social Vision of Indigenous Peoples" held in October in the Philippines. While the WCC has long advocated for the rights and inclusion of indigenous peoples, particularly through the United Nations, the consultation was an important step in fully recognizing and including their theological insights among the worldwide fellowship of churches.

"Someone once said that the church is like a bird flying with one wing that continuously flies in circles. The bird needs to have both wings to balance," says Parkin. "For me the church is a bit like this—until indigenous Christians are accepted and become a part of the church, it too, is left in an imbalanced order."

The consultation explored commonalities and differences among indigenous theologians and noted those that particularly contributed to a wider Christian perspective, such as "stewardship," in which indigenous theologians can help "... to rethink the way we live in the world." As the report noted, "... our value of community in the journey of Christian pilgrimage can show the church a renewed sense of hope for its ecclesiological understandings. Sharing, community and love of one's neighbour are areas where our indigenous values can inform the Christian theological task."

Hosted by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, the consultation was called in response to the WCC Ninth Assembly's recommendation for theological input from an indigenous perspective to strengthen the life and witness of the WCC.

Juan Jacobo Tancara from Chile reflected that in his context of Pentecostal indigenous churches, "ecumenism is still very rare and the revalorization of indigenous spirituality sounds, at least in the discourse, dangerous."

As Parkin stated, it impacted her "knowing that I belong to the much bigger picture of Indigenous Christians across the globe I see the Spirit moving across the waters drawing all into the one voice for the Indigenous peoples' struggles." For Tancara, the consultation was personally significant as he "had never been in an international meeting like this before." And, he hopes that "the diversity of ideas and the shared will of a fairer healthier land, a strong awareness of the destructive process where extreme capitalism is taking us, and the shared ideas that are presented in the document" will promote common understanding and joint action among indigenous peoples and the wider Christian community.

5. *Public Witness: Addressing Power, Affirming Peace*

a. *United Nations Advocacy Week*

Advocacy for justice, peace, the abolition of poverty and the preservation of the ecology becomes more effective when churches and their partners combine forces to interpret the gospel's demands for the present day. In November, 120 people, representing a variety of confessional traditions and diverse nationalities, spent six days participating in the WCC's fourth annual United Nations Advocacy Week (UNAW) in New York. It was an opportunity for strategic planning and dialogue with representatives of the U.N. and related networks of activists.

The UNAW provides an evolving model of ecumenical collaboration and a significant moment for expressing concerns and addressing questions of power, inequality, and structural injustice throughout the world. As the global financial crisis of 2008 turned the media's focus to stock exchanges, banks, and centers of government, advocates of the poor and dispossessed

took the opportunity to remind international leaders that, for the poor, this was not a threat to privileged lifestyles, but literally a matter of life and death.

Dr Robert C. Orr, the U.N. assistant secretary-general for strategic planning and policy coordination, spoke at one of the UNAW discussion sessions. “In times of crisis,” he observed, “people tend to look inward and seek to protect their own families and communities. You need to help people fight this instinct; because we can cope with this crisis only if we look outward and all work together.”

Founded by the WCC’s Commission of the Churches on International Affairs in 2003, the advocacy week at the U.N. in New York has among its stated goals the gathering of churches and ecumenical partners in a forum dedicated to common advocacy on global issues. It is also intended to deepen theological and ethical insights concerning identified priorities, build the capacity and understanding of Christians with regard to advocacy within the U.N., and create opportunities for dialogue with the U.N. member states and related agencies.

The UNAW’s advocacy areas in 2008 included human rights, migration, and the continuing violence in Sri Lanka. The week’s events moved through four phases: (1) setting the context for common strategic, global, ecumenical advocacy; (2) deepening common understanding of priority advocacy issues; (3) engaging as one in ecumenical advocacy; and (4) setting common commitments for networking and follow-up.

The six-day program resulted in many participants planning and undertaking regional and inter-regional projects on such problems as upholding the rights of migrant workers, the affirmation of indigenous cultures, youth and gender issues, the intersection of climate change and economic justice, as well as the search for peace amid conflicts like that in Sri Lanka.

b. *Empowering People to Demand Their Human Rights*

On April 28, 2007, Jonas Burgos was having lunch alone at a restaurant in his town in the Philippines when four armed men and one woman in civilian clothes forced him into a car. The license plate of the car was eventually traced to a local army battalion. Despite strong evidence of military involvement in Jonas’ disappearance, no one was brought to justice and nothing more was heard or seen of him until almost a year later. A friend of the family working in the military showed them an army document that listed Jonas as an insurgent who had been “neutralized”—a military term for killed. Jonas, an organic farmer, had been giving technical training to local members of a peasant movement that the Philippine government and armed forces labeled a “front” organization for the Communist Party.

Jonas’ story is one of over nine hundred extrajudicial killings and almost two hundred enforced disappearances from 2001 to 2007 in the Philippines. Many of the victims were political activists and human rights defenders, including church leaders. Jonas’ mother, Dr Edita Burgos, and several other family members of victims were members of WCC-supported delegations to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in 2008.

“I went with the ecumenical delegation to Geneva to give a face to the victims,” said Dr Burgos in her reflections on the trip. “I did not know what to say before the UNHRC. I am just another mother looking for her son.” But inside events, visits with missions and personal testimony, Dr Burgos and the other members laid out the chilling facts of case after case of death and disappearance. And, face to face with the Philippine government delegation, Dr Burgos challenged their suggestion to debate the issue of enforced disappearances: “I told them, ‘what is there to debate about? Even if you accuse my son of being a communist, he is still a human being who has rights.’” After her words, the U.N. hall was silent.

The WCC has been one of many church and ecumenical groups supporting the churches in the Philippines in their outspoken and persistent pursuit of truth and justice. Pastoral and political solidarity over several years led in 2008 to facilitation of the preparation and participation of several delegations acting as part of the UNHRC’s Universal Periodic Review of the Philippines.

Through technical and material support, the WCC enables those most affected by injustice to plead their own case effectively before international forums. Mervin Sol Toquero, assistant program secretary for the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), notes that the WCC’s offices in New York and Geneva provided the necessary support for the delegations to engage with the UNHRC, from the planning and writing stages of the extensive report, *Let the Stones Cry Out*, to organizing side events and submitting official interventions to the U.N. body.

The personal testimony that accompanied the delegation’s documentation made an even more powerful impact. The Reverend Rex Reyes Jr, general secretary of the NCCP and a member of the delegations to the U.N., stated in reflections on the launch of the book *Let the Stones Cry Out* that “a major factor that contributed to the credibility of their delegations was the inclusion and active participation of the relatives of victims.” The book itself is not only a record of injustice, but is intended as a reference for other groups bringing their concerns to the United Nations.

A reduction in the rate of killings suggests that international pressure is having an effect, but it has not yet been enough. Reyes concludes from the delegations’ experiences: “It taught us that vigilance and faithfulness to truth still remain important

parts of the conduct of the struggle for peace and justice. And it taught us the necessity of global response to the human rights crisis in any country.”

For Edita Burgos, her search for her son continues. Yet she has hope. “I can see a growth in impact of the ecumenical delegation because of the perseverance of the team and the support of the international community,” she reflects in the concluding chapter of *Let the Stones Cry Out*. As she considers the task still ahead in bringing to justice the individuals and institutions behind the violence, she says, “that is why it is important for people to be aware. It will be the action of people combined with prayer that will dismantle these institutions.”

6. *Justice, Diakonia, and Responsibility for Creation*

a. *Preserving the Gift of Creation*

“The storms and waves eat away our beaches, and as they continue they will some day eat us,” states Rev. Baranite Karate from Kiribati, one of three Pacific Island countries facing immediate threat from rising sea levels. For his community and many others already vulnerable to changes in weather patterns, climate change is not just a statistical probability but a fact with devastating consequences. In Kiribati, those living on the coast have already had to move further inland as floods are more frequent and intense. At the same time, diseases and extreme heat have become more common. The prospect of being refugees is more acute as the place they call home progressively disappears beneath rising waters.

The WCC has addressed environmental issues and climate change for nearly two decades. It brings a moral and faith-based voice to United Nations Climate Change Forums that works at establishing agreements, commitment, and urgent action to reverse the effects human activity has on climate change. The voice and experience of Pacific churches have added to the urgency of the ecumenical message. At the December U.N. conference on the Kyoto Protocol, the WCC told delegates that much more radical steps must be taken. In February, the WCC Central Committee addressed global warming and climate change by building on previous statements of the WCC to emphasize the need for immediate action by governments and for a “profound change in the relationship towards nature, economic policies, consumption, production, and technological patterns.” The central committee said, “the responsibility lies with all of us, from our individual ecological footprint through parishes, corporations, and states.”

Following the lead of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the central committee named September 1 as a special day of prayer and action for the care and stewardship of creation. As His All Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, wrote in his encyclical for that day, “the use of the world and the enjoyment of material goods must be eucharistic, accompanied by doxology towards God; by the same token, the abuse of the world and participation therein without reference to God is sinful both before the Creator and before humanity as creation.”

The WCC has worked on climate change and the care of creation through direct work with churches and their members. It has also utilized its networking skills and U.N. accreditation and recognition to bring churches, other religions, and grassroots communities to speak together and directly to countries and international forums. Activities range from staff leadership of a week’s Focus for Christians on Caring for Creation in August, organized by the Council for World Mission in Europe, a visit to Pacific churches led by the WCC general secretary in July, and plenary statements and other advocacy during the sessions of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Ecumenical cooperation on the inter-related issues of climate change and water also led to the formation of the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN), whose secretariat is hosted by the WCC. Initiatives such as the EWN’s “Seven Weeks of Water for Lent” encourage biblical reflection on the use of the earth’s resources.

The importance of the leadership and advocacy within churches is clear. In a March visit to the WCC, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told WCC staff, “Global warming will only be resolved through a global common response, and we need your help.” The WCC’s efforts are grounded in the call to care for God’s creation. This call does not hesitate to remind people at every level of the responsibilities they hold to care for such a gift. As the WCC told the delegates attending the high-level segment of the U.N. meeting on the Kyoto Protocol in December, “With a sense of wonder we look at life on planet Earth. It is a miracle and a gift! We all share the responsibility of being conscious caretakers of this home of ours.”

b. *Through Migration, Understanding a Church “on the Move”*

On Fridays, the Holy Trinity church compound in Dubai is abuzz with worshippers from early morning until after night-fall. Over ten thousand members of more than 120 different Christian groups and congregations come here on the Emirates’ weekly day of rest.

Services in more than a dozen languages, including English and Arabic, and South Asian languages such as Urdu, Tagalog, Tamil or Malayam, fill not only the main church from 6 am to 11 pm, but twenty-five other halls built around a central courtyard, adorned with a Canterbury cross.

A vibrant church life may not be the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about the Gulf region, which is primarily Muslim. But in a way, the three to four million Christians in the region, almost all of whom came in search of work from around the globe, present a microcosm of Christianity and a challenge of church unity.

Migration is a fact of life all over the world, whether people are seeking safety, freedom, or a better life. Wherever it occurs, migration contributes to a more diverse religious presence in the countries concerned. Among Christians, that can also lead to tensions between the established churches in a country and the new migrant churches. “Why do migrants stay in migrant churches? Why don’t they go to mainline churches?” are central questions, says Sydia Nduna, WCC’s program executive for Migration and Social Justice.

A consultation in Palermo, Italy, in November addressed migration and the changing ecclesial landscape, touching on the essence of the church, as Nduna put it, “providing protection, identity, human dignity, self-esteem, and human worth.” This meeting was the first church consultation between mainline and migrant churches organized by the WCC in collaboration with the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe, and the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy.

These issues of pastoral care have become one of the priorities of the Global Ecumenical Network on Migration, a WCC network that works closely with other church bodies to deepen understanding of migration issues such as racism, xenophobia, and the effect of migration on the understanding of the church. This understanding directs the churches as they seek to have more impact on global policy.

In Dubai, where a WCC delegation led by General Secretary Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia visited in April, the ecclesial and religious challenges of migration are stark. Referring to the churches built in the compounds jointly granted to several denominations, the chaplain appointed to care for the spiritual welfare of the expatriate Christians laments that they “are often built facing away from one another, when, in fact, each church could encourage the other.”

In his sermon at the Anglican Holy Trinity Church in Dubai, Kobia encouraged Christians to, in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, seek the welfare of the city where God has sent them into exile and reminded them of the biblical mandate “to open up ... relationships so that we may move from being strangers to being neighbors.”

Amélé Akué, professor at the WCC’s Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, stated in Palermo, “A church of strangers and sojourners will understand itself as a church of people on the move, in which the otherness is not a motive for exclusion but a source of mutual growing in recognition and respect of the diverse versions of Christianity.”

7. *Education and Ecumenical Formation*

a. *Real Life Faith and Study*

When Angok Achuil was 11, he was recruited as a child soldier into the Sudan People’s Liberation Army. Since that time he has become an Anglican and a spiritual leader. Both of these experiences have profoundly affected his graduate studies at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. “It has been very emotional here,” he says. “It is really about issues of life, and not what I think about when coming and doing theology.”

In class discussions, students connect academic study with real experiences. Few, however, have the raw memories Angok has. “Like when we talk about water,” he says, “I know how many people have been killed because of water in our place, how many people have died because of hunger, because of drugs.”

Angok’s 2008 class at the Graduate School at the Ecumenical Institute had nineteen students from thirteen different countries. A quarter of the graduate students were women and about half of them came from Africa. Two master’s programs offered by the Institute have an additional nineteen students, with a rising number of women (now 40 percent). With students in residence at Bossey every day of the year, some of the most profound lessons come just from living and worshipping together.

“The first fascinating thing that caught my attention was during the orientation time,” says master’s student Emmanuel Babatunde Gbogboade from the Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide in Nigeria. “They asked how we wanted to live in community...? This is a new community, how do we want to live?” Emmanuel applies this globally now: “Peace is possible if we respect one another and the talents of one another, not to be jealous of one another. As the world, how do we want to live?”

For Emmanuel, worshipping together was also a revelation, even though his church in Nigeria is already ecumenical in outlook. After participating in Orthodox services and sharing his own style of worship, he says, “I have a better understanding and value of how people worship their God.” And, he reflects, “God understands the way everyone worships.”

Angok says his experiences at Bossey have changed him completely. “I will not be going back as the same person,” he says. “I’ve discussed with many people—Orthodox, Catholic, and Pentecostal. You cannot know yourself... as the only way.”

His respect, though, is not limited to Christians alone. “When I go back, I will reflect a lot about what I can do, especially in my churches,” Angok says. “In my diocese, if we have Muslims, we can have dialogue with Muslims, not call them terrorists like we do. It is the same among the Christians, with the denominations. We have to have something in common as a people of God.”

b. *Practicing Ecumenism: It’s a Way of Life*

Sister Pina Sandu says that in her Orthodox monastery located in the mountains of Romania they practice touristic spirituality. With a resort built up around the monastery, like it or not the tourists “hear the bells, hear the services three times a day ... they hear, they feel, they know that something is happening.” As a result, their curiosity leads them into the yard and the church—“small, sure steps towards something beautiful.”

Sister Pina and five other sisters—two each from Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant orders—are providing a similar but subtle radical witness at Bossey for students and visitors alike. The sisters live together, coordinate the worship and prayer life at the Ecumenical Institute, and participate in classes—while embodying a sense of spirituality in daily life.

Their presence alone, in their striking habits, is noticeable to all who use the Institute for meetings and events. Visitors come from church, development groups, and secular organizations like Rolex or the regional Swiss television company. All are invited to take part in the prayer life at the Institute.

But their main role over their year at Bossey is to provide pastoral support for the students. Rev. Emmanuel Twahirwa, a graduate student from the Anglican Church in Rwanda, appreciates their worship facilitation. “When you come, you find yourself lost in academic study and you may end up forgetting your spiritual life,” he says. “We have to balance the two.” Even more, he appreciates their presence: “Sisters from different denominations, living together—it is important for us to learn from them.”

The sisters themselves were uncertain how it would work living together. Sister Sperancia Mulashani Thadeo, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, reflected that she had met other Roman Catholic sisters but could not imagine how it would work living with them. “I thought perhaps they would stay in other parts,” she says ruefully. The reality she found was that it is possible to live together. “The happiest of times is sharing about our life, what we are doing and our spiritual life.”

“For us,” says Ivy Athipozhiyil, a Dominican sister from India, “ecumenical spirituality is living together... We are sharing everything, laughing. This we offer, without knowing, to others, like the students. For them it is a sign.”

Maria Elena Romero Molina, a Missionary Dominican sister from Guatemala, states it most simply, “Ecumenism is not a concept. It is a way of life.”

Sister Pina reflects, “The motto of the life and work commission, back then, was ‘doctrine divides, service unites.’” Now, she states, “I could say doctrine divides, spirituality unites.”

8. *Inter-Religious Dialogue and Cooperation*

a. *Encouraging Inter-religious Paths to Peace*

“Our concerns are very much the same as yours,” a senior Buddhist leader told a WCC delegation visiting Sri Lanka in October. As a member of the Conference of Religions—a grouping of Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians in the country—he has been an advocate for a political solution to the protracted ethnic conflict there.

Yet not all Buddhists support this approach. One of the highest ranking Buddhist leaders in Sri Lanka, Udagama Sri Buddhharakkhita Mahanayaka Thero of the Asgiriya chapter, supports the government’s military intervention. He told the delegation, “It is the government’s duty to suppress and overpower the misguided [Tamil militant] groups and protect the civilians” against terrorist activities. “As religious leaders,” he said, “we will never tell the government to shy away from its duty to protect the civilians.”

In countries such as Sri Lanka, religious identity often becomes entangled with ethnic identity, and religious people of all faiths can become polarized. In the program activity, *Accompanying Churches in Conflict Situations*, the WCC seeks ways to encourage religious leaders and communities to come together for dialogue and seek justice and peace together.

Such an approach is critical in places like Pakistan where Christians make up a tiny minority of a population that is 95 percent Muslim. Political, religious, and economic barriers are compounded when Christian identity is linked with the Western world. Events such as the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the publishing of inflammatory cartoons in Europe resulted in violence against Christians in Pakistan.

“You people sneeze in the West and we get a cold,” Bishop Munawar K. Rumalshah, from the Church of Pakistan, told a Living Letters team from the WCC.

“Living Letters” are small international ecumenical teams traveling to locations around the world where Christians strive to overcome violence. Such teams, in addition to other visiting delegations such as the one to Sri Lanka led by WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, discuss how churches can help ease political and religious tensions. The visits provide tangible solidarity to the churches. They also provide an opportunity to build new relationships while strengthening existing ones with other religious communities. They encourage working together to seek just and peaceful ways of conflict resolution and reconciliation.

b. *Women Promote Peace through Religion*

While the WCC encouraged inter-religious dialogue in places of conflict, another form of dialogue took place in Gothenburg, Sweden during 2008. In September, twenty-five women from Iran, U.S.A., Pakistan, Senegal, Palestine, Sweden, and other European countries met to discuss the role of women in inter-religious dialogue. They exchanged experiences with Swedish families and local Christian-Muslim women’s groups in an effort to strengthen the capacity of women for peace-making.

“The dialogue in this meeting makes us all understand the issues we face as women,” stated Bibifatemeh Mousavi Nezhad, director of the Iranian Institute for Inter-Religious Dialogue (IID). “This not only affects the work we do back home, but influences the way we initiate dialogue in our own countries and communities,” she said. This journey of women working together for peace through dialogue began in 2007 in Tehran when the IID hosted the first meeting of this project. The event was co-organized with the WCC. The women involved come from diverse backgrounds. They are policy makers, journalists, educators, doctors, NGO workers, religious scholars, and filmmakers. Their common perspective as women strongly influenced how the meeting addressed issues hindering peacemaking in communities and societies.

“Being women influences the way we communicate with each other,” said Catherine Oberg-Sadjedi, an American with both Christian and Muslim roots. “Women do speak differently when we are alone together and we tend to approach the issues from a cultural and social aspect as well. We are able to share about the problems that concern us and initiate dialogue in a unique way.”

“Dialogue in this event has made us learn from each other, educate ourselves, and listen to the diverse voices,” said Lily Habash, a Christian from Palestine. “This can be called a first step in peacemaking, where dialogue creates a deeper understanding of how we understand the ‘other.’”

“Breaking the barriers through interfaith dialogue makes us realize that we can accept the ‘others,’ and [that] we are not the only ones with the ‘truth’,” Habash said.

The exchanges at this meeting enabled the group to build a network of Christian and Muslim women who can strengthen community projects and bring new methodologies for building interfaith understanding at the grassroots level. The network is now involved in three projects—an educational booklet on methodologies on inter-religious dialogue from the perspective of Christian and Muslim women; a Web site and documentary to share information, best practices, and connect with a wider audience and women’s groups; and a national effort in Iran that uses WCC resources in an effort to work with religious groups on HIV and AIDS.

However, it is perhaps at the personal level where inter-religious dialogue and encounter has its strongest effect. In such cases, women have been empowered to play a more effective role in the religious debate of their own communities.

Reflecting on her painful experience of the occupation of Palestine, Habash states, “I can tell that my country is a land of people and not stones. If there is a hope for peace, women are in a significant position to influence that process along with men.”

To: GAMC Members
 From: Israel-Palestine Mission Network
 Date: February 18, 2010



RE: "CHRISTIANS AND JEWS: PEOPLE OF GOD"
AN EXAMPLE OF OCCUPATION THEOLOGY

The 216th General Assembly (2004) directed that **"formation of a Worldwide Ministries Division-related Palestine Mission Network...for the purpose of creating currents of wider and deeper Presbyterian involvement with Palestinian partners, aimed at demonstrating solidarity and changing the conditions that erode the humanity of Palestinians."** It is with this mandate in mind that we respond to the report before you, *Christians and Jews: People of God*.

The Israel-Palestine Mission Network (IPMN) has had very little time to examine the report, *Christians and Jews: People of God*, because the drafting process was confidential and the vetting process very limited. Since the document was made public on February 4, we have only had time to prepare an initial response, which follows.

There is much that we affirm in this report.

- We appreciate the call to "reject... anti-Judaism and all the stereotypes and prejudices that accompany it." (p. 13) As we said in *Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace*, this includes charges that Jews are Christ-killers (deicide) and that the New Covenant in Christ negates the covenant God made with the Israelites (supersessionism).
- Likewise, we affirm the call to recognize the Old Testament as Christian scripture and intimate on-going connection between Jews and Christians.
- In addition, we applaud the recognition that both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples have a right to secure homelands and that God's promises to ancient Israel cannot serve as the basis for contemporary land claims by Israeli settlers in the occupied Palestinian territories or by the state of Israel.

In spite of these very positive elements, the overall impression we have is that this document represents what has been called "Occupation Theology." This applies to both what is said in the document and what is left unsaid. The political effect of *Christians and Jews* is that it will justify Israel's military occupation and minimize its effect on Palestinians.

This document quotes the 1987 report, "A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews," which states: "Theology is never done in a vacuum. It influences and is influenced by its context." A central element of our context today is the pressure on the churches from American Jewish religious and secular organizations to stop criticizing Israel and provide uncritical support of Israel. *Christians and Jews* appears to be a response to that pressure.

Fatal Flaws:

It is with heavy heart that we identify some fatal flaws in this document.

• **The Separation of Theology and Justice**

One of the hallmarks of Presbyterian and Reformed theology is the unity of theology and ethics. This report lacks that unity. *Christians and Jews* is based on a faulty analysis of the situation in Israel-Palestine. The report reduces the cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to "incompatible historical narratives and political claims" and limits the description of the conflict to "a sustained cycle of violence." The origins and history of the conflict, the United Nations resolutions regarding the conflict, the U.S. vetoes of U.N. Security Council resolutions, and the ongoing breach of international law and human rights that has characterized the conflict are passed over in silence, as if this had nothing to do with Jewish-Christian relations in the contemporary world.

Nothing is said about the nature of the military occupation, the ongoing blockade of Gaza, or Israel's 2008-2009 war on Gaza and the crimes against humanity that were reported in the Goldstone Report. (See *Kairos Palestine*, section 1. "The reality on the ground" for a description of life under military occupation.)

By neglecting the reality on the ground, this report would “make nice” with certain American Jewish organizations to avoid unwarranted charges of anti-Semitism. These are the organizations that have provided financial and political support for the Israeli occupation and colonization of Palestinian lands since 1948, and used threat and intimidation to censor debate about Israel within and without the Jewish community.¹ A report that confesses Christian guilt for the past and calls for changes in our theology and practice but neglects to mention the contribution of American synagogues to the oppression of Palestinians over the past six decades appears to us as inauthentic interfaith dialogue.

Why this separation between theology and ethics? During the February 17 “webinar” discussion of *Christians and Jews*, the question was asked, does this report deal with the issue of divestment? One presenter replied, “No. We don’t deal with these issues here.” The other presenter added, “These are theological papers. These papers are not about the Middle East conflict.” By neglecting the “elephant in the room” this report makes no attempt to deal theologically with the ongoing confiscation of Palestinian land, the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, and the contribution of the Israel lobby and the U.S. government to these actions.

- **A House Divided Against Itself?**

Since 1948 the PC(USA) has passed resolutions strongly supporting the right of Israel to exist within the internationally recognized pre-1967 borders and emphatically condemning violence against civilians by all parties. The church affirms that Israel and all nations have the right to provide security for their citizens by taking appropriate measures that are consistent with international law. Our Church has also strongly supported the right of Palestinians to an independent and sovereign state within the pre-1967 borders, the right of return of refugees or a negotiated compensation, the removal of all illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories or a negotiated and fair swap of land, a shared Jerusalem, an end to Israel’s military occupation of Palestinian territories, either the total removal of the Separation Wall or the removal of those portions of the Wall that are on Palestinian land, and equal rights for Palestinians who are citizens of Israel.

While the existence of GA statements on Israel-Palestine is mentioned in passing in *Christians and Jews*, the specific positions of the GA are passed over in silence. Statements like “both peoples have claims on the same land,” and “critical questions such as ending the occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel or the future of Jerusalem are complex and difficult” give the impression that because Israel has taken more Palestinian land and built more illegal settlements, things have changed or become more difficult, so that maybe the PC(USA) should reconsider its previous statements in light of the current facts on the ground. Palestinians will certainly consider any weakening of the GA statements as another nail in their coffin. They will also be confounded by a report of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that discusses Jewish-Christian relationships in today’s world without taking into account how those relationships affect their very survival in the Holy Land.

Thus, the question arises, is the PC(USA) a house divided against itself in which world mission (and the mission networks), social witness policy, peacemaking, and racial ethnic ministries are on one team and interfaith relations, theology and worship, and evangelism are on an opposing team?

- **“A worldwide increase in Anti-Jewish Rhetoric and Actions” (p. 2)**

This statement needs to be contextualized. This “anti-Jewish rhetoric” does not arise out of a vacuum, or some inchoate reservoir of anti-Semitism. In fact, the case can be made that it is a reaction to the actions of the state of Israel. And that this is related to the American Middle East wars, which, combined with the U.S. defense of Israel internationally, fuels anti-Jewish stereotypes and some classic anti-Semitic beliefs.

- **Jarring Metaphors**

This report makes use of two New Testament metaphors to describe the theological relationship between Christians and Jews: “. . . to share the rich root of the olive tree . . .” [Romans 11:17] (p. 3) and “. . . and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility.” [Ephesians 2:14] (p. 6) In the present context, the use of these metaphors is jarring—even offensive—unless reference is also made to the way in which actual relationships in the Holy Land deny this theological affirmation. Since 1967 Israel has uprooted over one and a quarter million Palestinian olive trees; since 2002 Israel has constructed a 25-foot high Separation Barrier which has been condemned by the International Court of Justice.

- **“The same God”**

¹ The package (a bomb?) sent to 100 Witherspoon St in 2004, the fire in a Rochester church, the picketing of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship event at GA when Professor Norman Finkelstein was a featured speaker, and the many visits of teams of Jewish neighbors to local Presbyterian churches are examples of these tactics. This type of censorship and intimidation is so frequent that Jewish Voice for Peace has created a special website to document it. See www.muzzzewatch.com/

Christians and Jews uses selected texts in the Old Testament and in Romans 9-11 to affirm the continuity of Jewish and Christian faith. It declares that both are "People of God" and "serve and worship the same God." (p. 4) While much is said about the differences between Christian and Muslim understandings of God in the report entitled "*Toward an Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations*," nothing is said in *Christians and Jews* about the differences between Christian and Jewish understandings of God. The rest of the New Testament is strangely absent from this report, as if giving an account for the hope that is within us is important in dealing with Muslims but inappropriate in dealing with Jews. Nowhere do we find anything about Christmas (the Incarnation), Lent and Easter (Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection) or Pentecost, which sends us into the world in mission. The Christian understanding of divine suffering is also absent, along with the command to love our enemies and eschew revenge.

The significant differences between Jewish and Christian understandings of God are glossed over in *Christians and Jews*, whereas the differences between Muslim and Christian understandings of God are highlighted in the report on Christian-Muslim relations. Muslims who compare the titles of the two reports may conclude that we believe they worship a lesser God than Christians and Jews.

- **Biblical claims to land**

At crucial points in the discussion of the biblical promise of land, reference to the military occupation is particularly called for. For example: "In the Scriptural account, the land is integral to the responsibility of God's people. The land is given not just as a place to live, but primarily as the place in which the people Israel can live out the covenant and carry out God's commandments. The concrete gift of land, as presented in the biblical text, comes less with rights than with distinctive responsibilities. The gift of the land is conditional upon the following of God's way." (p 9) "God has given the land as a trust for safekeeping, a place for responsibility, and an arena in which to deal justly with one another and with the land." (Exodus 19:6) (p. 11)

The absence of any reference to Israeli laws, policies, and practices which contradict these biblical passages decontextualizes the discussion of relationships between Christians and Jews in the U.S. and the role that these relationships have played in supporting injustice in the Holy Land.

On page 9 of this report the Christian Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann is quoted in support of Jewish biblical claims to land. The quotation is from *The Land*, first published in 1977. Brueggemann has since changed his position. In his preface to Mark Braverman's new book, *Fatal Embrace: Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land*, Brueggemann writes:

It is Israel's elemental conviction about being God's one chosen people—and the ensuing social-political exceptionalism—that is the root cause of the conflict... The claim for exceptionalism—held commonly by Israel's most one-dimensional advocates and by Israel's most urbane Jewish critics—makes serious, realistic political thinking impossible and gives warrant for brutalizing policies carried out by the Israeli government that are destructive, self-destructive, and finally irresponsible. (p xiii)

Brueggemann continues:

When I published my book, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (1977), I was, as were many Christian scholars of the Bible, rather innocent about the extrapolation of the land promises into Israeli ideology... in the newer edition of my book (2002), I made an important revision, concluding: "It is clear on any reading that the modern state of Israel has effectively merged old traditions of land entitlement and the most vigorous military capacity thinkable for a modern state. The outcome of that merger of old traditional claim and contemporary military capacity becomes an intolerable commitment to violence that is justified by reasons of state." (p. xvii)

While *Christians and Jews* cites Old Testament texts of God's promise of land, it neglects the silence of the New Testament on this subject. Neither Jesus, nor Paul, nor any other New Testament writer has anything to say about God's promises of land to Abraham and his descendants. When Paul speaks about this, it is in the context of faith and the spiritual descendants of Abraham, both Jew and Gentile. Paul demonstrates a new understanding of the Old Testament promise by replacing the word "land" with "world." ("The promise to Abraham and his descendants, that they should inherit the world (cosmos)..." (Rm. 4:13) A promise to "inherit the world," is spiritual, not a real estate deed.

- **Biblical interpretation**

We celebrate that Jewish and Christian biblical interpreters have used historical critical methods to call into question the validity of anti-Jewish texts in the New Testament, e.g., texts that have given rise to charges of

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deicide and supersessionism. To do so is to act justly. At the same time, we believe it is necessary to use historical critical methods to call into question biblical texts in Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Joshua that are used to support the Israeli treatment of Palestinians within Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This too is to act justly. The section on Land appears to accept the Old Testament texts at face value, using terms like "in the biblical account," rather than subjecting them to a critique based on justice. What is called for is a consistent hermeneutic for both the Old Testament and the New Testament that is consistent with the confessions and the statements of the General Assemblies of the Church.

- **Palestinian cruciform interpretation of their suffering and death**

Christians and Jews states: "Some expressions of Christian liberation theology tend to describe the Palestinian experience as oppression by "Jews" or "Zionists" rather than by Israeli state authority...." (p. 14) We believe this statement is inaccurate. Palestinian theologians do compare their situation under Israeli military occupation to the Roman occupation under which the Jews of Jesus' time suffered grave injustices. From what we have read and heard, Palestinian Christians level their criticisms at the Israeli state, those who carry out Israeli policies, and those forms of Zionism which fuel the occupation and the ongoing "ethnic cleansing."² Palestinians have many Israeli Jewish allies in the peace and human rights movements. Never have we heard any of those Jews criticize Palestinian theologians for targeting Jews indiscriminately. Nor have we ever read or heard of any Palestinian "...theological critique of state policies... [that]... characterize[s] a whole people as oppressors or "Christ-killers." (p. 14)

Christians and Jews also criticizes theologians who "... liken the passion of Jesus to the sufferings of the Palestinian people." (p. 14) There are theologians who make the reverse comparison: they liken the sufferings of the Palestinian people to the passion of Jesus. We fail to understand why this is a problem. Oppressed Christians in every place and every age have identified with the suffering of Christ. In fact, the Lord's Supper immerses us in the passion and crucifixion of Jesus who urges us to "do this in remembrance of me." For many Christians throughout the ages, being "crucified with Christ" was a physical experience, not a metaphor. In the Palestinian situation where land confiscation, imprisonment, torture, home demolition, and all the evils of a military occupation is a part of everyday life, it would be very surprising if Christians did not identify with the crucified Christ.

- **Zionism**

Christians and Jews rightly cautions against the portrayal of Zionism as "monolithic or univocal." What the report fails to recognize is that expansionist forms of political and religious Zionism have been major ideological forces behind the confiscation of Palestinian land and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians by every Israeli administration since 1948. The literature on this subject is vast and the reality undeniable. The push by the current government of Netanyahu for recognition of Israel as a "Jewish state" is one example of this ideology.³

Conclusion

Many of the flaws cited above could have been avoided if the process of preparing this report had avoided two pitfalls.

- **A Tightly Managed Process**

Normally, reports dealing with such important issues are done by appointed committees with representation from all segments of the church. Various drafts of the report are circulated widely for comment and the names of their members are included with the report. In contrast, this report, and its companion paper, *Toward an Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations*, were not widely circulated and were kept confidential until the very last moment. Those involved in the process of creating *Christians and Jews* remain anonymous.

- **Absent Partners**

Normally, those who will be affected most by a report are part of the process of writing and editing. As far as we know, none of the following were consulted: the Middle East Caucus; Church leaders from Palestine or any other part of the Middle East; members of the Advisory Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns; the IPMN (with the exception of one member); members of the Middle East Study Group.

² Read *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006) by the noted Israeli historian Ilan Pappé.

³ Chapter 1 of Jeff Halper's book, *An Israeli in Palestine* (2008) examines various forms of Zionism and Zionist groups, from liberal to conservative. The common denominator of most forms of Zionism is the demand for a Jewish State. As the past six decades have demonstrated, this ideology, when put into practice, has resulted in on-going ethnic cleansing and legally sanctioned discrimination against non-Jews.

Office of the General Assembly

***A message to the EPC family
from Stated Clerk Jeff Jeremiah
December 20, 2006***

I want you to know that I was able to represent you all at the funeral service on Wednesday, December 13, for Associate Pastor John Patterson at Cherry Hills Community Church in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. Several thousand people attended this service of remembrance and celebration of John's life, ministry and resurrection victory in Jesus Christ. Please continue to remember Cherry Hills and John's family (Mary Ellen and Elizabeth, Laura, John and Will) in your prayers. John and I first met twenty years ago. He is one of the most engaging, likeable servants of Christ I've ever known. A "Remembrance" of John is found on the Cherry Hills church website, www.cherryhills.com.

Thanks to many of you for your responses to my inquiry about blogging. Because of your help, I'll be doing further research in the coming weeks with a much better sense of direction and understanding. I can identify personally with the fact that the 21st century is a time of rapid change. It was just four months ago that I told the Session of First EPC that I believed God was calling me to take the Stated Clerk position. I finished in Renton on October 7 and started in Detroit on October 9. I took over for Mike on November 7. Having been immersed in this new, different and exciting ministry for about sixty days, let me share with you these thoughts about changes we're in the midst of, and the opportunity I believe Jesus Christ could have for us in these changes.

I see two momentous changes occurring in American Christianity.

First, the continued break-up of the mainline denominations. In the PCUSA, their 2006 General Assembly produced two watershed events: (1) a report recommending the adoption of heterodox Trinitarian language. Though not approved, its use was not discouraged; (2) the approved Peace, Unity and Purity (PUP) report effectively allows churches and presbyteries to ordain homosexuals to the offices of the church. As a result, many churches and pastors who identify themselves as Bible-believing evangelicals are looking to depart from the PCUSA.

Second is the rise in new ways of doing ministry. During the EPC Stated Clerk search process, Luder Whitlock was the first person who made me aware of the "third wave" of American Christianity. The first wave was the establishment and hegemony of the mainline protestant denominations. The second wave was post-World War II evangelicalism. At the local church level, the second wave distinguished itself from the first wave on theology. However, it maintained the same forms, structures and ways of doing ministry as the first wave. The third wave, while adhering to biblically-based, orthodox theology, has scrapped the forms and structures of the first two waves, and has pursued entirely new and different ways to think about and do ministry for Jesus Christ.

I believe that in this point in our history, God has strategically placed the EPC to respond to the opportunity these changes represent. We are unapologetically confessional and reformed in a moderate way. We are not "loosey goosey" in our theology, nor do we beat each other over the head over disagreements on the finer points of our theology.

Speaking to the second change, almost everyone I've talked with recently within the EPC recognizes that in the United States, the church no longer ministers in a churched culture. Our local community is now every bit as much a mission field as Third World areas. EPC churches large and small, traditional and contemporary, rural, suburban and urban are struggling with and seeking the Lord's direction as to what it means to be the church in an unchurched culture. We're doing "third wave" thinking and beginning to act on that thinking as we move our churches into the 21st century. Some of our churches are further along than others, but we're all on the same path. The Long Range Planning committee is working hard to help redirect our church ministries to more effectively serve and share Jesus Christ in this new era.

I believe the Lord has given us a tremendous opportunity to re-capture the great priorities of the church of Jesus Christ in American Presbyterianism. We are placed in a very attractive position to gather and help create a new, re-energized evangelical and Presbyterian entity that could make a major impact for Jesus Christ in the 21st century, far out of proportion to our impact today. The Parable of the Mustard Seed comes to mind repeatedly as I consider the possibilities before us. Today, we are indeed small, but could it be that before us is the opportunity for an impact for Christ incredibly out of proportion to our size in our country and world? I believe so.

Two ways we're taking advantage of this opportunity are (1) the transitional presbytery proposal our leadership has been developing since September, and (2) our conversations with the leadership of the New Wineskins.

1. *Transitional presbytery/presbyteries*

While this proposal has not been finalized, I can give you this overview. The transitional presbytery (or presbyteries – we may need more than one), if approved at our 2007 General Assembly, will allow churches interested in coming into the EPC to find a safe haven outside their current denomination as quickly and as easily as possible. The transitional presbytery will be non-geographic, and will exist for five years. During this five-year period, the church can “heal” from its departure, assess who they are and the future the Lord has for them, and learn about who we are. This five-year period also gives us time to learn about them and whether they would be a good fit for us. We’ve repeatedly described our relationship with churches in the transitional presbytery as a “courtship.” When the church is ready to seek admission as a full member of the EPC, it would pursue the currently established process to receive new churches (which helps maintain our theological integrity). If it does not look like we would be a good “match,” we would work together to accomplish an amicable departure. A church in a transitional presbytery can seek to enter the EPC at any time within the five-year period. Please note that the transitional presbytery does not prevent a church from entering the EPC directly from another denomination. Some of our presbyteries are currently working to receive individual congregations who want to merge now.

2. *New Wineskins*

New Wineskins is a group of 148 PCUSA churches that has been talking since 2002 about their concerns for the PCUSA. (I’d note that there are many other churches interested in the New Wineskins who are not formal members.) They are very interested in the possibility of becoming a part of the EPC. As we’ve become better acquainted, we’ve discovered some remarkable similarities. The New Wineskins have indicated that their doctrinal and confessional commitments are similar to ours. The New Wineskins are talking about reforming how they do ministry in ways that are very similar to the deliberations of our Long Range Planning Committee, and conversations I’m having with you. (If you’re interested in learning more about New Wineskins, they are easily found on the internet: www.newwineconvo.com.)

On December 12-13, Nate Atwood, Paul Heidebrecht, Bill Meyer, Bill Vogler and I met with New Wineskins leaders in Tampa, Florida to discuss further the possibility of proceeding together into the future. You should be proud of the way Nate, Paul, Bill and Bill represented you in that meeting, which I believe was successful in every way. Because of the hostile environment evangelical pastors and churches currently face in the PCUSA, at their request we cannot divulge much information about that meeting to you at this time. The CoA, Executive Committee and Stated Clerks are aware of these developments. In January, I hope to provide a report of that meeting and the ensuing plan. I anticipate that as a group, a portion of the New Wineskins will want to become a transitional presbytery, should we approve the transitional presbytery proposal at our 27th Assembly in Colorado.

How will we respond to these changes, these opportunities? My hope is that we will prayerfully pursue Jesus Christ as He leads us, we’ll be open to how and where He leads us, and we’ll converse regularly among ourselves about our dreams, goals and hopes for the church we serve.

I’ve appreciated the chance to respond to questions and concerns that many of you have raised. Please know I’m committed to serving you in a way that honors Christ and furthers the great work you are doing for your Lord.

Appendix B



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

January 29, 2007

The Reverend Jeffery Jeremiah
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Dr., Suite 567
Livonia, MI 48152

Dear Jeff:

Greetings in the name of our Lord.

I still look forward to an opportunity for us to meet face to face, but even prior to that time I need to seek clarification from you about several issues related to EPC's proposed "transitional presbytery" and how that might relate to our churches seeking to be dismissed to the EPC through that presbytery. I obviously wish we were not dealing with these issues of division, but since we are, I hope we can do it in ways that do not damage the relationships between the PCUSA and the EPC.

After your December 20, 2007 letter appeared on the EPC's Web site our offices began to get inquiries as to the protocol of our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presbyteries transferring congregations to your proposed "transitional presbyteries." As I am sure you recall our polity limits our presbyteries to dismissing member congregations to ecclesiastical bodies "whose organization is conformed to the doctrines and order of this Church." We have always considered the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and its geographical presbyteries to fall into that definition.

We are being asked by our presbyteries to give them advice as to the polity propriety of transferring PCUSA congregations and pastors into a transitional "Presbytery." Given the church case law made in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. at the creation of the Presbyterian Church in America, there are a number of unanswered questions in the current context. Therefore I am hopeful that you can provide me with some clarity as to EPC's understanding of a "transitional presbytery."

When will the transitional presbytery be created?

What will be the relationship of a transitional presbytery to the EPC?

Will it be treated as a member presbytery? (power to ordain, receive, and discipline ministers, create new congregations, assess apportionments, release congregations).

The Reverend Jeffrey Jeremiah
January 29, 2007
Page -2-

Will current EPC presbyteries be able to transfer congregations into a transitional presbytery?

What Office would act to receive congregations into transitional presbyteries?

Will congregations simultaneously be members of a geographical EPC presbytery and a transitional presbytery?

Will there be separate admission standards, or will the transitional presbytery accept the examination of the transferring presbyteries?

I am hopeful that you can give my offices some clarity that we may provide advice to our presbyteries in responding to requests to dismiss congregations and ministers to a transitional presbytery.

Cordially yours,



Clifton Kirkpatrick
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

March 28, 2007

The Reverend Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah, Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567
Livonia, MI 48152

Dear Jeff:

Thank you for your recent letter providing additional information about the proposal to create a Transitional Presbytery in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. I do understand that this proposal will be subject to further development, and I will appreciate receiving a copy of the finalized, or penultimate, version once you deem it to be appropriate. It will be helpful to both of us to be very clear about the nature of the presbytery to which some of our churches may be seeking to be dismissed, and our Advisory Committee on the Constitution will need this as they propose to our Assembly how to respond to questions of constitutional interpretation that are already pending on this matter.

I appreciate your commitment to maintain good relations between our two denominations and not to actively encourage churches within the PCUSA to withdraw to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. However, I am having a difficult time explaining this to many of our members when you and your moderator actively participate in events planned by those whose stated purpose is to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

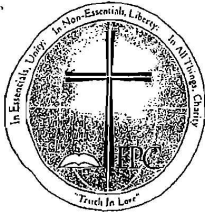
For the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) there is not a detailed process in our *Constitution* for the dismissal of congregations to another denomination. What is clear is that that action can only be taken by one of our presbyteries and that such a dismissal must be to another Reformed body of similar organization and doctrine. I am enclosing for your information a document entitled, "Dealing Pastorally with Troubled Churches," which makes suggestions to our presbyteries in dealing with these matters.

May God's richest blessings be with you during this season of Lent and may you find special joy in the Resurrection this Easter Sunday!

Cordially yours,

Clifton Kirkpatrick
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
CK/cb

enclosure



Evangelical Presbyterian Church

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MAR 12 2007

STATED CLERK

March 8, 2007

Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202

Dear Clifton,

I read with interest your interview that appeared in the Christian Post. Congratulations on the recent arrival of your newest grandchild!

As I respond to your letter of January 29, I'm afraid that I'm not able to answer all of your questions at this time. This is because the Transitional Presbytery proposal is still "in process." After the Committee on Administration approved the proposal and the Permanent Judicial Commission ruled that it was constitutional, we sent it to our presbyteries for their suggestions/questions during the January-February meeting cycle. Having received really good input, we're now engaged in a further development/refinement of the proposal. After Easter, the Committee on Administration will approve the finalized version of the proposal and it will then be reviewed by our Permanent Judicial Commission. I am confident that I can answer your questions after that review.

The questions I can answer: If the Transitional Presbytery proposal is approved,

1. The Transitional Presbytery will be created by an Act of the General Assembly at our June, 2007 meeting
2. The Commission that oversees the Transitional Presbytery will receive congregations and ministers into the Transitional Presbytery.
3. The Transitional Presbytery will accept the examination of the transferring presbyteries, with two additional requirements: 1) affirmation of the "Essentials of the Faith" without reservation, 2) affirmation that the Westminster Confession of Faith is the sole confessional standard.

Let me re-iterate that the Transitional Presbytery proposal is the EPC response to churches that have approached us about the possibility of affiliating with the EPC. While this proposal is an exception to our past practice, we are working within the boundaries of our constitutional "norm," as stated in our Book of Government. We do not solicit, recruit or initiate contact with

churches outside our denomination about affiliation. Although I have yet to see it in print, in all of my interviews I have made clear my goal to maintain cordial relations with you and the PCUSA.

Our desire is to enable a reception of churches that is amicable and honors our Lord. I know you are seeking a dismissal of churches that is the same. I'd like to dialogue with you about these unanswered questions you have to ensure we have the best opportunity to meet our goals, which I believe will glorify Christ and advance His kingdom work in this first decade of the 21st century. In preparation for that conversation, it would be most helpful to me if I knew the details of the process of dismissal you are directing from your office.

Sincerely in Christ



Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah
Stated Clerk



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

May 23, 2007

Dr. Jeffrey J. Jeremiah, Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567
Livonia MI 48152

Dear Dr. Jeremiah:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior!

The Presbytery of Indian Nations received the Reverend Mateen A. Elass as minister member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). When a minister from another denomination seeks membership in one of our presbyteries we require a letter of good standing and removal from the rolls of the sending church. Reverend Elass took a call in the year 2000 as pastor of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church (EPC) in Illinois. His process to become a minister member of the Presbytery of Indian Nations is subject to his transfer from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

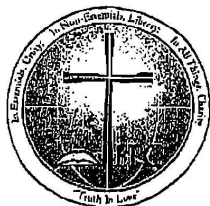
I'm cordially requesting, on behalf of the Presbytery of Indian Nations, a letter that attest that the Reverend Mateen A. Elass is a minister in good standing, and will be removed from the rolls of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

May God richly bless you and the witness of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Cordially yours,

Clifton Kirkpatrick
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Cc: Jack Huntress, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Indian Nations



Evangelical Presbyterian Church

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

October 23, 2007

Arthur M. Martin, Jr. MD
Presbytery of Mississippi
710 South 28th Avenue, Suite A
Hattiesburg, MS 39402

Dear Dr. Martin,

Thank you for your letter of September 24, which was received by my office, directed to our Committee on Administration and discussed on October 15.

You are correct in noting that we relate to one another through our memberships in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). However, we have never understood that this relationship means that our reception of churches into the EPC is conditioned upon any dispute a church might have with the denomination from which it has departed. The EPC does not recruit, solicit, seek out or initiate contact with any church outside our denomination. We take calls and offer help to churches that first seek us out, which is what Grace Chapel did. The National Transition Presbytery received their application for membership, found it in good order, and received the church and its pastor into the Presbytery. Having reviewed this process, the Committee on Administration does not believe that we have made an error in taking this action: Grace Chapel EPC is a member in good standing in the EPC.

While we are pleased to provide you this response, it is not our practice to have our General Assembly respond to enquiries from presbyteries of other denominations. Any further correspondence about Grace Chapel EPC should be directed to John Adamson, chair of the National Transition Presbytery.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah
Executive Pastor/Stated Clerk

C: Mr. John Adamson
adamson.j@comcast.net

Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive
Suite 567
Livonia, MI 48152

Re" October 23, 2007 to Arthur Martin

Dear Dr. Jeremiah:

I am troubled by the second paragraph of that letter where you represent that: "The EPC does not recruit, solicit, seek out or initiate contact with any church outside our denomination."

I do not believe this to be an accurate statement. At the New Wineskin's gatherings in Tulsa and in Orlando, your GA Moderator and other GA level officers were present and doing exactly such solicitation. I am in possession of a very slick folder entitled "Information for Inquiring Congregations" which actually questions the actions of our 217th General Assembly in Birmingham. That folder contains CD's with forms and applications for admission.

Finally, the EPC's 27th General Assembly took action to create a New Wineskins Transitional Presbytery to receive PCUSA congregations into the EPC. These are not actions consistent with your statement.

I have several times requested that you and I sit down and discuss this situation and reiterate that request today. This situation is destruction to US based members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

I hope to hear a substantive response.

Cordially,

Clifton Kirkpatrick



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

November 30, 2007

Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567
Livonia, MI 48152

Dear Jeff:

May this Advent Season be a time of hope and renewal for you!

As you know, the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its related authoritative interpretations make provision for PC(USA) presbyteries to dismiss congregations to another Reformed body of similar doctrine and organization. A number of congregations have been transferred in accord with our Constitution to presbyteries of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) in the past year. However, in recent months the Office of the General Assembly has received complaints from our presbyteries concerning the reception of congregations and ministers by the EPC prior to Constitutional release by PC(USA) presbyteries. We have also received information that Evangelical Presbyterian Church representatives have been actively recruiting, seeking, and initiating contact with PC(USA) congregations to encourage their leaving this denomination.

Both practices are contrary to the principles and expectations of our respective *Books of Order*.

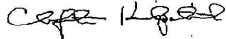
I am writing to request that your office advise your presbyteries – including the transitional presbytery – they should abide by the processes in our *Books of Order*.

If this pattern continues unabated, I expect one or more of our presbyteries will overture the 218th General Assembly of the PC(USA) next summer, requesting that the assembly examine the basis of the PC(USA)'s relationship with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Such examination might well result in the 218th General Assembly taking action that would adversely affect the relationship between our two communions and the possibility of being able to transfer congregations between our presbyteries in the future. You may be aware that just over thirty years ago, the 199th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America considered just such an action.

Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah
November 30, 2007
Page -2-

I also reiterate my invitation to you to come to Louisville that we might discuss how to resolve this current situation in the spirit of Christ and of our common commitment to fellowship with one another in the Reformed community.

Cordially,



Clifton Kirkpatrick
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly



bc: Mark, Gradye, Jill, Loyda, Sharon
Marcia, Doska

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

January 3, 2008

The Reverend Jeffrey Jeremiah, Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567
Livonia, MI 48152

Dear Jeff:

As we begin a new year, I wish you God's blessings on your ministry.

I am in receipt of your December 18 response to my letter, for which I am grateful. However, I continue to be concerned about the dynamics between our two denominations.

You note that you received my letter on November 30, 2007. In the two weeks that followed the receipt of my letter, I received strong expressions of concern from two of our presbyteries about your "presenting" the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to PC(USA) congregations in Florida and Kansas, both of which also had an abundance of interpretive material that had obviously been provided to encourage them to seek transfer to the EPC. That kind of activity, exacerbated by EPC presbyteries "receiving" congregations that have not been dismissed by PC(USA) presbyteries is simply creating a climate of distrust that is helpful to neither of our denominations.

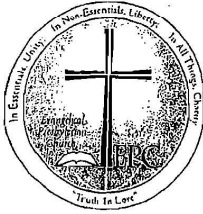
My concern was heightened dramatically when my office received a draft overture asking the 218th General Assembly (2008) to withdraw "in correspondence" rights and privileges from the EPC. I do not know whether such an overture would pass the General Assembly, but it is the first time in my service the prospect has ever been seriously raised as a possibility. The impact of such an overture, if passed, would be that our presbyteries would be prohibited from being able to dismiss congregations to the EPC, and that would not be good for either of us.

Jeff, we have been down this road before in the relationship between our two denominations, and we need to learn from those experiences. Following the reunion of the PC(USA), we moved to a period of better relations between our two denominations. I still remember fondly your predecessor, Ed Davis, joining us as a very helpful ecumenical delegate to our General Assembly in Charlotte. While there will undoubtedly be tensions between some of our churches, I hope we can find a path to deal with one another as entities that respect the integrity of each other's order and ministry.

I do believe there is value in our meeting together, but even if that does not happen, I hope that we would at least be able to "speak the truth in love" to one another and to respect each other's governing bodies as fellow members of the body of Christ. To let these circumstances continue to escalate is not likely to advance the mission of either of our denominations.

Cordially yours,

Clifton Kirkpatrick
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly



Evangelical Presbyterian Church

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December 18, 2007

Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40202-1396

Dear Clifton,

While Ms. Brooks emailed me your November 30 letter, I was not able to review it until Tuesday, December 11. The contents and tone of your letter require a response.

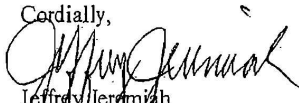
You allege that "EPC representatives have been actively recruiting, seeking, and initiating contacts with PC(USA) congregations to encourage their leaving this denomination." In the EPC, we do not solicit, initiate contact or recruit churches and leaders outside our denomination. We do respond to enquiries and accept invitations from the elected leadership of local churches to answer questions about, and present the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to them. I would appreciate substantiation of this allegation so that we can adequately respond to it. If no substantiation is forthcoming, a retraction is expected.

You also state that we are receiving congregations prior to "constitutional release" by their PCUSA presbytery. We have received churches and ministers pending their dismissal from the PCUSA, in part because past history tells us that some PCUSA presbyteries will not dismiss until after we've taken action to show that the way is clear for the minister and/or congregation to be received.

Your letter gives the impression that it is actions of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church that are causing churches to depart the PCUSA. This is simply not true. Again, we are simply responding to leaders and congregations who are finding it increasingly difficult to remain in the PCUSA.

It would be helpful to me if you could respond to these issues of concern before I consider meeting with you. Much has happened since I offered to meet with you in Seattle over Thanksgiving weekend of 2007. I hope these concerns can be addressed and resolved.

Cordially,

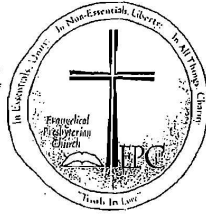

Jeffrey Jeremiah
Executive Pastor / Stated Clerk

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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STATED CLERK



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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

January 31, 2008

Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40202-1396

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STATE CLERK

Dear Clifton,

I am in receipt of your letter of January 3, which I received in the office on January 10. I was disappointed to find that incorrect information about the ministry of the EPC is being used in a way that can only produce dissension and potential division in the relationship between the EPC and the PCUSA.

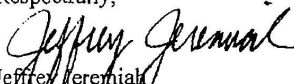
In response to my request for evidence that EPC leaders are soliciting, initiating contact and recruiting PCUSA churches in an effort to bring them into the EPC, you cited complaints by two presbyteries about my activities since November 30. My involvement at Covenant - Ft. Myers, FL is consistent with that of EPC leaders in the past year. At the invitation of the elected spiritual leadership of the church, we come to congregational information meetings that are open to the public to present and answer questions about the EPC. Any materials that are made available to the congregation are created and produced by the leadership of the host church, not by the EPC. The EPC produces no materials about the PCUSA. You state that a presbytery in Kansas complained of my activities presenting the EPC to PCUSA churches there. I have never been to a PCUSA church in Kansas.

I assumed that our correspondence would not only be open and honest, but also respectful of each other. I was further disappointed to learn on December 17 and 18 that your November 30 letter addressed to the EPC was distributed by your office to presbytery leadership across the PCUSA, and even to local PCUSA churches. It is difficult to see how distribution of a letter addressed to my office, given that it contains inaccurate information, can have anything but a negative impact on the relationship between the PCUSA and the EPC.

To insist that our activities are causing churches to depart the PCUSA is simply not true. We do not solicit, initiate contact or recruit churches to come into the EPC. We do respond to enquiries and invitations from hurting and struggling congregations.

In light of these realities, I do not believe that continued correspondence would be beneficial. When we are presented with accurate information and our correspondence is treated fairly and respectfully, we will willingly seek to engage the PCUSA in a way that we hope will mitigate distrust between our denominations.

Respectfully,


Jeffrey Jeremiah
Executive Pastor / Stated Clerk

Appendix C

COMPARISON OF PC(USA), NWAC AND TWO OTHER USA PRESBYTERIAN DENOMINATIONS

QUESTIONS	PC(USA)	NWAC	EPC	PCA
<i>Who is Jesus?</i>	Debatable	God/"The" Way	God/"The" Way	God/"The" Way
<i>Authority of Scripture</i>	Debatable	Inspired/Infallible	Inspired/Infallible	Inerrant Inspired/Infallible
<i>Property Ownership</i>	Major Dispute Denomination claims ownership	Local Congregation	Local Congregation	Local Congregation
<i>Ordination of Women</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes/Local Option	No
<i>Gay and Lesbian Ordination</i>	Yes/Local Option	No	No	No
<i>Abortion</i>	Pro-choice	Pro-life	Pro-life	Pro-life
<i>Missionaries per 10,000 Members</i>	1	Not applicable (not a denomination)	10	18
<i>Attendance as Percent of Membership</i>	52%	68% (estimated)	94%	100% (estimated)
<i>Giving per member per year</i>	\$ 900	\$1,354 (estimated)	\$2,769	\$2,263
<i>Number of Churches</i>	10,960	148	180	1,319
<i>Number of Members</i>	2,313,662	Not available	66,417	331,126

New Wineskins Initiative: A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven, p. 14, Copyright 2007 New Wineskins Initiative, available at http://www.newwineskinsassociation.com/documents/Strategy_Team_Report_book_format.pdf

Item 09-01

[This item has been moved to 13 Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues as Item 13-11.]

Item 09-02

[The assembly disapproved Item 09-02. See pp. 71, 81.]

On Considering That All Undesignated Funds from the Foundation to the General Assembly Level Be Allocated Directly to Individual Presbyteries—From the Presbytery of Sierra Blanca.

The Presbytery of Sierra Blanca overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to consider that all undesignated funds flowing from the Presbyterian Foundation to the General Assembly level/General Assembly Mission Council/Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a Corporation, be allocated directly to individual presbyteries (by percentage of denominational membership) for direct dispersal to particular churches of that presbytery, as each presbytery determines.

Rationale

For well-intentioned reasons, over several decades, the General Assembly level of our denomination has, with reorganization after reorganization, proceeded in what may be described as a headquarters model of ministry. During those decades denominational membership has declined. Committed skilled people both employed by and volunteering in the efforts of this model have made mighty efforts.

Our particular churches are vital to the continuance and growth of membership: This overture simply takes a new approach by taking an existing revenue source and using it for direct funding to our particular churches. This overture would give particular churches much needed financial resources for ministries as each sees fit. The conduit and allocation point is the presbytery.

The effect of this overture will impact how General Assembly level does ministry, it is incumbent to note that funds designated to General Assembly level ministries and Shared Mission Support donations by individuals and particular congregations to the General Assembly level will remain.

This overture seeks to facilitate the distribution of undesignated funds entrusted to the Presbyterian Foundation for use by particular churches through the presbytery. Each presbytery will determine dispersal to particular churches within its bounds. In order to facilitate the change in policy with GAMC and with the presbyteries, we recommend the action become effective January 1, 2014.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 09-02

Comment on Item 09-02—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The GAMC concurs that congregations are of vital importance to the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Church universal. However, the GAMC opposes this overture and urges the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 09-02 because its passage will have a significant, immediate, and long-term detrimental effect on Presbyterian mission, including, but not limited to, GAMC mission in support of congregations.

Item 09-03

[The assembly disapproved Item 09-03. See pp. 71, 81.]

On Amending the Process for Forming Social Witness Policy Approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993)—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

The Presbytery of the Grand Canyon overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to amend Section 3.h. of the *Manual of the General Assembly*, “Forming Social Policy,” which was approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993) (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 768–70), as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“h. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy shall submit a penultimate draft of the policy statement *or resolution* for consultation as described in section 3.a. on p. 68.

“(1) All social witness policy and resolutions shall be sent to all presbyteries for study, discussion, and comment back to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy prior to the General Assembly that is to act on the policy or resolution for

inclusion in its final report and recommendations to the General Assembly, in order that General Assembly commissioners may have the benefit of feedback from the wider church as it considers the actions to be taken.

~~“(1)(2)~~ The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy may augment the number of participants gathered in consultation for purposes of inclusivity and expertise.

~~“(2)(3)~~ The consultation may create a report, including suggested changes to the proposed policy statement, which shall be received by the Committee on Social Witness Policy.

~~“(3)(4)~~ The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy may amend the proposed policy statement, refer the proposed policy statement back to the task force, or reaffirm the original policy statement.”

Rationale

The current process for Forming Social Policy, approved in 1993, requires a prospectus defining the social issues to be addressed to be distributed to synods and presbyteries encouraging their input. However, this input occurs in the very earliest stages of policy formation and does not require feedback and response from the wider church on the final recommendations to the General Assembly for its action.

c. The task force shall develop and make known to the whole church a plan indicating the manner in which the whole church can participate (advise, offer input, etc.) in its deliberations.

d. The task force shall listen to the

- (1) voices of the biblical text;
- (2) wisdom of theological discourse;
- (3) guidance of the Reformed confessions;
- (4) insights of sociopolitical disciplines;
- (5) tradition of past policy statements;
- (6) advice of members and all governing bodies of the church; [emphasis added]
- (7) insights of people who are poor, victims of existing policies, and those who have not had a voice in the councils of the church; and
- (8) counsel of ecumenical partners. (*Manual of the General Assembly*, Forming Social Policy, Section 3.c.—d., p. 68)

The 216th General Assembly (2004) voted to “initiate the process of selective, phased divestment.” Jewish groups and some Presbyterians launched immediate and vociferous protests and interfaith relations nationally and locally were strained. As a result, more than twenty overtures were submitted to the 217th General Assembly (2006) on the subject. The 217th General Assembly (2006) acknowledged the hurt that the actions of the 216th General Assembly (2004) caused referring the matter to the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee to initiate a phased, selective divestment and to make recommendations to the General Assembly Council for action.

While “no social witness policy documents shall use language which implies that the conscience of individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is bound by General Assembly statements or recommendations” (*Manual*, Forming Social Policy, p. 67), these statements do impact the internal as well as public image of the denomination. Therefore, it is important that these statements have the support of its governing bodies.

Prior to the action of the 205th General Assembly (1993) that approved the current process for making social witness policy and resolutions, there were at least two different attempts by presbyteries to require a ratification process by the presbyteries of such statements approved by a General Assembly before they could be enacted. These were disapproved as they might hamper the timeliness of a General Assembly’s ability to approve such statements.

While the overture leaves responsibility for approving statements of social policy and speaking for the denomination with the General Assembly, it seeks to broaden participation in forming social policy prior to action by the General Assembly.

Social policy is intended to have long-lasting effects, and the process should take the time necessary to consider the diversity of thoughts and positions.

Now that the General Assembly meets biennially, the participation and action on forming social policy can be conducted in a two-year General Assembly cycle.

Concurrence to Item 09-03 from the Presbytery of Sierra Blanca.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 09-03 from the Presbytery of the Grand Canyon requests the 219th General Assembly (2010) to amend the process for forming social witness to require that all policy documents and resolutions be sent to all presbyteries for study and discussion and submission of comments to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy for inclusion in its final report and recommendations to the General Assembly.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 09-03 be disapproved with the following comment:

The ACSWP advises the General Assembly to consider requesting the Coordinator of Middle Governing Bodies to set up consultations between middle governing bodies and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to consider more effective means of communication and feedback concerning the development and dissemination of the church's social witness policy.

Rationale

Item 09-03 describes actions taken by the 216th General Assembly (2004) that resulted in numerous reactions, including twenty overtures to the 217th General Assembly (2006). However, these actions were in response to an overture from the Presbytery of St. Augustine (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 64–67), not to a policy recommendation submitted by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). It would seem then that the remedy being suggested is misdirected. Presbyteries are free to submit overtures to a General Assembly as they prayerfully and carefully decide. The action described by Item 09-03 would not correct the problem described.

However, the confusion that this overture illustrates merits further attention. Recognizing that the current process is designed to work through middle governing bodies, ACSWP suggests that the General Assembly request the Coordinator of Middle Governing Bodies to facilitate consultations between the middle governing bodies and ACSWP for the purpose of developing more effective means of communication and feedback. Item 09-03 would not achieve this goal.

Item 09-03 should be evaluated in light of the current processes by which social witness policies and resolutions are currently developed. Adopted by the 205th General Assembly (1993), the current process was the product of a task force created in 1988 in response to numerous overtures about the procedures by which the newly reunited church made social witness policy. The policy, *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Witness*, primarily amended Standing Rule 57 of the *Manual of the General Assembly*. (<http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/whyandhow.htm#process>)

First, issues are raised from the church in the form of overtures and commissioners' resolutions which are referred by a General Assembly to ACSWP (a body of nine elected members from the wider church and three from the GAMC). If new policy is required, a prospectus is prepared by ACSWP and sent to each presbytery and synod with a one-page summary for each church and the new policy study is announced in the Presbyterian media—all for the purpose of soliciting comments and nominations for persons to serve on the task force that will develop the paper. Members of the task force are selected with attention to expertise in the subject and demographic and theological diversity.

The task force is charged with listening widely to the whole church. This is done through consultations with experts and interested persons and by selecting varied meeting places. Often ACSWP organizes its own meetings to receive updates from a task force in a location where the local presbytery can provide specific insights and experiences. Policy task forces typically develop study documents that are sent out to the church at large to elicit responses. All of this is taken into consideration in the writing of the final report and recommendations. The task force presents its final draft to ACSWP, where it may receive further refinement. Sometimes it may even be returned to the task force for further work prior to submission to a final consultation with representatives from all of the synods.

The ACSWP reviews the report from the synod consultation and again revises the paper as necessary before voting to approve it for submission to the General Assembly, "... the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church" (*Book of Order*, G-1.0400).

This process, from General Assembly to General Assembly, is long, complex, and highly consultative. Policies are grown from an expression of the church's concerns by a General Assembly, developed by diverse representatives of the church, critiqued by the church at local and middle judicatory levels, and given approval only by a subsequent General Assembly.

The proposal raised by Item 09-03 would require that at the last stage of development, a draft document of both potentially new policy and the application of existing policy (resolution) be submitted "... to all presbyteries for study, discussion, and comment back to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy prior to the General Assembly that is to act on the policy or resolution..." (Item 09-03). This replicates an already existing consultative practice of policy task forces. It unne-

cessarily complicates the resolution process which does not involve the development of new policy. It could effectively add as much as a year to the process of policy development that is now typically a two-year process, but which may at times be longer. The result would be a significant delay in the church's ability to speak to urgent and serious issues facing us and impacting God's children. Needless to say, this would also add to the cost of developing policy at a time of serious fiscal constraints.

For presbyteries, this process could mean the need to organize representative study groups for the purpose of studying and commenting on one or more policy documents prior to each General Assembly. If this process were also mandated for the development of resolutions, presbyteries would need study groups for as many as three to seven resolution papers prior to each General Assembly.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 09-03 be disapproved.

Rationale

The ACREC sees this item as cutting out the core of the Presbyterian process by not trusting the Spirit at General Assemblies to move commissioners to the right decisions. Currently, commissioners are entrusted to make decisions on behalf of the church at-large and this overture takes away that trust and implies that if everyone had a vote, the results would be different or better.

Further, the item singles out social witness policy amongst all other votes and decisions. If the will of the assembly is not to be trusted in one area, then why trust it in other areas? Should all decisions be taken to a wider electorate?

The ACREC sees this item as one that would bring the Presbyterian representative system to a standstill where no decisions would be made in a timely manner. The ACREC believes that such a move would mean the loss of a prophetic voice for the church.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

Item 09-03 deals with amending the process for forming social witness policy.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns concurs with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy's (ACSWP) Advice and Counsel on this item.

Item 09-04

[The assembly approved Item 09-4 with amendment. See pp. 72, 81.]

On Support of Missionary Funding—From the Presbytery of Shenango.

[The Presbytery of Shenango overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to] [That the 219th General Assembly (2010)] instruct the General Assembly Mission Council to continue to make missionary support among the highest priorities in the 2011 and 2012 budgets [to the end that the long-awaited reversal in the numbers of mission personnel may be sustained] [in order to sustain the long-awaited reversal in the numbers of mission personnel, the 219th General Assembly (2010) invites each presbytery to participate in sharing the costs of one mission co-worker during 2011 and 2012].

Rationale

The Scriptures are clear in affirming the importance of partnership with Christians around the world in personal and public witness to Jesus Christ (Acts 1:6, Matthew 28).

The Book of Confessions (6.055ff; 6.187ff; 9.31ff) and *Book of Order* (G 1.0200; 3.0000) affirm the missionary responsibility of the church.

Many PC(USA) partners in the world Christian community are in a period of dynamic growth while the American church is in decline, signaling the importance of a deep and abiding relationship with these partners.

Partner churches have for decades consistently requested more mission workers to join with them as partners (“Presbyterian Do Mission in Partnership,” approved by the 212th General Assembly (2000), *Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 229ff).

The Dallas Declaration (“An Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God’s Mission”) of January 2008, as approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) states, “We commit ourselves to seeking more mission personnel who will serve long-term in cross-cultural contexts through the PC(USA), and to supporting them fully” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 716).

The 2009 and 2010 General Assembly budgets were established based on a commitment to turn around the long decline in the number of mission workers. The financial support from congregations and individuals has been dramatically more than could ever have been expected, including two encouraging World Mission Celebrations and two highly successful Mission Challenge programs of mission worker itineration (2007 and 2009).

Thirty-one new missionaries (the most in twenty years) have been commissioned since the 218th General Assembly (2008). That has allowed a total that had dipped below 200 to stand at 205 as of July 2009.

The work of world mission is profoundly relational. Large numbers from PC(USA) congregations participate in international mission travel each year. This further highlights the need for an increase in mission workers. The PC(USA) missionaries are very important in assisting short-term mission travelers because they have extensive language proficiency and a deep understanding of the cultural context with which our church members are directly involved.

Concurrence to Item 09-04 from the Presbytery of San Joaquin.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 09-04

Comment on Item 09-04—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council is very appreciative to Shenango Presbytery for its long-standing support of international mission co-workers. During 2009–2010, the GAMC has, in fact, reversed the decline in the number of mission co-workers, having made this a priority for this budget cycle. The GAMC increased its financial support for international mission personnel and launched a funds development effort to provide sustained support for this initiative.

Since July of 2009, the GAMC has been engaged in an intensive strategy process for the 2011–2012 ministry cycle. As part of that process, the GAMC sought input from across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), at all levels, regarding strategic priorities for 2013 and beyond. The GAMC conducted stakeholder research (including paired weighings, a Presbyterian Panel survey, and video interviews with church leaders), listening sessions (seeking trends for the future in the world and in the church), and analyzed funding patterns for GAMC mission efforts.

The results of this research showed that Presbyterians look to the GAMC for support across a broad range of ministries, both domestic and international, and there is no consensus top priority ministry.

Over recent years, the GAMC has remained solid in its commitment to international mission personnel, as demonstrated by the percentage of its budget committed to their support. In 2011–2012, the percentage of the GAMC budget committed to mission personnel will increase.

Mission Personnel as a Percentage of GAMC budget						
	2007*	2008*	2009 *	2010	2011	2012
Mission Personnel	\$10,717,823	\$10,169,926	\$9,456,202	\$10,198,702	\$10,867,933	\$10,429,639
GAMC	\$100,196,515	\$94,187,351	\$86,085,504	\$93,841,273	\$82,097,234	\$80,550,613
% of GAMC	11%	11%	11%	11%	13%	13%
* 2007, 2008, and 2009 are actual figures						

In a very real sense, the more that Presbyterians give, the more mission personnel the General Assembly Mission Council will be able to send. We continue to seek the necessary funds to sustain the increase in 2010 and beyond. Our mission workers serve on behalf of the whole church. We need the support of the whole church to continue this long-sought growth.

The General Assembly Mission Council is not able to sustain the increase in mission personnel into 2011–2012 without additional financial support. The General Assembly Mission Council encourages those who want to see the number of international mission personnel increase to give to Extra Commitment Opportunity account E132192. In addition, the General Assembly Mission Council requests that the General Assembly amend the overture from Shenango Presbytery, so that it would read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“~~[The Presbytery of Shenango overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to]~~ [That the 219th General Assembly (2010)] instruct the General Assembly Mission Council to continue to make missionary support among the highest priorities

in the 2011 and 2012 budgets [~~to the end that the long-awaited reversal in the numbers of mission personnel may be sustained~~]. [In order to sustain the long-awaited reversal in the numbers of mission personnel, the 219th General Assembly (2010) invites each presbytery to participate in sharing the costs of one mission co-worker during 2011 and 2012.]

Item 09-05

[The assembly disapproved Item 09-05. See pp. 72, 81.]

On Amending the Manual of the General Assembly Mission Council to Require Certain GAMC Staff to Actively Participate in the Work/Worship of a Congregation—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

The Presbytery of Great Rivers respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to amend the *Manual of the General Assembly Mission Council* with regard to personnel to include the following:

“That all General Assembly Mission Council personnel who serve as Executive Director or Deputy Executive Directors or who staff committees that recommend policy to the Council and the General Assembly, shall actively participate in the work and worship of a PC(USA)congregation. It shall be a part of the annual review of this staff member by the Personnel Committee or by his or her supervisor to evaluate this participation.”

Rationale

The General Assembly and its General Assembly Mission Council constitute “... the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and governing bodies.” (G□13.0103). These are the bodies that set the direction of the denomination and represent its public face to the world. The staff who serve the church at this level have important ministries in providing support, information, and insight for the committees and other entities who formulate the policy of the denomination. From time to time, these policies and pronouncements create situations for local congregations that cause consternation or worse. It is important not only for the members of committees to take into account the ramifications of their decisions, but it is also important for their staff to be cognizant of the struggles often faced at a session table, in a Sunday School class, or as a congregational member in a community after the General Assembly or a committee has taken a stand on a particular issue. Participation by these staff members in a local congregation can help them to evaluate the impact of proposals made by the committees and entities they staff.

The General Assembly may submit changes to the *Manual of the General Assembly Mission Council* according to the Manual, Appendix 12, Section II. C.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 09-05 calls for the 219th General Assembly (2010) to amend certain aspects of personnel policy contained in the *Manual of the General Assembly Mission Council*.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 09-05 be disapproved.

Rationale

1. Jesus said, “... for the tree is known by its fruit” (Mt. 12: 33). He is concerned with whether people contribute positively or negatively to their community and world. Where a person contributes is less important than the outcome of their service.

2. From the *Book of Order*:

6. Christian Vocation

“God calls a people:

- a. to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- b. to follow Jesus Christ in obedient discipleship;
- c. to use the gifts and abilities God has given, honoring and serving God:
 - (1) in personal life,
 - (2) in household and families,
 - (3) in daily occupations,
 - (4) in community, nation, and the world. (*Book of Order, W-5.6000*)

Obedient discipleship to God can take many forms and be expressed in many different places. There is no suggestion here that it must occur within a specific Presbyterian Church congregation.

3. The overture proposes that senior PC(USA) staff be evaluated annually as to the quality of their congregational participation. This is not properly a part of performance evaluation as the GAMC comment clarifies, but the larger matter is that policy is set by elected committees and the assembly itself. While it is important to have employees who understand and participate in the PC(USA) at senior levels, theological understanding of Presbyterian tradition and ethos is most necessary in elected agency members. Such an approach could also eventually lead to evaluating the faithfulness and stewardship of the congregations where the staff members attend.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 09-05

Comment on Item 09-05—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) believes that its employment policies and procedures allow it to develop and maintain a diverse, high quality work force and suggests that nothing be done to put that ability in peril.

Rationale

The Employee Handbook for the General Assembly Mission Council describes the manner in which Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation seeks to order its institutional life—by the biblical and theological themes that give it purpose and mission: “... *It seeks for its structure to reflect its policy: one that places a high value on participation and diverse representation in decision making and avoids decisions imposed by individuals. It seeks to cultivate an environment where people support one another, utilize their gifts creatively and productively, and embody the love and openness of Jesus Christ*” (Employee Handbook, p. 5).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer. “... All employment policies and practices including recruiting, selection, benefits, compensation, performance reviews, promotion, transfers, discipline, training, and separation will be administered without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, uniformed service ... veteran status, or religious affiliation (except where a category is a bona fide occupational qualification.)...” (Employee Handbook, p. 7)

Membership in a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation or presbytery is a bona fide occupational qualification for several positions, including the GAMC Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Directors, the Ministry Directors, and several other key positions. This requirement is due to the public profile of these positions, and occupational expectations for these employees to be fully conversant and engaged in the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Other positions call for theological or technical expertise, but do not require membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Thus the positions of Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director named in the overture already meet this requirement.

The overture includes several incorrect assumptions about the role of GAMC staff (including any who might not be members of the PC(USA)) in supporting the work of elected committee members.

The GAMC Employee Handbook contains explicit instructions:

“607. *Role of Staff in Resourcing Meetings*

During meetings of the GA, GAMC and related committees, employees must be perceived as impartial providers of resources and services, not advocates on issues coming from sources other than those sources that may come before the meeting for action. When staffing these meetings, they are working as GAMC employees, and are expected to give full and accurate representation of the position of the GA and GAMC in matters of policy, social witness statement, or theological or doctrinal positions, even when representing GA or GAMC policies or positions that do not represent the employee’s personal position. It is appropriate for employees who participate in advocacy or advisory roles as part of their position description to, at times, engage in work in opposition to or toward changing GA or GAMC policies or around which there is controversy, but in so doing the employee must accomplish such work in consultation with the employee’s supervisor and not in a manner intended to advocate the employee’s personal position on any issue. Employees may be asked by the GA, GAMC or committee members for recommendations or to provide leadership on topics in meetings. Such recommendations or leadership must be provided in a balanced, impartial manner that is consistent with the employee’s duties as defined by the position description, supervisor and organization. (Employee Handbook, p. 61)

The GAMC policy requires staff to be impartial providers of resources and services for committee members, and in that role, it is important for them to be cognizant of the life and mission of the PC(USA). However, *it is not the role of staff to evaluate the impact of committee actions upon the life of the church*. Rather, this is the role of the elected committee members, as they “...seek together to find and represent the will of Christ” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0301d).

The GAMC believes that this policy sufficiently guides its staff in serving committees that may recommend policy to the Council or the General Assembly, and is consistent with the employment guidelines that have been established. Therefore the GAMC urges the General Assembly not to amend the *GAMC Manual of Operations* in the manner requested by the overture.

Item 09-06

[The assembly approved Item 09-06. See pp. 72, 81.]

On Reestablishing an Office of Collegiate Ministries as a Vital Part of Ministry and Mission—From the Presbytery of North Central Iowa.

The Presbytery of North Central Iowa overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the General Assembly Mission Council to reestablish an Office of Collegiate Ministries in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a vital and integral part of the ministry and mission of the church and direct that office to prepare a strategy for mission in higher education in concert with middle governing bodies, congregations, and, where possible, ecumenical partners, to be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$68,391; 2012: \$70,168 (GAMC)]

Rationale

This is a reaffirmation of the action of the 210th General Assembly (1998) concerning *Overture 98-63* on preparing a church-wide mission strategy for Ministry to Higher Education, and of the action of 213th General Assembly (2001) that adopted the report, “Renewing the Commitment: A Churchwide Mission Strategy for Ministry in Higher Education.”

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor denominations enjoy a long and historic preference for educational pursuits as means of understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The commitment of the Presbyterian church in the United States to ministry in higher education is its oldest continuing mission beyond the congregation.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is represented on many campuses of higher education, including colleges and universities in covenant with the denomination, through the committed work of chaplains and campus ministers.

The students on the campuses of the nation’s colleges and universities represent a tremendous mission opportunity for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and can be valuable servants for carrying out the mission of the church in areas of social and environmental justice.

Synods and presbyteries that traditionally have been responsible for collegiate ministry are experiencing difficulties in coordinating and financing ministries of higher education.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affiliated collegiate ministries are facing a crisis in funding.

Traditional methods of evaluating the effectiveness of collegiate ministries may be ineffective and may not be valid measures of the higher education mission value to Christ’s church; and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has not, as recommended in “Renewing the Commitment: A Churchwide Mission Strategy for Ministry in Higher Education” (adopted by the 213th General Assembly (2001)) financially supported the restoration and renewal of our denomination’s commitment to the oldest continuing mission of the church.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through its General Assembly Mission Council, has not, as recommended in “Renewing the Commitment: A Churchwide Mission Strategy for Ministry in Higher Education” (adopted by the 213th General Assembly (2001)), “[established] with Mission Funding and Development a focused and systematic process of funds development for the continuing support of the church’s ministry with college and university students ...” (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, p. 197).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has not, as recommended in “Renewing the Commitment: A Churchwide Mission Strategy for Ministry in Higher Education” (adopted by the 213th General Assembly (2001)), requested an annual report from the General Assembly Mission Council “... regarding progress and implementation of the strategy contained in ‘Renewing the Commitment’.” (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, p. 197)

The Presbyterian Association for Collegiate and Higher Education Ministries, conceived by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), was formed by the denomination’s 2004 Higher Education Summit, but it is not funded by the denomination and is connected to the denomination only through a covenant.

Budgetary Impact

The General Assembly Mission Council estimates that the cost of implementing this overture is \$85,000 annually. This amount includes programming and staff expenses (salary, benefits, travel, and shared office services).

Concurrence to Item 09-06 from the Presbyteries of Chicago, Florida, Northern Kansas, and Western North Carolina, and from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 09-06 requests that the General Assembly Mission Council reestablish the Office of Collegiate Ministries in the PC(USA).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 09-06 be approved.

Rationale

Item 09-06 reaffirms the action of the 213th General Assembly (2001) to call for a national Office of Collegiate Ministries. Campus ministries are a vital Christian witness and source of spiritual nurture at colleges and universities. They play important roles in the intellectual, spiritual, and moral development of young adults. Much of the current young adult leadership in our congregations comes from alumni/ae from Presbyterian related institutions like Stillman and Davidson colleges and Whitworth University.

There are some notable examples of PC(USA) congregations that serve Presbyterian students at nearby institutions of higher education. Most Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations, however, are ill equipped for this kind of ministry. Many of the young people who have grown up in Presbyterian churches are involved in ministries to young adults at non-PC(USA) related schools like the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Campus Crusade for Christ. In earlier decades, Presbyterian students involved in these programs often returned in later life to PC(USA) congregations. That trend seems to be coming to an end. Attracting, nurturing, and re-engaging young adults is essential for the future of the PC(USA). Without such a ministry, the church will continue to lose members.

Our support for a renewed effort to address this ministry need on a national basis does not deny the value of the associations that the PC(USA) continues to maintain. Nor does it presume the availability of unrestricted funds for every worthy purpose. We do, however, want to support a more substantial game plan for re-designing ministry on campuses. For a tradition that prides itself on an “educated ministry,” this still seems like an area worthy of strategic investment and greater coordination.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 09-06

Comment on Item 09-06—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) has demonstrated a long-term commitment to collegiate and young adult ministry. Because of significant reductions in budget and staff for the GAMC, not every commitment can require a distinct office and dedicated staff. The ministry function is being served in the current General Assembly Mission Council structure through the Associate for Young Adult and Collegiate Ministries. Reestablishing a separate Office of Collegiate Ministries would require elimination of other programs and staff that are vital to the mission of the PC(USA).

Ministry to young adults across the GAMC is alive and well. The following list is the areas of where the GAMC supports ministries to young adults:

- Presbyterian Association for College and Higher Education Ministries (PACHEM)
- Presbyterian Student Advocacy Leadership Team (PSALT)
- Presbyterian College Chaplains Association (PCCA)
- College Ministries Summit
- Young Adult Women’s Leadership Development
- National Network of Presbyterian College Women (NNPCW)
- Racial Ethnic Young Women Together (REYWT)
- Young Adult Volunteers (YAV)
- National Taiwanese Presbyterian Young Adult Council (NTPYAC)
- Filipino American Young Adult Council (FAYAC)
- Young Adult Interns at the United Nations Office
- Christian Vocation/PLSE

The total annual funds that go support the work and strategies of these ministries are more than \$1.3 million.

The role of the General Assembly Mission Council is changing in response to trends in mission engagement and funding throughout the denomination. The focus of our ministry is to inspire, equip, and connect Presbyterians as they engage in ministry.

We are moving away from:

- creating offices at the denominational level to coordinate every area of specialized ministry, and
- producing our own resources where good resources exist from other sources.

This ministry focus for the GAMC is consistent with the available funding streams and the broad range of ministry support that Presbyterians expect.

We invite Presbyterians with a passion for specialized ministries to form ministry networks for collaboration and coordination. The PC(USA) Web site provides tools for these networks to form and for synergies to emerge. New features are being added to the Web site to improve that capability. These varied ministries are vital for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and we will continue to seek ways to foster connections and collaboration to join in expanding partnership in God's mission and to grow Christ's church deep and wide.

Item 09-07

[The assembly approved Item 09-07 with amendment. See pp. 72, 81–82.]

On Affirming the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association—From the Presbytery of Elizabeth.

The Presbytery of Elizabeth respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Affirm the work of the Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA) as an early, effective, and continuing model of social networking and an effective way to multiply gifts; and
2. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to develop and apply a funding strategy for the continuing life of PHEWA before the end of the fiscal year 2012 so that it may continue to implement GA-mandated ministries as an entity of networks [and report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) the results]; and

~~[3. Direct that an impact study be conducted before the next General Assembly, in 2012, to ascertain whether the GAMC termination strategy (due to lack of funding) has had a disproportionate impact on programs and structures within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that served the value of justice; and if so a method of remediation be designed, and that such study be reported in full to the commissioners of the 220th General Assembly (2012) for their consideration, recommendation, and action.]~~ [That an extra commitment opportunity fund account be earmarked to provide salary and support for the position of executive director of PHEWA as described in the historic covenant of shared ministry partnership agreement that outlines our collaborative ministry.]

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$50,000; 2011: \$25,000; 2012: \$25,000 (GAMC)]

Rationale

The first Guiding Principle adopted by the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) in February 2010 recalled our ordination vows, "... to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ."

The Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) is in covenant partnership with the GAMC and has organized, for more than fifty years of service within and beyond the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "... to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with ... God" (Mic. 6:8). The service of PHWEA has been to connect and network grassroots ministries that implement General Assembly-mandated ministry (i.e. mission that General Assembly commissioners called for by vote).

At present ten volunteer networks of PHEWA now exist:

- Presbyterians for Addiction Action
- Presbyterian Association for Community Transformation
- Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network
- The Presbyterian AIDS Network

Presbyterians Affirming Reproductive Options
 The Presbyterian Association of Specialized Pastoral Ministries
 Presbyterian Child Advocacy Network
 Presbyterians for Disability Concerns
 The Presbyterian Health Network
 Presbyterian Serious Mental Illness Network

These networks are led by trained, committed Presbyterians with expertise that is volunteered to the denomination in a minimum of ten different ministry areas. PHEWA has been coordinated, nurtured, held accountable, and resourced by very minimal staffing, even when it had an Executive Director, who serve as generalists who know where the most effective volunteer expertise is for each particular need that is presented. This model of ministry networking is cost effective and serves the denomination.

The PHEWA has been operating for the past year without an executive director, but is served by an extraordinary full-time program assistant, Susan Stack, along with additional staff work from the program offices of Bill Somplatsky-Jarman, Martha Gee, and Peggy Gunther.

The PHEWA is “good news for the poor” from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in work with some of the most marginalized persons of our country using community organizing strategies for both evangelism and justice.

“Justice” carries a top priority value for members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as disclosed through the survey conducted in September 2009, as well as the succeeding Presbyterian Panel survey conducted by Research Services.

The PHEWA has historically received most of its funding from investment funds designated to the Social Welfare Organizations office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In 2005, the decision was made by the General Assembly Council (now GAMC) at the recommendation of the Presbyterian Foundation to divest the church of the principal as well as the annual yield of these investments. This decision effectively de-funded some of the most significant justice ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and in particular PHEWA, which received the majority of its network budgets and staff support from the social welfare organizations budget.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 9-07 from the Presbytery of Elizabeth asks the 219th General Assembly (2010) to affirm the work of the Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA); to direct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to develop and apply a strategy for funding these General Assembly-mandated ministries; and to do an impact study to determine if justice ministries have been disproportionately impacted by recent reduction in force strategies.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 9-07 be approved.

Rationale

In the development of social witness policy, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is mandated to listen widely to the whole church, especially to those impacted by an issue and to those who minister with and advocate for them. The many networks that constitute PHEWA are formed by church members who, as volunteers, devote their time, energy, and compassion to a ministry mandated by the General Assembly. Numerous policies developed by ACSWP, in response to a General Assembly mandate, have been developed with the help and expertise of these church members, including the policy on serious mental illness approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and the policy paper on becoming an HIV and AIDS competent church that is being considered at this General Assembly. The ministry of these networks is an important part of the church’s experience and expertise on many justice issues.

The question of assessing the place of justice networks within a holistic mission strategy for the church does, as the proponents suggest, involve financial questions. The network model is cost effective and connectional, though its program mainly involves sharing resources and guidance among practitioners. National networks provide institutional continuity as well as historical memory. The organizational challenge is partly to make their value known within and beyond the congregations. The overall leadership and identity of the General Assembly certainly benefits from the justice component.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Item 09-07 deals with affirming the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

For more than fifty years, PHEWA has worked to connect and network grassroots ministries for justice, doing ministry to help the excluded, poor, and marginalized. This ministry has been mandated by the General Assembly by commissioner vote. Justice issues have been shown to be a top priority by a recent paired weighting survey within the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). Without positive action on this overture, this ministry is in danger of disappearing. Financial implications are involved, but can we as a church afford not to do so as followers of Christ?

Item 09-08

[The assembly approved Item 09-08 with amendment. See pp. 72, 82.]

On Supporting Mission and Ministry in North Korea—From the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse.

The Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Affirm the historical commitment of the PC(USA) and its predecessor denominations to bring the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Korea, recognizing that while the amazing growth of Christianity and Presbyterian churches in South Korea gives testimony to the good fruits of this mission, the challenge to demonstrate God's love and bring the good news to people in what today is defined as North Korea remains enormous.

2. Affirm the 2009–12 General Assembly Council Mission Work Plan (February 15, 2008), which states in part: "The General Assembly [Mission] Council will join God in transforming societies to reflect God's intention for a just, peaceful, and compassionate world by:

... Equipping and supporting congregations, mission initiators, global partners, and mission personnel as they bear witness to God's intentions; [and]

"Working to alleviate injustice, poverty, hunger, and the effects of illness, disaster and suffering..." (General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 2009–12 Mission Work Plan, p. 4).

3. Instruct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to:

a. develop and publicize a mission strategy to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the PC(USA)'s commitment to caring for the vulnerable population in North Korea—"... one of the least of these ..." (Mt. 25:40)—and thereby open up the way to reach the people in North Korea with the gospel of Jesus Christ in the future; and

b. use PC(USA) mission resources in South Korea to further promote partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) and other ecumenical partners to collaborate on this mission to North Korea; and

c. plan for fully-supported PC(USA) mission personnel for mission work in North Korea in the future.

~~[4. Affirm the work of the Lighthouse Foundation, which was established in 2004 by U.S. Presbyterian mission personnel, including PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker Sue Kinsler, to spread God's love to the impoverished and suffering in North Korea and other nations.~~

~~[5. Instruct the GAMC, in its strategy to minister to the vulnerable population in North Korea, to continue its cooperation with the Lighthouse Foundation, whose programs of providing food for orphans and others at risk from hunger and providing rehabilitative services to persons with disabilities have proven remarkably successful in what is considered a "closed" country, and through whom the PC(USA) contributed emergency food aid in 2008.~~

~~[6. Commend Sue Kinsler as she continues ministry in North Korea through the Lighthouse Foundation. Sue has provided visionary leadership and been the primary force for ministry through the Lighthouse Foundation. In this ministry, she has earned a special trust and privilege in North Korea, making her one of the most effective agents for God's work in this mission field.~~

~~[7. Support the Lighthouse Foundation by setting a goal of raising \$150,000, outside of the budget, to match the \$150,000 being provided by Pyongyang Presbytery (Presbyterian Church of Korea), which has an international partnership with the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse. This would be done by appropriately appealing to congregations,~~

~~presbyteries, synods, and entities such as the Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Medical Benevolence Foundation, and Presbyterian Women.]~~

[8-] [4.] Inform the PC(USA)'s national and global ecumenical partners of this action and encourage them, and PC(USA) congregations and entities, to participate in praying for, raising awareness of, and contributing funds [for this ministry] to feed the hungry and bring hope to the disabled in this reclusive country.

Rationale

“... ‘Lord, ... you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him ‘Feed my sheep.’” (Jn. 21:17)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) “is called to be Christ’s faithful evangelist

... (3) participating in God’s activity in the world through its life for others by

- (a) healing and reconciling and binding up wounds,
- (b) ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the powerless,
- (c) engaging in the struggle to free people from sin, fear, oppression, hunger and injustice,
- (d) giving itself and its substance to the service of those who suffer,
- “(e) sharing with Christ in the establishing of his just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world. *Book of Order*, G-3.0300c

“The Church is called to undertake this mission ... sharing the gospel, and doing those deeds in the world that point beyond themselves to the new reality in Christ” (*Book of Order*, G-3.0400).

Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Korea in the late 19th century and began to spread the gospel message across the peninsula. Within a few decades, the gospel message took root and was spread by indigenous Korean church leaders. Today nearly one-third of all South Koreans are professing Christians.

But North Korea, separated from South Korea after World War II, has been isolated. Cut off from economic, cultural, and religious interaction with South Korea and other Western countries, its economy was further devastated in the 1990s as it lost barter trade ties and economic support from other communist countries. Floods, drought, and hunger-related problems caused the deaths of some three million North Koreans between 1996 and 2008. Among those most severely affected have been orphans and those with disabilities. North Korean public policy has not been protective of the disadvantaged and disabled, to the extent that it was once declared that there were no disabled people in North Korea. This at-risk population deserves special attention and support from Christians, both in Korea and around the world.

Because Presbyterian missionaries served extensively in Korea both before and after the division of the country; because there are within the PC(USA) so many Korean Presbyterians and Korean Presbyterian Churches; and because projects supported by the Lighthouse Foundation (www.lighthousekorea.org) offer both individuals and church entities a most unusual opportunity to help people with great need in what essentially is a “closed” country, it is appropriate to seek to raise the funds for humanitarian aid to North Korea by making an appeal through as many channels as possible. Where ecumenical partners share concern for North Korea, it is also valuable to involve those relationships in this ministry. Through this overture, the Presbyterian church will be able to facilitate humanitarian aid and social welfare work where even the Korean Christian Federation, the North Korean official state Christian organization, is unable to act.

By identifying a strategy for mission and ministry in North Korea that includes the Lighthouse Foundation, the PC(USA) gains enormous potential for “ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the powerless” (G-3.0300c (3)) because of the high degree of respect and trust that both South Korea and North Korea have in Sue Kinsler and in the Lighthouse Foundation.

In 1997, Sue turned her attention to the needy in North Korea. Overcoming roadblocks in both South and North Korea, she developed a program that now feeds several thousand young children soybean milk and bread (with a goal of 200,000). In 2004, she found a way to serve the physically challenged when North Korea agreed to open up to the programs of the Lighthouse Foundation and allowed it to set up a job training center in Pyongyang. The Lighthouse Foundation now services twenty sites offering food, medical services, and rehabilitation programs for infants, children, pregnant women, the elderly, and the disabled of all ages.

In 2000 the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse, PC(USA), and Pyongyang Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) in South Korea entered into an international partnership agreement with one of its goals identified as joint mission in North Korea. In 2008 and 2009 representatives of the Korean Partnership Mission and Ministry Team of the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse, along with members of Pyongyang Presbytery, met with Sue Kinsler, studied the work of the Lighthouse Foundation, and affirmed its mission.

In November 2007, North Korea granted the Lighthouse Foundation a piece of land on which to build a new facility to provide services to the disabled people in North Korea. The vision for this new four-story center, the Pyongyang General Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled, is to set up and put into operation a facility with a variety of programs for the welfare of the disabled of all ages. The center will promote health and well-being through nutritious meals, hygiene services, medical services, and rehabilitating therapy. The center will help people become productive members of society and advance their human rights through special education, general and vocational training, and the opportunity to participate in special programs in arts and athletics. The dining room and auditorium will promote sharing and service between people from the North and South and between persons with and without disabilities. The center will also serve as a model for future centers throughout the county.

The current plan is for the outside world to provide the building and equipment for this center and for North Korea to provide the personnel, utilities, and supplies to run the center. The architect and construction firm come from South Korea and were involved in the building of Bongsoo Church in Pyongyang (the construction of Bongsoo Church was a project of Pyongyang Presbytery and the PCK). They did an excellent job and have valuable experience as a South Korean firm working on a project in North Korea. The budget is estimated at about four million dollars and the construction is projected to take two and one-half years. The center will be a project where those from North and South Korea, and visitors from abroad can serve together.

In August 2009, the Lighthouse Foundation received a \$500,000 matching grant from the Unification Ministry of the South Korean government—one of only ten granted (out of the forty-seven nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that applied). This constituted a major policy change by South Korea, after months of denying humanitarian aid shipments to the North. The Lighthouse grant was the largest grant awarded. Of particular interest was its focus on providing food for young children and help for people with disabilities while maintaining a record for effective accounting and aid monitoring.

In October 2009, Pyongyang Presbytery voted to begin providing extensive support for the Lighthouse Foundation. In response to the matching grant awarded to the Lighthouse Foundation by South Korea, Pyongyang Presbytery pledged to raise funds to support the construction of the Pyongyang General Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled. In addition to the actual construction requirements, however, a great deal of humanitarian aid in the form of food, medical equipment, medicines, and medical supplies will also be needed for those served by the Center. Meanwhile, the challenge of feeding nutritious meals to the orphans and elderly in all of the various Lighthouse Foundation work sites continues unabated.

The scope of the hunger problem and the challenge to serve persons with disabilities in North Korea is beyond what the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can address with its own resources. By adopting this overture the church can live into its calling to be a connectional church and one which values working with its global partners, accomplishing more good for God's kingdom in collaboration (one of the core values identified by General Assembly Council in 2007) than it can on its own. The 2009–12 Mission Work Plan calls the PC(USA) to “Strengthening and discovering new ways to witness faithfully with Presbyterian and ecumenical partners in the United States and around the world” (2009–12 Mission Work Plan, p. 3). The “Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God's Mission” developed in 2008 also calls for “collaboration,” “cooperation,” and “partnership.” Collaboration between PC(USA) entities, the Lighthouse Foundation, Pyongyang Presbytery (PCK), and other ecumenical partners will significantly increase the good news in North Korea by providing a means for “[w]itnessing to the Gospel's transforming power locally and globally with special emphases on people at the margins of society and those with no active church affiliation ...” (2009–12 Mission Work Plan, p. 3).

May the body of Christ speak with a united voice to minister in Christ's name to the orphans, to the hungry, and to the disabled people of North Korea so that they may experience the Lord's healing care, and with prepared hearts, one day find hope and joy in the good news of Jesus Christ!

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

Item 09-08 requests the PC(USA) to affirm the custodial commitment of the PC(USA) to bring the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Korea, recognizing that while the amazing growth of Christianity and Presbyterian churches in South Korea gives testimony to the good fruits of this mission, the challenge is to demonstrate God's love and bring the good news to people of North Korea.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 09-08 be approved and we request consideration of the following:

That the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) raise \$100,000 in the next three years through Extra Commitment Opportunity (ECO) special mission giving to be used through world mission in consultation with Pyung Yong Presbytery in South Korea to provide material support such as food, supplies, and clothes to disabled and starving children in North Korea.

Rationale

The PC(USA) should affirm the past and current mission in North Korea by PC(USA) mission workers and also affirm the 2009–2012 General Assembly Council Mission Work Plan (February 15, 2008), which states in part:

The General Assembly Council will join God in transforming societies to reflect God’s intention for a just, peaceful, and compassionate world by:

Working to alleviate injustice, poverty, hunger, and the effects of illness, disaster and suffering.

We also should affirm that Jesus Christ commended us “to love our enemies” (Lk. 6:27).

Therefore, supporting North Korean disabled starving children is a right thing to do as Jesus loves all children (Mt. 19:14), however, not without some stipulations.

Too many starving children in North Korea suffer from malnutrition that results in deforming and disabling them physically and emotionally if they even survive.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 09-08

Comment on Item 09-08—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

World Mission is grateful for having been part of God’s marvelous work on the Korean peninsula for 125 years. Working together with Korean partners, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has shared in promoting the good news of Jesus Christ through evangelism, education, health ministries, advocacy for the poor, and promoting peace, justice, and the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula.

In its previous actions, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has consistently taken a stand to advocate for peace on the peninsula, and in doing so has always consulted with our primary partners, the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) in South Korea, and the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) in North Korea.

This consultative approach is based upon our theological and missiological convictions which emphasize doing mission in partnership with mutual respect and recognition. We continue to honor these principles of doing mission in partnership as we work with our Korean brothers and sisters in all areas of ministry.

Therefore, World Mission maintains that any overture coming to the General Assembly should be proposed only after consultation with and consent from partners who are directly involved, have intimate knowledge and understanding of the often complex issues, will share in the implementation of the proposed initiative, and will live with the consequences of the initiative.

World Mission is unable to support this overture for the following reasons:

1. The establishment of the Lighthouse Foundation was not carried out in consultation with or consent from either the PCK or the KCF, and continues to operate independently of our partners. It is one of sixty-two Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)s recognized by the South Korean government that are given permission to provide humanitarian aid and relief to North Korea.

2. Neither Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) partner in North or South Korea was consulted as to the specifics of this overture, or invited to comment upon the proposed recommendations before it was submitted.

3. This overture contradicts our understanding of doing mission in partnership, and circumvents the process of working in collaboration with our partners by seeking their input.

4. As an independent, registered, charitable organization in South Korea, the Lighthouse Foundation is not related to our long-standing partner in South Korea, the PCK.

5. Because World Mission affirms the one body of Christ, which is comprised of many members, each having gifts for service, to commend one person overlooks the gifts and service of others.

6. The General Assembly office of the PCK has not been officially consulted on the work of the Lighthouse Foundation in North Korea.

Finally, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consulted with the leadership of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea and they expressed concerns about the way the Lighthouse Foundation has circumvented their General Assembly offices.

In view of the above, and given the extreme delicacy of the political and military climate of the Korean peninsula, the potentially significant consequences that our Korean partners might face due to actions of the Lighthouse Foundation, and the critical importance of coordinating actions in such a sensitive context, World Mission is unable to concur with recommendations 4–7 of Item 09-08, but supports recommendations 1–3 and 8.

Item 09-09

[The assembly approved Item 09-09 with amendment. See pp. 72, 82–83.]

On Reinstating “Criminal Justice Sunday” in the PC(USA) Planning Calendar, and Establishing an Office of Criminal Justice Issues—From the Presbytery of New York City.

The Presbytery of New York City overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

[1.] Reinstates Criminal Justice Sunday (~~the~~ a Sunday ~~of~~ in February) in the *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Planning Calendar*, and within all calendar and schedule instruments.

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$4,773; 2012: \$4,773 (GAMC)]

~~[2. Create an Office of Criminal Justice Issues, informed by the example of the Office of Immigration Issues in its education and networking function, and located in the appropriate mission area, e.g. Compassion, Peace, and Justice. This office is to be staffed by at least one full-time staff person. The responsibilities of this office would be to:~~

~~[a. Educate members of our churches and presbyteries concerning the criminal justice crisis in the United States—the U.S. incarcerates a larger percentage of its population than any other country in the world, and incarcerated individuals come from disproportionately large percentages of communities of color. Content of this education would include (but not be limited to):~~

~~[• current trends in criminal justice in the United States: patterns of incarceration, sentencing, probation, and parole; the role of race in the exercise of criminal justice policies in the United States; the role of for-profit prisons in the formation of criminal justice policies in the United States;~~

~~[• models for ministry to currently and formerly incarcerated people including those ministries oriented towards helping formerly incarcerated people find sufficient support and resources for life after incarceration such that they do not return to prison;~~

~~[• policy engagement in areas that impact the lives of people living in prison, and those who have come home—at the federal, state, county, and local levels—such as those related to judicial discretion, alternatives to incarceration, parole reform, and housing and employment policies that apply to formerly incarcerated people.~~

~~[b. Educate members of our churches and presbyteries concerning Presbyterian positions—dating back to 1959—on various aspects of criminal justice, including restorative justice, particularly as outlined in the paper, *Resolution on Restorative Justice*, passed by the 214th General Assembly (2002); in the *Resolution on the Abolition of For-Profit Prisons*, approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006); and in repeated resolutions in opposition to the death penalty, summarized in *On Seeking an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions in All Jurisdictions That Impose Capital Punishment*, approved by the 212th General Assembly (2002).~~

~~[c. Link synods, presbyteries, and churches to ecumenical and civil society organizations that are working on criminal justice issues, services, and policies, in a manner that reflects the values of restorative justice as outlined in the *Resolution on Restorative Justice* passed by the 214th General Assembly (2002).~~

[3. Formulate an initial funding strategy for the Office of Criminal Justice Issues with consultation from all appropriate parties within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as identified by the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). While the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has faced financial difficulties and these seem likely to continue, the incarceration crisis in the United States must prey upon our conscience, our hearts, and our spirits—as it has for many years, as visible in the many criminal justice resolutions passed since before reunion. If need be, after two or more years of initial funding, this office may be required to raise its own budget: through use of designated giving; appeals to synods, presbyteries, churches, and individuals; and through foundations.]

Rationale

Preface:

A note about language: the Rationale outlined below includes quotes from source materials that use words such as “offender,” “inmate,” and “prisoner.”

It is important to note the importance of language in discussions about criminal justice issues. To that end, below is an excerpt from “An Open Letter to Our Friends” from the NuLeadership Policy Group of the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, New York. It is the first public policy think tank founded and directed by people who were formerly or are currently incarcerated.

... One of our first initiatives is to respond to the negative public perception about our population as expressed in the language and concepts used to describe us. When we are not called mad dogs, animals, predators, offenders and other derogatory terms, we are referred to as inmates, convicts, prisoners and felons. All terms devoid of humanness which identify us as “things” rather than as people. While these terms have achieved a degree of acceptance, and are the “official” language of the media, law enforcement, the prison industrial complex and public policy agencies, they are no longer acceptable for us and we are asking that you stop using them.

In an effort to assist our transition from prison to our communities as responsible citizens and to create a more positive human image of ourselves, we are asking everyone to stop using these negative terms and to simply refer to us as PEOPLE. People currently or formerly incarcerated, PEOPLE on parole, PEOPLE recently released from prison, PEOPLE in prison, PEOPLE with criminal convictions, but PEOPLE... (An Open Letter to Our Friends, NuLeadership Policy Group: The Center for Law and Social Justice, see also www.NuLeadership.org)

1. *Criminal Justice Is a Critical Mission Field for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

a. *Brief Notes on Criminal Justice in the United States*

- In 2008, there were 2,304,115 people in the United States incarcerated in jails or prisons. Another 5,099,086 were either on probation or on parole.

This means that in 2008 more than 7.3 million people—one out of every forty-two—in the United States was under the supervision of some branch of the criminal justice system. Many more were impacted, e.g. family and community members.

While the growth of this population has slowed dramatically in recent years, the number still represents a dramatic increase over the past 28 years. In 1980, only 1,842,100 people in the United States were either on probation, incarcerated, or on parole (Bureau of Justice Statistics). Marc Mauer, Executive Director of the Sentencing Project, has called the increase in incarceration that took place during this period “the race to incarcerate” (*The Race to Incarcerate*, 1999: The Sentencing Project).

- The U.S. recidivism rate in 2006 was 67.5 percent

The United States has in excess of 2 million people in prison—more than any developed nation in the world—and 95 percent of this population will eventually return to our communities. Yet few ex-offenders are prepared for that reintegration. They seldom meet minimum educational standards and have little employment history, and because few people want to house them, former inmates usually return to familiar environments conducive to crime or end up in homeless shelters. It is not surprising that the national recidivism rate in 2006 was (at 67.5 percent) up from 51.8 percent in 1994.

If we could lower this rate, not only would fewer people become crime victims, but taxpayers also would save between \$52 and \$92 per day per inmate (the cost of incarcerating an inmate varies by state). What’s more, criminal justice expenses (public defenders and legal fees), health-care expenses (Medicare), and social services expenses (dependent child welfare programs and food stamps) would dramatically drop. (Irwin, John, “After Prison: Comprehensive Reintegration Programs Will Lower the U.S. Recidivism rate” 2008: *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.)

- Between January 1 and February 15 of 2010, seven people were put to death by lethal injection in the United States. In 2009, over three thousand people were incarcerated on death row. (*Death Penalty Information Center*, <<http://deathpenaltyinfo.org>>.)

b. *Brief Notes on Criminal Justice Positions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

- References to Criminal Justice Sunday, and concern about prison reform and the U.S. criminal justice system were expressed in actions by the General Assembly dating back to before reunion (*ACWSP Social Policy Compilation*, Crime and Justice, p. 1.) Since reunion, resolutions have expressed a common theme in a biblical understanding of compassion—for both the victims of crime and the people who commit them; and a steady concern about the exercise of criminal justice policies in the United States.

- The 2002 Resolution on Restorative Justice summed up the orientation of compassion of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in its description of Restorative Justice:

Restorative justice is a creative and constructive alternative to the widespread understanding of justice as retribution, with its emphasis on retaliation or punishment. Restorative justice is not oriented toward the imposition of penalties, or the exaction of revenge, or the infliction of pain, but toward the realization of the biblical visions of shalom and the kingdom of God. A simple definition of restorative justice is ‘addressing the hurts and the needs of the victim, the offender, and the community in such a way that all —victim, offender, and community—might be healed. (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 576)

- At the 212th General Assembly (2000), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reaffirmed its opposition to the death penalty and called for a moratorium on all executions in Overture 00-90, “On Seeking an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions in All Jurisdictions that Impose Capital Punishment” (*Minutes*, 2000, p. 476–478).

- As recently as 2008, the 218th General Assembly (2008), in approving *A Social Creed for the 21st Century*, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirmed the importance of working for “[a] system of criminal rehabilitation, based on restorative justice and an end to the death penalty ...” (*Minutes*, 2008, p. 925).

- The 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a *Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Private Prisons* (*Minutes*, 2003, p. 439–458). For-profit prisons are thriving in the United States. The current (February, 2010) Corporate Profile of the Corrections Corporation of America begins as follows:

Corrections Corporation of America is the nation’s largest owner and operator of privatized correctional and detention facilities and one of the largest prison operators in the United States, behind only the federal government and three states. CCA currently owns and operates more than 60 facilities including 44 company-owned facilities, with a design capacity of more than 85,000 beds in 19 states and the District of Columbia. (Corrections Corporation of America Web site, <<http://ir.correctionscorp.com>>)

- Racism is a persistent factor in patterns of incarceration and the exercise of other criminal justice policies in the United States. Dismantling racism is a priority of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as articulated in *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community*, approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999) (*Minutes*, 1999, p. 273–287).

In recent years:

- 38 percent of prison and jail inmates are African American, compared to their 13 percent share of the overall population.
- Latinos constitute 19 percent of prison and jail population compared to their 15 percent share of the population.
- A black male born in 2001 has a 32 percent chance of spending time in prison at some point in his life, a Hispanic male has a 17 percent chance, and a white male has a 6 percent chance...

... While African American youth represent 17 percent of their age group within the general population, they represent:

- 46 percent of juvenile arrests
- 31 percent of referrals to juvenile court
- 41 percent of waivers to adult courts. (*Reducing Racial Disparity in the Criminal Justice System: A Manual for Practitioners and Policymakers*, Second Edition, 2008: The Sentencing Project, p. 2)

2. “... I was in prison and you visited me” (Mt. 25:36b).

- Both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament carry admonitions to the faithful to be concerned about people who are incarcerated.

- See the *Resolution on Restorative Justice* (*Minutes*, 2002, p. 576ff) for an extensive discussion of the biblical warrants for restorative justice.

3. Dedicated staff make a difference, particularly in an era when prison and reentry service, ministry and advocacy organizations are faced with addressing a national crisis in a time of economic stress. Staff from entities such as denominations have the capacity to leverage the work of others: both faith-based organizations and civil society organizations.

- A partnership in the greater New York City area between the Presbytery of Hudson River, the Presbytery of New York City, and Prison Fellowship, Inc. is leading to a conference titled NY Out-4-Life. The purpose of the conference is to help the prison and reentry service, ministry, and advocacy fields take a significant step forward in realizing its potential for collaboration and mutual mentoring; and the synergy of its combined strength for political advocacy. The importance of this goal has been affirmed by multiple area stakeholders. Planning for the conference would not be possible without the participation of staff from both presbyteries.

- The *Resolution on Restorative Justice* (214th General Assembly (2002)) noted that the “... the Criminal Justice Program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has become an articulate voice within a widespread movement that is best known as restorative justice” (*Minutes*, 2002, p. 576). Yet in 2006, the Criminal Justice Program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ceased to exist. With the dissolution of that office, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) lost its national voice, lost that

office's work to raise awareness within our church, and abandoned a critical mission field—a field as important as any other in which our church is engaged.

4. A dedicated Criminal Justice Sunday as part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Planning Calendar will provide a regularly occurring opportunity for education, reflection, discussion, discernment, and action. Many denominations have specially-designated Criminal Justice Sundays.

Concurrence to Item 09-09 from the Presbytery of Hudson River.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-09—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 9-09 be approved.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor bodies have a long history of involvement in issues and contributions to solutions related to criminal justice, retributive justice, and restorative justice. As early as 1972, the PCUS expressed its concern for the disproportionate incarceration of people from the marginalized sectors of U.S. society. “We are concerned for people who are inmates of prisons. A large percentage of these people are poor, black, friendless, young, uneducated, unskilled, and products of unstable families...” (*Prison Reform*, PCUS, 1972, p. 174). In recent years, the church has developed policies regarding hate crimes, the privatization of prisons, the growth of for-profit prisons, and restorative justice methods for both victims and perpetrators. This large and comprehensive body of policies continues to be relevant today as the U.S. leads the world community in both the number and the percentage of its population that is incarcerated (more than 1 in every 100 persons) and the continuing disproportionate burden of U.S. policies on racial/ethnic minorities and the poor.¹

ACSWP also advises the General Assembly to consider answering the proposal for an Office of Criminal Justice by mandating the creation of a Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) network on criminal justice for education and advocacy ministries. This would recognize the financial limitations of a full program office (noted in the overture) and strengthen the capacity of PHEWA (if the network approach were adopted).

Endnote

1. Pew Charitable Trust, “One in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections,” (May 2, 2009) at http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=49694&category=356. The figure 1 in 31 refers all probationers and parolees, prisoners and jail inmates combined under correctional control, 3.2 percent of all adults; and “One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008” at <http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/One%20in%20100.pdf>

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The item calls for the reinstatement of Criminal Justice Sunday in the PC(USA) *Planning Calendar* and the establishment of an Office of Criminal Justice Issues.

The Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) advises that Item 09-09 be approved with the following comment:

“In a context of a precipitous growth in the number of incarcerated U.S. residents and citizens, Criminal Justice Sunday is a needed interpretive tool for U.S. Presbyterians and Presbyterian congregations to inform and to increase awareness of the issues underlying the increase in incarceration rates. Furthermore, the establishment of an office would offer leadership and resourcing to these efforts.”

The ACREC also would like to be included in the group of those consulted in Recommendation 3 of the overture, as racial ethnic persons are disproportionately represented in the U.S. prison population.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 09-09

Comment on Item 09-09—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) makes the following comments about recommendations in Item 09-09.

Recommendation 1—Regarding Reinstating Criminal Justice Sunday

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) is charged with the annual review and approval of programmatic emphases celebrated by the church and published in the *Presbyterians Planning Calendar*.

The GAMC uses these “Guidelines for Programmatic Emphases:”

The life and worship of the local church finds its rhythm in the seasons of the church year as they reflect the life of the Lord and relate to our faith narrative found in scripture. At the same time, the people of God do not live in isolation. The context of Christian ministry and worship is the world in which we live. The faith community proclaims that God is sovereign over all creation, acts in history, revealed in scripture, and at work in our world today. Each congregation has the responsibility through its session to respond to the work of God’s Spirit in the life of the community, presbytery and region. Our sense of Christian vocation leads us in a variety of responses through mission service and spiritual formation. Programmatic emphases are those opportunities for church-wide participation and focus on the whole church’s mission together.

The following criteria reflect the theological and liturgical grounding in which our programmatic emphases are rooted:

1. Approved emphases will demonstrate a commitment to the liturgical calendar, the lectionary, and the programmatic needs of the denomination.
2. The church’s liturgical calendar with particular attention to Advent and Christmas, the Season of Lent and Easter Sunday, as well as historic feasts of Epiphany, The Transfiguration, the Day of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and The Festival of Christ the King provides an historical and theological framework for shaping the rhythm and life of our church.
3. Ecumenically shared emphases will receive primary consideration.
4. The Mission Work Plan of the General Assembly Mission Council provides a framework for understanding church-wide mission. In order to give substance and meaning to these designated observances, programmatic emphases should relate to and be supported by the Mission Work Plan.
5. In order to be fair to all General Assembly Mission Council programs, requests will be reviewed for overlap and redundancy. Each program team will normally have no more than one programmatic emphasis, and is responsible for providing interpretive resources.
6. Since the church in God’s world must be cognizant of its relationship with other world religions and the culture in which it exists, major Jewish, Islamic, and secular holidays will be included for information.

Recommendation 2—Create an Office of Criminal Justice Issues

The role of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) is changing in response to trends in mission engagement and funding throughout the denomination. The focus of the ministry is to inspire, equip and connect Presbyterians as they engage in ministry.

The GAMC is moving away from:

- creating offices at the denominational level to coordinate every area of specialized ministry, and
- producing our own resources where good resources exist from other sources.

This ministry focus for the GAMC is consistent with the available funding streams and the broad range of ministry support that Presbyterians expect.

We invite Presbyterians with a passion for specialized ministries to form ministry networks for collaboration and coordination. The PC(USA) Web site provides tools for these networks to form and for synergies to emerge. New features are being added to the Web site to improve that capability. These varied ministries are vital for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the GAMC will continue to seek ways to foster connections and collaboration to join in expanding partnership in God’s mission and to grow Christ’s church deep and wide.

Item 09-10

[The assembly approved Item 09-10. See pp. 19, 83.]

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) confirm the election of Elder Linda B. Valentine to a second, four-year term as the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council.

Rationale

Upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee, the General Assembly Mission Council voted unanimously to elect Elder Linda B. Valentine to a second, four-year term during the GAMC meeting of February 23–26, 2010.

Item 09-11

[The assembly approved Item 09-11. See pp. 72, 83.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct that effective December 31, 2013, Mission Partnership Funds, as we know them, shall come to an end. Synods currently allocated such funds may forego receiving those funds prior to the cessation of this system on December 31, 2013.

Rationale

MISSION PARTNERSHIP HISTORY IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A. *The Board of Christian Education and The Board of National Missions*

During much of the last century, Presbyterian mission in the U.S. was understood to be primarily the responsibility of the General Assembly, with synods and presbyteries playing a secondary role. The Board of Christian Education and Board of National Missions oversaw program in presbyteries and synods as deployed field staff, and generally functioned in the role of middle governing body staff on the field. After World War II, some presbyteries increased their staffs (and became known as “self-administering units”—SAU’s), but synods were generally defined by state boundaries and had deployed staff from Philadelphia and New York. During this time, funding remained the responsibility of General Assembly.

B. *Overture H*

In 1973, in response to Overture H, the General Assembly of the UPCUSA enacted a new structural model for organizing middle governing bodies—regional synods. It shifted responsibility for oversight of former national mission ministries from General Assembly to middle governing bodies. The General Assembly Committee on Boundaries created regional synods with the intention of one major metropolitan area in the bounds of each new synod, but it often grouped synods with the expectation that because of size and shape of the ministries, there would be ongoing funding for what have come to be called “historical ministries.” General Assembly continued, initially, to provide staffing for all middle governing bodies, which was coordinated through the oversight of the former Council on Administrative Services. With institutions, the General Assembly turned over many properties (including their assets) to newly formed boards, which boards often had no experience in running institutions or managing property.

C. *Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS)*

In the PCUS, this shift was already well-advanced because of the longstanding mistrust of large, national institutions in those regions. In the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) the decision was made to keep most of the dollars flowing to the General Assembly and then to “circulate” those funds back to synods (and through them, to the presbyteries). A strong guiding principle was that dollars might not always be available in the region where they were needed—so the General Assembly was in charge of managing the flow of funds across the church.

D. *Following Reunion*

In 1983, following reunion of the PCUS and UPCUSA, additional changes followed. The difference in style between synods and presbyteries in the former churches was part of the transition. New boundaries, particularly in the southeast, were created to incorporate presbyteries from the former churches. At the same time, the Council on Administrative Services was ended and presbyteries and synods began to take responsibility for their own staffing.

About this time, synods and presbyteries that had received “oversight” of national mission ministries and properties began to seek some funding pattern from General Assembly to sustain those ministries that had been “given” to MGBs, often with no commitment to sustained funding.

By the time of reunion, this system was well-established but not universally adored in the UPCUSA. To most people in the PC(USA), it seemed cumbersome and regulatory. One very significant difference between the two former denominations was that the UPCUSA had a number of synods and presbyteries with very large geography and very small numbers that made it difficult-to-impossible to support mission entirely from dollars generated within the region (Alaska, Arizona). The PCUS had no such regions. Through a series of consultations held with synods in 1986 and 1987, Mission Partnership Funds were created to replace the circulating funds system.

E. *Similarities to Previous Patterns*

As Mission Partnership Fund (MPF) began, there were two similarities to the previous pattern:

1. Partnership funds for the first year (1988) would be exactly the same number of dollars as were distributed as circulating funds in 1987.

2. The causes to be supported by MPF—staff, campus ministry, aid-to-field, racial ethnic ministries—were the same causes for which circulating funds had been negotiated.

F. *Differences from Previous Practices*

Important differences in the two systems:

1. While everyone participated by sending dollars (basic mission support) to the General Assembly, synods were given the opportunity to negotiate a “revenue neutral” withdrawal from receiving partnership funds. Seven synods took this step.

2. While the causes to be supported remained the same, MPF were recognized as block grants

3. The MPF allocation for each synod was determined through a consultation process involving the General Assembly Council (GAC) and all sixteen synods rather than one-on-one negotiations between a committee of the General Assembly and a particular synod.

4. The total amount placed in the General Assembly budget for MPF is percentage (10.447 percent) of the General Assembly’s total unrestricted revenue. This percentage was determined by the General Assembly and cannot be decreased by action of the GAC alone.

G. *Problems with MPF*

1. Because we began the system with the allocation formula from the old circulating funds system, any inconsistencies in the old system became a part of the new system;

2. We have never been able to determine effective criteria for asking for and receiving MPF. How does one evaluate the need for staff in a presbytery in Atlanta alongside the need for Native American ministry in Arizona? Therefore, the inherited pattern in item one becomes normative.

3. Despite the best efforts of a number of people, a “welfare mentality” keeps insinuating itself into the discussion—sometimes from those most dependent on the funds and sometimes from those who are seen as “givers.”

H. *Changes Since 2000*

By the early 2000s, declining membership and more dollars being kept “at home” either in the congregation or the presbytery, meant that the General Assembly had fewer dollars available to spend. This now means fewer dollars as well for MPF. In addition, congregations began to designate their giving to General Assembly meaning that there were significantly fewer unrestricted dollars available.

At the same time, the sixteen synods have changed their original structure and priorities since the late 1980s when MPF was created. Therefore, national consultations have tended to perpetuate the same model of distribution without having a way to understand or appreciate the differences and how those differences would affect MPF distribution. For example, some synods used all MPF moneys for their own operating expenses. Other synods did not keep any of the money and used it in its entirety to support the ministries of presbyteries within their bounds. What did remain consistent was the original uses of the funds: campus ministry, new church development or redevelopment, racial ethnic ministries, governing body staff.

I. *Previous Actions of the Mission Partnership Consultation and MPF “Table”*

In April 2007, the synods represented at the Mission Partnership Consultation and GAC agreed that we needed a new plan, and adopted the following action:

1. That this April Mission Partnership Funds Consultation (2007), in solidarity with the September GAC/MGB Joint Meeting (2006), October National Polity Conference (2006), and the February “Communion and Conversation” gathering (2007), affirm that these times require extraordinary means of moving into the future. We have heard that mere changes in management of present systems is not the most fruitful approach.

2. Confirm that the present system of the division of the Mission Partnership Funding System, including the portion set aside for Mission Funds Development Projects for 2007 and 2008 continue until such time as some new system addressing critical needs of middle governing body personnel and mission issues in a framework of shared theological values be put in place by the synods and General Assembly Council [now General Assembly Mission Council] through 2010, or whichever is earlier.

3. Moving towards a new system:

a. That this consultation direct its National Mission Partnership Committee (inclusive of all the synods and the General Assembly Council) to immediately engage a planning conversation with the General Assembly Council with the

intent of developing a new system that affirms that the General Assembly Council and synods together find a way to support mission and ministry mutually affirmed and that recognizes concerns of historic obligations and future needs;

b. That planning for a new system includes a comprehensive survey of the impact of ending the former system on the middle governing body system.

c. That a report with a plan of action be given to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

4. This consultation affirms that new collaborative mission initiatives across governing body boundaries need to be funded through other channels than the Mission Partnership Funding stream.

5. In the interest of fulfilling the General Assembly Council's responsibility for accountability of funds given for support of the church's mission, each recipient shall provide within ninety days after their fiscal year a complete and accurate financial accounting of the use of all National Mission Partnership Funds demonstrating compliance with the National Mission Partnership Funds mission arenas. Reporting shall be in a form reasonably satisfactory to the General Assembly Council.

Subsequent actions include the following:

In September 2007, GAC ACTION 20-907 Request for Conversation with National Mission Partnership Committee—The General Assembly Council VOTED that representatives from the National Mission Partnership Committee and representatives of the General Assembly Council (GAC) be requested to immediately engage in a planning conversation with the intent of developing a new system that affirms that the GAC and synods together will find a way to support mission and ministry mutually affirmed and that recognizes concerns of historic obligations and future needs. The council further requested that the National Mission Partnership Committee, in conjunction with the GAC, provide a status report to the Shared Support Committee at the September 2008 General Assembly Council meeting and a full report to the September 2009 General Assembly Council meeting.

August 2008 MPF Group (Synod representatives and GAC)—The committee then agreed that in creating a proposal particular issues need to be included in the draft proposal

1. Defining the historical context
2. Where we want to be (how we get there)/Survey on Impact
3. Process
4. Timeline
5. Impact—in similar format

After discussion, the NMPF committee VOTED to adopt a five-year plan for elimination of the current funding method based on the same 10.447 percent, ending at the end of 2013, with each receiving synod receiving their current percentage of funds.

The committee VOTED that within the 2009–13 timeframe to do the following:

1. Encourage the nine receiving synods that are able to decline their allocations from the National Mission Partnership Funds.
2. Create a transitional generative team that will be composed of nine members (five, [Expanded] NMPF, two GAC, two executive presbyters [EPs]). This writing team will draft a process and report back to the NMPF.

Members of the Writing Team: Joyce Emery, convener (NMPFC); David Crittenden (NMPFC); Jan DeVries (NMPFC); Nancy Kahaian (NMPFC); Jack Shelver (NMPFC); Conrad Rocha (GAC); Mike Kruse (GAC); Joy Kaufman (Huntingdon Presbytery/Trinity). A second EP was appointed but was subsequently unable to participate.

3. Urge the writing team use a consultant for this project if necessary.
4. Designate any allocated funds declined by the nine receiving synods be pooled in an account to be used at the termination of the [Expanded] National Mission Partnership Funds system.
5. To designate \$100,000 of unallocated Mission Partnership Funds to fund this process (extra meetings, consultant, expenses etc.) Sources of the \$100,000 would be:
 - a. Unused portions of the moneys set aside (10 percent) in 2008 for funds development projects.

b. A portion of the moneys being returned to the larger pool in 2009 with the end of the funds development projects.

J. Today

The transitional generative team presented their report to the Expanded National Mission Partnership Committee in Atlanta on June 14 and 15. Their central findings were that:

1. The present mission partnership funding needs to end and a more collaborative model needs to be developed for national mission.
2. The transition out of the present system into a new way of doing national mission risks damage to existing ministries that are presently receiving Mission Partnership Funds. A process is needed that will ensure appropriate consideration is given to the future of these ministries as we make the transition.
3. Synod leadership, as they work in collaboration with other parts of the church, need to take on a more collaborative and generative role.

The report generated the following three recommendations that were approved by the Expanded National Mission Partnership Committee on June 15, 2009, and sent to the General Assembly Mission Council [GAMC] for consideration. The GAMC approved Recommendations 1. and 2. during their September 2009 GAMC meeting:

1. That the GAMC establish a task force for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, and making recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012) regarding those ministries and that work now supported by Mission Partnership Funds (MPF), including the ramifications of ending that support and possible other avenues of support to all, some, or none of those ministries and that work beyond December 31, 2013.

- a. Such committee to be comprised of seven persons

- (1) two appointed by the GAMC;

- (2) one appointed by the current ENMPC from among those synods currently receiving support from MPF;

- (3) one appointed by the current ENMPC from among those synods not currently receiving support from MPF; and

- (4) three persons appointed by the moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008), one of whom shall be appointed as moderator of the task force.

- b. Such task force to be funded from a portion of the \$100,000 set aside to fund ENMPF and if not possible, allow the chairperson of the ENMPF and the chair of the GAMC to negotiate a shared funding for the process,

2. That GAMC in partnership with the middle governing bodies of the PC(USA), encourage, and to the extent possible, facilitate and support conversations throughout the church regarding the meaning and direction of National Mission.

3. That the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct that, effective December 31, 2013, Mission Partnership Funds, as we know them, shall come to an end. Synods currently allocated such funds may forego receiving those funds prior to the cessation of this system on December 31, 2013.

Item 09-12

[The assembly approved Item 09-12. See pp. 71, 81.]

Communications and Funds Development Recommendation for Approval of Revised Criteria and Guidelines for Special Offerings.

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the revised “Criteria and Guidelines for Special Offerings” and direct that the *Organization for Mission*, Appendix A, be amended accordingly.

“Criteria for Participation in Special Offerings

“The special offerings operate within the PC(USA) as a distinct but integrated part of the church’s overall, coordinated funds development and communication strategy. As they provide important sinew for the connectional church, they are too valuable a resource to be squandered on emphases of passing interest to church members. The following criteria attempt to outline ways of discerning whether a particular focus is eligible to be considered for funding by one of these special offerings.

“1. Churchwide special offerings will provide valuable mission interpretation opportunities within the overall funds development and communications strategy of the whole church.

“2. Churchwide special offerings will enable the church to meet historical and ongoing needs in relationship to the total mission priorities of the church, always proclaiming the name of Jesus.

“3. Causes included in a churchwide special offering will have demonstrated potential for churchwide donor support.

“4. Causes included in a churchwide special offering will specifically define the needs to be met; plans will be provided for funds’ allocation, program implementation, and accountability.

“5. Causes grouped within the same churchwide special offering will have a focused, coherent mission purpose.

“Operating Guidelines for Special Offerings

“In order to fulfill the promise of special offerings, the following principles and practices are necessary to guide the churchwide special offerings of the PC(USA):

“1. On a four-year cycle, the General Assembly will provide for review and evaluation of the causes supported by churchwide special offerings, and will consider new causes in light of established criteria. Between reviews, the task force created for this evaluation will continue to review performance, accountability, and accumulation of reserves on an annual basis and will forward its findings to the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). Finally, this task force will send its findings and active questions to the successor task force.

“2. Churchwide special offering promotions will occur in a central promotions office rather than within programmatic entities.

“3. Costs of promoting and receiving each churchwide special offering will be paid from receipts of the offering. After deducting each offering’s costs from total receipts, restricted and unrestricted, of that offering, all receipts will then be considered permanently restricted, and will be used only for the purposes for which they were given. Each offering’s costs will be determined by the GAMC through its regular budget process.

“4. Start-up costs for new or significantly revised special offerings will be expensed as incurred.

“5. Promotion materials for a special offering will relate to the liturgical season in which the offering is received.

“6. Any change in the pattern of distribution of a churchwide special offering will require an eighteen-month time period before becoming effective to allow adequate time for development and distribution of promotion materials.

“7. There will be no more than five churchwide special offerings in any given calendar year. The General Assembly will identify times for the promotion and receipt of offerings.

“8. The agencies receiving churchwide special offering funds will prepare an annual report concerning the receipt and distribution of those special offering funds for review by the General Assembly Mission Council. This report, which shall include a compilation of reports from congregations and middle governing bodies where portions of the offering have remained summarizing their use, will be made available to churches and other governing bodies.

“9. All programs receiving funds from churchwide special offerings will work with mission interpretation staff to identify and develop networks of potential interpreters throughout the church.

“10. All churchwide special offerings will develop interpretive materials that are well-grounded in Reformed theology and appropriate to the offering’s recommended liturgical season.”

Rationale

The General Assembly approved two actions on Churchwide Special Offerings. One action involved changes to the criteria for Churchwide Special Offerings and the other changes to the Churchwide Special Offerings section of Appendix A. A revised Criteria and Guidelines for Churchwide Special Offerings has been created out of the two actions.

Item 09-13

[The assembly approved Item 09-13. See pp. 71, 81.]

The General Assembly Mission Council requests that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the update of the mandate of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People.

Rationale

The mandate of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People has been updated to reflect the structural and name changes made to the General Assembly Mission Council.

Updated Mandate of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People

The Assigned Function is to provide for a coordinated approach to assist in self-development of poor, oppressed and disadvantaged people through a Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. Its purpose will be to assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in carrying out its global commitment to work toward the self-development of people who are poor, oppressed and/or disadvantaged, who have initiated, control, and benefit directly from projects which promote long-term change in their lives and communities.

a. *Assigned Tasks*

(1) Provide program and strategy for the church's mission of self-development with poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged people in cooperation with ministry areas and governing bodies.

(2) Be responsible for receiving, reviewing, referring, and/or approving funding of proposals from poor and oppressed communities.

(3) Be responsible for overall direction, oversight, training, and certification of presbytery and synod Self-Development of People Committees whose membership shall be at least seventy-five percent (75%) Presbyterian and a majority of racial ethnic persons.

(4) Educate the church on the condition and status of poor and oppressed communities and share the theological insights of these communities.

(5) Work cooperatively with ecumenical partners in the self-development effort.

(6) Work cooperatively with the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry to enable a coordinated approach to development and report regularly to the ministry area.

b. *Linkage*

The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People will be responsible administratively to the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry.

The director (coordinator for administrative purposes) of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People will be elected by the ministry area. The search committee will be appointed by the ministry area with a majority of members chosen by the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. The search committee will elect its own chair. The search committee will recommend the director to the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People will nominate the director for election by the ministry area.

The director will be accountable to the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People for the functions assigned to the committee and accountable to the ministry area director in all matters related to coordination of the work of the committee with the ministry area and the General Assembly Mission Council.

The staff rationale of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People will be approved annually by the General Assembly Mission Council. Any staff other than the director will be selected by the committee and its director. They will be accountable to (with duties assigned by) the director of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People.

After consultation between the director of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People and the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry, staff of the committee may be assigned to other specific responsibilities of the ministry area. The staff, however, continues to be primarily accountable to the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. Any responsibility beyond linkage and coordination functions must be negotiated between the committee and the ministry area. The committee will be responsible for the annual review of staff. (This responsibility has been delegated to the director, by the Self-Development of People Committee, in consultation with the ministry area.) An in-depth annual review of the director is carried out by the Self-Development of People Personnel Committee, in consultation with the ministries area. The director may be dismissed by the ministry area only with the concurrence of the committee and in conformity with the Employee Handbook of the General Assembly Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People will participate in the planning and budgeting process of the General Assembly Mission Council through the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry. The budget of the Presbyte-

rian Committee on the Self-Development of People will be approved annually by the General Assembly Mission Council. The committee will be reviewed as a part of the regular review process of the General Assembly Mission Council.

c. Membership

The committee will be composed of thirty-one (31) persons, chosen so as to reflect diversity and inclusiveness in accordance with G-9.0104. The members of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People will be nominated through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process and elected by the General Assembly for a three-year term and eligible for election to one additional term. At least 75 percent (75%) of the members will be members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); a majority of the members will be racial ethnic persons. The membership will be composed of twenty-two members at-large nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee, three members nominated by synods, and six members nominated by presbyteries in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee so as to facilitate meeting the competency needs of the committee. Presbyteries and synods chosen to nominate members for the committee will be selected on a rotating basis to be established by the General Assembly Nominating Committee. The committee elects its own chair.

Item 09-14

[The assembly approved Item 09-14. See pp. 71, 81.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends the 219th GA (2010) approve the revised Covenant Between Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the General Assembly Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Rationale

Over the years, it became apparent that a clear understanding about the relationship between Presbyterian Women and the national church structure needed to be articulated. The covenant approved in August 2001 by the Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women (CCT) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Council, now known as the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), clarifies, enhances, and strengthens that relationship.

Covenant Between Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. and the General Assembly Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

I. PREFACE

This covenant expresses the partnership in mission among Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (PW) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). The PW and the GAMC have had a long-standing partnership based upon shared beliefs, complementary visions and commitments, common history, and a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation. While this covenant is specifically for the relationship between PW and the GAMC, it is commended as a model for Presbyterian Women in relation to other corresponding governing bodies and councils.

II. THE COVENANT-BASED RELATIONSHIP

A covenant is essentially an agreement between two or more parties committing themselves to certain responsibilities. The idea of Covenant is at the heart of the Biblical story and is generally understood as different from a contract. A contract is about legal and economic transactions while a covenant depends on trust and fidelity and focuses more on the quality of the relationship. It is agreed that PW, GAMC, and the GAMC's Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministry/Presbyterian Women Ministries Area (RE&WM) will each assume responsibility for their actions, and the signing of the covenant does not hold any party liable for the actions of another party. As reflected in this covenant, the GAMC provides various services to PW. PW supports the mission of the GAMC.

A. Background:

PW is a not-for-profit, national women's organization related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), hereinafter PC(USA). Its members are first and foremost members of the PC(USA). Prior to incorporation, Presbyterian Women came into being in 1988, five years after the reunion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. PW incorporated in 2009 as a mission entity related to the PC(USA). Its members participate in leadership coordinating teams at all governing body levels from the congregation to the General Assembly.

From reunion in 1983 until the organizing Business Meeting of Presbyterian Women in 1988, a Working Team of the Women of the Church (WOC) and United Presbyterian Women (UPW) proposed designs to their constituencies which culminated in the approval of the present structure. The 198th General Assembly (1986) received the Presbyterian Women Pur-

pose and Principles of Organization as information only, pending approval by the uniting constituencies. The General Assembly action affirmed the independence and responsibility of Presbyterian Women to make its own decisions concerning leadership, program and budget.

Membership in Presbyterian Women is open to all women who choose to participate in or be supportive of the PW organization in any way.

The PW Purpose states: “Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves: to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace, and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.”

In 1986, UPW and WOC, as they looked ahead to becoming Presbyterian Women, willingly became a part of the Women's Ministry Unit where they were in partnership with Justice for Women, Women Employed by the Church, and the Committee of Women of Color. In 1993, the Women's Ministry Unit was reorganized into the Women's Ministries Program Area of the National Ministries Division. In 2007, Women's Ministries Program Area was reorganized into RE&WM. PW continues to be in partnership with RE&WM with staff as part of the ministry area and as further evidenced by an administrative services agreement. PW supports the PC(USA) ministries that advance the role of women in the church and society. With each restructure or reorganization of the denominational staff, the PW organization made the decision to be lodged with women's constituency groups and emphases.

Because of PW's status as a corporate entity, assets currently held or managed by the GAMC's corporate entity, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, will be transferred to PW together with liabilities and contracts pursuant to a written agreement.

B. The Covenant Responsibilities of the PW

PW will:

1. a. nurture (their) faith through prayer and Bible study,
b. support the mission of the PC(USA),
c. work for justice and peace,
d. build a community of women that strengthens the PC(USA);
2. work cooperatively with the RE&WM as a whole and with other offices within the GAMC organization and other related entities;
3. be an active presence on the GAMC through the PW Moderator's membership, voice and vote and vice moderators' attendance at GAMC meetings as observers;
4. be faithful stewards of the money given by Presbyterian women from throughout the church, whether that money is given for the general mission of the church, for ongoing work of PW, or for projects of Creative Ministries offerings;
5. ensure editorial autonomy for *Horizons* magazine, the annual Bible study, and all other publications of PW;
6. respect the limits of staff time;
7. understand that staff operate under the rules of the GAMC Employee Handbook and report via the regular process of supervisors within the GAMC;
8. be guided by general policies of the GAMC (for example: contract procedures, minority vendor policies, and travel and meeting policies).

C. Covenant Responsibilities of the General Assembly Mission Council

The GAMC will:

1. recognize and respect PW's autonomy and status as a separate corporation, self-determining in its leadership, budget, program and lodgment;
2. provide support to PW :
 - a. honoring the relationships as stated in the GAMC Manual of Operations, recognizing the full membership with voice and vote on the GAMC of the Moderator of PW Churchwide;
 - b. appointing a member of the GAMC to serve with full voice and vote on the Corporate Board (CCT) of the PW.

c. acknowledging and ensuring editorial autonomy for all PW publications, including *Horizons* magazine and the annual Bible study;

3. through specifically assigned staff persons, seek ways to build tangible partnerships with PW for joint programming with various program areas of the PC(USA) in which the mission priorities of the church are served;

4. through the GAMC staff assigned and the RE&WM Ministry Area Director, maintain close connections with PW and be responsive to changes, new developments, and program options.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY:

In the following ways, PW, GAMC, and RE&WM stay in communication as each party attempts to be faithful to the covenant promise:

A. PW will provide an annual report to the GAMC through RE&WM of its programs, services, and policies, and PW's mission giving will appear in the General Mission Budget.

B. A member of the GAMC will sit with full voice and vote on the CCT of PW and report on the policies and activities of the GAMC at the triennial Churchwide Gathering Business Meeting of PW.

C. A representative group from each body will meet on a three-year cycle to review the covenant and propose any changes, the terms of this covenant being three years, commencing January 1, 2010 and expiring June 30, 2013.

D. Any party may propose changes in the covenantal relationship at any time upon prior written notice to the other parties.

Item 09-15

[The assembly approved Item 09-15 with amendment. See pp. 72, 83–84.]

~~[The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to appoint a task force of nine to review mission funding and the development of new ways to raise and sustain for the mission of the whole church.]~~

~~[The task force shall consist of the following:~~

~~• Three persons from the racial ethnic and emerging communities and networks;~~

~~• Two persons from the stewardship/mission funding programs in presbyteries;~~

~~• One person from a synod stewardship/mission funding program;~~

~~• One person from the 219th General Assembly (2010) Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination;~~

~~• Two persons at large.~~

~~[This task force would be staffed by one (1) person from the Mission Funding area of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).]~~

[Advise GAMC and the Presbyterian Foundation to consult with ACREC and its constituencies to develop new ways to raise and sustain mission funding.]

Rationale

The church's mission council and its ministries, and indeed all church agencies, are under increasing pressure to do more with less as giving patterns change. A new funding plan and strategy with varied methods, philosophies, and material would be helpful in order to increase giving for this growing diverse church community. A variety of dynamics encourage this recommendation:

- Mission funding is decreasing as the number of members decreases.
- Mission funding is being affected by the social and theological issues facing the church.
- Emerging ethnic church communities have varied patterns that are not necessarily traditional for funding mission and are not included in the usual plans for raising funds.
- Mission funding for racial ethnic church growth is not adequate to promote, sustain, or encourage that growth.

- Racial ethnic communities have varied ways of funding mission.
- Social changes are rapidly taking place and the church needs to be sensitive to these changes.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-15

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-15—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 09-15 be approved.

Rationale

The funding crisis within the PC(USA) has reached critical proportions. The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) has just been through two reductions in force that have heavily impacted the ability of the church to carry out its mission. Current attempts to raise money have relied heavily on direct mailings, which have been proven statistically to have a limited response. A new approach to stewardship that engages well established Presbyterian networks might prove to be helpful. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) proposal deserves serious consideration.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 09-15

Comment on Item 09-15—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) requests that the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove the recommendation from the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns on the development of a Task Force to Review Mission Funding, but does join with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns in seeing the need for new ways to raise and sustain funding for Christ's mission.

Rationale

The 216th General Assembly (2004) instructed the General Assembly Mission Council to "... develop and propose a conceptual framework for a new Mission Funding Strategy for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 494), and launched the creation of the Mission Funding Task Force.

The Mission Funding Task Force began operations and developed its own charge: "To develop a multi-dimensional funding design for the mission, program, and administration of the whole church, built upon relationships among sessions, presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 669). In 2006, the General Assembly added to the mandate for the Mission Funding Task Force, instructing the GAMC to "... assist congregations in communicating to their membership the reality of changed patterns in unrestricted giving and the resulting cost implications of administering restricted funds, and ... to seek alternative ways of budgeting in order to deal with this changing reality" (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 649).

The GAMC brought the results of the four year study, "Funding Christ's Mission through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" to the 218th General Assembly (2008), which approved its recommendations. The Mission Funding Task Force found that any attempt to design a successful funding system that supports the ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) must be imbued with the theology of stewardship. "We affirm that stewardship is not merely one part of Christian discipleship, but involves every aspect of life as we respond gratefully to God's grace and goodness" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 668).

God's Spirit alone enables faithfulness to Jesus Christ: Because God loves the world, and Christ gave his life for it, God's Spirit calls us as individuals and as the Church to respond with our lives and resources.

The Mission Funding challenge facing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is not a problem of resources, as Presbyterians are a people with abundant resources.

The primary challenges for the mission funding system of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are low awareness of Presbyterian mission, a preference for designated gifts, and a complicated funding system which is difficult to understand. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 670-671)

Therefore the task force recommend[ed]:

"• a raised priority for the communications and funds development activities of the General Assembly [Mission] Council..." (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 671). And this work has begun. The staff have now been in place for about eighteen months, and awareness of General Assembly mission has increased (from 16 percent who were aware in a 2005 study, to 36 percent when the questions were asked again in 2009, and awareness among elders has grown from 29 percent to 44 percent).

“• a revision of the funding system to broaden the availability of designated mission funding opportunities...” (*Ibid.*) With the creation of a new funds development ministry, this work is beginning to take hold. We have developed direct response funding and special gift opportunities for individuals, and strengthened our relationships with congregations and presbyteries for restricted and unrestricted mission funding opportunities.

“• a new emphasis on simplified giving and accountable processes, so that all Presbyterians might more clearly understand the need for funding and accountability for how the funds have been used...” (*Ibid.*). These recommendations will be fully realized in the 2011–12 mission budget. We have sought to fully allocate the cost of all programs to the budgets of those programs, as a demonstration of transparency in accounting and mission funding. In addition, we have streamlined the online giving process, and begun to narrow the thousands of individual giving opportunities to families of related funds that are more generally restricted.

The full spectrum of the Mission Funding Task Force recommendations are to be implemented over a five year period (2009–14), therefore, at this time the General Assembly Mission Council requests that the 219th General Assembly (2010) not adopt the recommendation from the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns, which begins a new mission funding study, so that efforts might focus on fully implementing the results of the 2008 study, rather than launching another study two years after receiving the results of the previous one.

Funding Christ’s Mission through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the 2008 Mission Funding Task Force report, emphasizes the equal importance of restricted giving alongside unrestricted support, and makes space for promoting particular causes within particular constituencies for funding support. Rather than establishing a new task force to review mission funding, the GAMC thinks it would be better to tap the passionate energy of concerned individuals from all areas of the church’s life in telling stories of transformation, inviting engagement, asking for financial support, and thanking supporters for their generous responses. In short, we are asking all leaders of the church to take an active role in fund raising.

If the General Assembly does wish to commission another mission funding task force, it would be helpful for the General Assembly to clarify the scope of work for the proposed task force. The ACREC recommendation speaks generally regarding mission funding in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), but the rationale draws explicit attention to mission funding for racial ethnic church growth, and the varied ways of funding mission in racial ethnic communities.

Item 09-16

[The assembly approved Item 09-16 with amendment. See pp. 72, 84.]

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following:

1. Grant a two-year extension of the 2004 referral to replace the term “racial ethnic” with new terminology so that ACREC can study and reexamine all the issues and implications in the broader contexts in the renaming of ACREC.

~~[2. Enable ACREC to form a special study group of five people that includes ACREC member(s), a theologian, and a sociologist who have a deep understanding on racial, cultural, ethnic, and growing diverse demographic issues in the United States and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).]~~

~~[3.]~~ [2.] Request that ACREC bring a report ~~[on the study]~~ and recommendation of a new name of ACREC to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2004 Referral: Item 07-08, Recommendation 3.a. Discontinue Use of the Term “Racial Ethnic” and Replace Term with New Reference—From the 216th General Assembly (2004) (Minutes, 2004, Part I, pp. 51, 540).*

The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved a report from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns called *Creating a Climate for Change within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. In that report the committee recommended that the term “racial ethnic” be discontinued and replaced with the term “emerging majorities” (*Minutes, 2004, Part I, pp. 51, 540*). Their reasoning was that the phrase racial ethnic no longer adequately represented the groups and persons it was originally intended to represent. This was apparent because Caribbean blacks didn’t fit neatly in the church’s racial ethnic classification of Black American, nor Brazilians in the church’s racial ethnic classification of Hispanic, nor Filipinos in the church’s racial ethnic classification of Asian and so on and so on. Their thinking was this new phenomenon could best be expressed in the new demographic reality that theorizes the United States people. This emerging majority is projected to constitute a majority of the nation’s population by 2050, a majority of diverse ethnicities, nationalities, and cultures.

The General Assembly was not ready to institute such a radical departure and thus it referred the issue of renaming back to the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns for continued examination. To this point no definitive decision has been made on the issue, but ACREC sees it as an important task for several reasons:

1. The church first encountered this dilemma when Middle Eastern Presbyterians asked to be recognized as a caucus although technically there was no category for Middle Easterners in the federal category recognized by the church. To resolve this dilemma, the General Assembly made an exception to its official policy and recognized the caucus, but in spite of the action no formal alteration of the policy was ever made.

2. In approving the Creating a Climate for Change within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) report, the 216th General Assembly (2004) essentially broadened the focus of the church's emphasis on diversity from one focused primarily on race to one essentially focused on the broader category of culture. The report is clear to point out that this change does not minimize the problem of race or imply that it has gone away but based on the dynamics of a changing social context broadens the focus of diversity beyond traditional connotations of race.

3. Because the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is overwhelmingly Anglo-American and nondiverse in its style, culture, and outlook, it is important for the church to have a highly recognizable, representative and nonjudgmental term that identifies populations that in the annals of the denomination are underrepresented, underserved, and rarely heard. For many years now some variation of the term "race" has been used for such references; the question now is whether or not there is a more appropriate term that should be used—a term that doesn't have some of the inherent exclusions that "race" as defined by the federal category implies.

Item 09-17

[The assembly approved Item 09-17. See pp. 72, 84.]

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) recommends that unused funds designated for the work of the Status of Women Task Force in 2009 (\$19,345) be re-designated for the work of the Status of Women Task Force through 2012 when their report will be presented to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$19,345; 2012: \$0 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral: *Item 09-12: Resolution to Explore the Study of the Status of Women at All Levels in the PC(USA), Recommendation 1. Create a Task Force to Design a Mechanism for the Study of the Status of Women at All Levels in the Church That Will (a) Assess the Presence, Participation, and Effectiveness of Women at All Levels of the PC(USA), Both Elected and Employed, (b) Explore and Analyze Attitudes About Women in Leadership, and (c) Describe the Treatment of Women in Leadership Positions, Including How They Are Compensated as Compared with Men—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 961–64).*

Funds in the amount of \$19,345 were provided for the work of the Status of Women Task Force in 2009, but went unused due to a delay in beginning work resulting from restructuring within the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) Women's Ministries area. Since the work of the task force was only begun in January of 2010, ACWC recommends that the funds be re-designated to the group in order that it can complete the work assigned it by the 218th General Assembly (2008).

Item 09-18

WITHDRAWN 5-12-10

Item 09-19

[The assembly approved Item 09-19 with amendment. See pp. 72, 84.]

The Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) take the following actions:

1. **Affirm the continuance of the present structure with separate advocacy committees for racial ethnic and women's concerns.**

2. Instruct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), in formal consultation with each of the two advocacy committees, to review and revise the scope of responsibilities of each of the advocacy committees, and on this basis consider how best to provide staff services.

3 Direct that a formal consultation process be used in the hiring of the associate(s) for the advocacy committees similar to the search process used for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy's (ACSWP's) coordinator.

~~[4. Direct the GAMC to amend its policy on closed meetings (GAMC Manual of Operations, Appendix 1) to provide that corresponding members to the GAMC from the advisory and advocacy committees be included in all closed sessions of the GAMC with the understanding that they are bound by confidentiality.]~~

[5.] [4.] Recommend to the three committees reviewed that they investigate the use of alternative strategies including social networking sites, to engage younger people in social justice, advocacy, witness, and policy development work, using such resources as the Office of Communications and Funds Development.

[6.] [5.] Advise the GAMC to identify and encourage additional fundraising opportunities for social witness policy development and advocacy for social justice, such as donations from individual churches, Extra Commitment Opportunities (ECO), and grant funds.

[7.] [6.] Defer the six-year review cycle of these three committees by two years, thus postponing the Advocacy Committee on Women's Concern's (ACWC's) review from 2012 to 2014 due to current the work load and staffing situation. The other two committees' reviews would also be postponed two years each.

[8.] [7.] Recommend that GAMC Executive Director assign staff to be responsible for the dissemination of General Assembly policies and studies developed by the three committees.

[9.] [8.] Instruct the GAMC to meet at least once every two years with the elected leadership of the advocacy committees.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2008 Referral: Item 08-16. That the General Assembly Council Create a Review Committee, with Each Agency Reviewed Having a Voice on the Review Committee, to Review the Service of the Whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Permanent and Advisory Committees as Related to the General Assembly Council by Doing Items 1.-3.—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 23, 24, 709–11).*

Recommendations 1.–3. from Item 08-16 reads as follows:

1. examining the interaction, cooperation between such committees and commissions, as well as their scope and authority;
2. the collective role each contribute complementing and implementing the General Assembly's total mission program or directives; and
3. report findings and recommendations to 219th General Assembly (2010). (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 709)

In response, the General Assembly Mission Council appointed a Review Committee of six members: Elder Doug Megill (Presbytery of Lake Erie), chair; the Reverends Bill Chapman (Presbytery of the Palisades) and Lemuel Garcia (Salem Presbytery); and Elders Charles Easley (Presbytery of Greater Atlanta), Joyce Smith (Scioto Valley Presbytery), and Sylvia Washer (Mission Presbytery). The committees under review sent representatives who also participated in committee work with voice and no vote. Representing the committees were Elder Jean Demmler (Denver Presbytery, ACSWP); the Reverend Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty (Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns [ACWC]); and the Reverend Cynthia Holder Rich (Presbytery of Lake Michigan, ACREC). The review committee received staff support from Curtis Kearns, Mark Koenig, and Alejandra Sherman. [Note: The name of the General Assembly Council was changed to the General Assembly Mission Council in 2009 after the presbyteries ratified the relevant amendment to the *Book of Order*. For clarity, General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) is used throughout this document.]

I. Committee Process

The committee met early in its process, either by conference call or in person, with Linda Valentine, Executive Director, GAMC; Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly; and the leadership teams of each of the committees under review. Subsequently, the committee sent representatives to meet with each of the committees under review; with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) of the GAMC; and with the Executive Committee of the GAMC.

After initial review of the committee's call and other documentation and meetings with key persons, the committee settled on two additional objectives for their work beyond those specified by the 218th General Assembly (2008):

1. To review the level of resources needed for the committees to effectively execute their duties, including funding required for adequate staffing, research and administration, and committee support.
2. To identify ambiguities and incompatibilities in the current organizational structure when encountered and recommend strategies for alleviating these conditions.

Following the compilation of feedback from the three committees and the GAMC, the review committee drafted recommendations and findings in its meeting of December 9–11, 2009. After further revision, this draft was approved by the review committee and circulated for comment in January 2010. After review of the comments received, the review committee adopted its final report by conference call on February 1, 2010, and submitted it to the GAMC for transmittal to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

II. Introduction and Background

The value placed on social witness and advocacy by members of the PC(USA) varies. All of us have read Christ's words recorded in Luke 4:18:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (NRSV)

Yet, we certainly may and do have different understandings of how we follow our Lord in such matters. The PC(USA) has approved this statement in the *Book of Order*, G-3.0300c(3),

- c. The Church is called to be Christ's faithful evangelist ...
 - (3) participating in God's activity in the world through its life for others by
 - (a) healing and reconciling and binding up wounds,
 - (b) ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the powerless,
 - (c) engaging in the struggle to free people from sin, fear, oppression, hunger, and injustice,
 - (d) giving itself and its substance to the service of those who suffer,
 - (e) sharing with Christ in the establishing of his just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world.

The principles of God's sovereignty and service in the public realm are of utmost importance within the Reformed tradition. Organized social witness on this continent by Presbyterians began in 1706 with the foundation of the Presbyterian church. The present structure of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is reasonably dated from 1936. The 205th General Assembly (1993) set up the present structure of one advisory committee (ACSWP) and two advocacy committees (Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns [ACWC] and Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns [ACREC]).

Foundational to the actions taken by the 205th General Assembly (1993) is a document entitled "Vision for Social Policy and Witness—Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness." This vision of the task of social witness for the church takes as its beginning foundation statements from the 1991 "A Brief Statement of Faith." It continues, outlining affirmations of why and how the church makes a social witness and develops a social witness policy, discusses how people of Reformed faith discern the movement of the Spirit, how the church is a community of discernment, and how this discernment happens.

Specifically, discernment of God's call in a Reformed context happens in community. It is undertaken in conversation with God's Word offered to us in Scripture and strives therefore to be faithful to Scripture. This discernment and the making of social witness policy is named as the unavoidable responsibility of covenanted people. The importance of the church's social witness being made from an informed and knowledgeable stance is noted. Therefore, employing the full range of expertise available, including biblical, theological, and ethical scholarship, and including serious study of all relevant documents and resources, is seen as imperative.

The "Vision for Social Policy and Witness—Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness" document particularly calls for the inclusion in the discernment process of the perspectives of those on the margins of society and those who will be most impacted by a social witness. Awareness of past policy documents is also required, as is a faithful stance taken by all who disagree. In fact, disagreement is an expected part of the process, which invites response, dialogue, and communication. There is accountability, to and from those who adopt it, to and from the ministry units that use adopted social witness policy to create programmatic emphases, and to church and society. Social witness policy is understood as evangelical, and should result in mission activity. Finally, the document states that the making of social witness policy is a task undertaken by those called on behalf of the whole church. These affirmations have assisted the committee in understanding the task they have been called to undertake.

III. Findings

This part of the report is in four sections, the first two sections responding to the 218th General Assembly (2008)'s specific charge; and the last two relating to the additional objectives the committee set for its work.

A. *The Distinctive Roles of the Advocacy and Advisory Committees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

The understanding of the Reformed view of social witness outlined in the previous section makes it clear that the church will need to continue social witness until Christ comes again. It is our hope and dream that the advocacy committees may not one day be necessary.

Presently, ACREC faces increasing responsibilities as demographic realities continue to shift in the U.S., with growth of some groups previously called "minorities" and increasing in-migration of new immigrant groups. The recent call at the General Assembly level for discussion of the name of the committee, raising questions about the term "racial ethnic," has sparked conversation on ways of understanding racial and ethnic relationships, new and old, and how these can be transformed in ways that are faithful to the call to share the Good News with all. Growing the church deep and wide in our time requires diverse understandings and methods of evangelism. And, as our society becomes increasingly pluralistic and diverse, legacies of past injustices persist and are combined with new challenges to the justice mandate of our faith. There is no shortage and, indeed, increasing responsibility for ACREC.

The inclusion of women in all levels of ministries in the PC(USA) is something to celebrate. There have been many ecclesial, social, political, and economic advances for women in the United States. However, these advances offer only a partial response to questions of equality and justice for women in the U.S. and around the world. Scratching beneath the surface one finds that women's realities continue to be shaped by expectations created for them that are beyond their control. Pay equity, property ownership, domestic violence, human trafficking, and full representation in the public forum name just a few of the issues related to women's daily lives in the U.S. and around the world. The ACWC has been charged with the task of raising the church's consciousness of these issues and enabling the church to more effectively witness to God's hope for justice for all people in the midst of the realities that women face every day.

The distinction between "advisory" and "advocacy" committees needs to be understood. To quote from the *GAMC Manual of Operations*, an advisory committee is formed "for the purpose of providing advice, recommendations, resources, information or counsel to its parent body." An advocacy committee is formed "for the purpose of providing resources and support for a stated cause, constituency, policy or defined interest through recommendations, advice, counsel and efforts that endorse, define or encourage."

The review committee finds that the advisory and advocacy committees have similar roles but that each has a different focus and emphasis. These committees are not duplicating work being done by other committees currently at work in the church, nor are any of the three committees under review duplicating the work being done by other advocacy or advisory committees. These three committees complement each other effectively and engage in many cooperative projects. This is the basis for the first of our recommendations.

It is important to note that these committees do not establish or implement policy, nor are they called to do so by the mission programs or directives of the General Assembly. The ACSWP has authority to develop policy statements, which are then submitted for review and approval by the General Assembly. The role of the three committees was described during the review committee process as a "prophet to power" relationship, advising the church on social and ethical issues. Most of their work is based on initiatives approved by the General Assembly, some referred from the GAMC and only a small portion on the committees' own initiative (yet the taking of such initiative is explicitly authorized by the *GAMC Manual of Operations*). Nor are these committees programmatic agencies. Their role is to relate to, respond to, monitor, and advise the General Assembly and the GAMC. They interact with online networks; a variety of national, international, and ecumenical organizations; as well as middle governing bodies as part of this work.

The review committee finds that it would be unwise, even counterproductive, to expect these committees to solicit funding for their work. Yet, the GAMC should seek to develop particular funding sources that might mitigate the impact on this work of the general decline in PC(USA) revenue sources.

We find that the three committees are seeking to adapt themselves to the needs of the church and the changing demographics of the PC(USA). Several of our recommendations are intended to encourage and strengthen such adaptations.

B. *The Relationship Between the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and the Advocacy & Advisory Committees*

The review committee found many difficulties and strains in the relationship between the GAMC and the three committees under review. It should be recognized by all that some of these tensions are built-in to the structure. The GAMC has broad responsibilities, the advocacy and advisory committees are more focused. The "prophet to power" analogy is apt. All would affirm the need for working at communication, speaking the truth in love, and strenuous effort in private conversation

before public announcement or criticism. There are areas of significant mutual appreciation in the relationship as well, but for the sake of brevity this report will focus more on problem areas.

Some comments from meetings with the different groups give understanding of the places where strain exists and where appreciation emerges.

- *GAMC Executive Committee (GAMCX)*: The place of justice work in the whole of the mission of the church is one area where there is clearly a difference of opinion between the GAMC leadership and the committees under review. Is justice a primary calling of the church or simply one part of its mission? Secondly, the GAMCX reports frustration with the initiation of studies and projects for these committees beyond that which the GAMC budget planned. The review committee noted a significantly different understanding of who was responsible for the dissemination of the advocacy and advisory committees' work: the particular committee or the GAMC—each thought they were not responsible. *The GAMC acknowledges the need for regular interaction with the advocacy and advisory committees, whether in a joint meeting or regular brief presentations to GAMC meetings on a rotating basis. The GAMC expresses its appreciation to the advocacy and advisory committees for adding an extra layer of focus to understanding the impact of GAMC actions and how they may be perceived.*

- *Executive Leadership Team, GAMC*: Members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) encourage front-end collaboration between the committees under review and the GAMC, and an assumption of the GAMC's goodwill in the relationship by the advocacy and advisory committee membership. The ELT would like to see more engagement of the three committees with middle governing bodies. The three committees were commended for serving with energy, passion, and enthusiasm; for the importance of their collective work; and for the unique perspective they provide on social justice, a perspective that would often not be considered otherwise.

- *ACREC*: Committee members noted that while the GAMC states that they want to nurture the relationship, "constant review is not nurturing." The time that the review process has taken in this term, time that then has not been available for other committee business, is seen as problematic for the committee in its work. This comment generated the review committee's seventh recommendation.

The ACREC shares a hope with the ELT that its collaboration with middle governing bodies and congregations will increase in the future, as the committee works to assist the church in growing in diversity and in cultural competence and sensitivity with the continuing demographic shifts in North American society. Related to this effort, the review committee encourages that the staff persons associated with all three committees coordinate with the associate for Youth Ministries the inclusion of social witness and advocacy and policy development at the Youth Triennium and similar events.

- *ACSWP*: It is important to note that ACSWP is an "advisory" and not an "advocacy" committee, thus differing from the other two committees in this review. Recently ACSWP has had an amicable relationship with the GAMC, perhaps due to the fact that despite the downsizing of the elected GAMC, three members of GAMC still serve on ACSWP. The ACSWP members are open to more assignments from GAMC. The strength of the relationship allows ACSWP's work to be engaged with the program content of mission work, which enables ACSWP to integrate understanding of programmatic concerns when they respond to requests and recommendations from General Assembly. The ACSWP would like to see more visibility of their committee, its work and its members among GAMC members and at GAMC meetings, to strengthen the sense that social witness is central to the whole work of the church. The committee is looking into how social networking sites and other web-based strategies can be used for social justice work and the making of social witness. One notable (though gradual) change is that justice issues are "increasingly international, interracial, and interfaith."

How the church responds in a time of decreasing revenues and membership is a real concern. The crucial nature of the unity of the Gospel and justice can get lost within the life of a church busy with "other things." The review committee calls upon General Assemblies to be accountable when they refer work to ACSWP and the advocacy committees to the reality that studies and development of social witness policy statements take time, research, and funding.

- *ACWC*: The ACWC notes that setting up committees to take on the work of advocacy for social justice is distinctively Reformed, stating that "The church in Reformed tradition has been understood as a community in which God's work is made visible to the world, but it has never been understood as a perfect community." Both of these aspects of the nature of the church have been built into our confessional heritage from the Reformation era and continue to be included in confessional statements to the present day. Members of the ACWC submit that this is why the direct relationship to General Assembly must be maintained. They also offer thanks for the collaboration they have had with GAMC, particularly through their corresponding members. However, they have experienced "a deterioration of the cooperative working relationship between the GAMC and ACWC" in recent years. While both advocacy committees report the loss of their existing staff hindered their work in the last two years, the departure of the ACWC staff person was an involuntary result of a reorganization and thus particularly distressing to the elected ACWC (while the ACREC staff person departed for personal reasons). They are hopeful about the future, though, and offer suggestions that could work toward a stronger relationship. They would like to have the advocacy work of the PC(USA) included in GAMC new member orientation; they call for strengthened communication; and they propose that their new (hopefully) fulltime staff person have access to the ELT for planning and consultation.

The ACWC, like ACREC, requests access to GAMC and the ELT similar to that the GAMC *Manual of Operations* gives to ACSWP. They also ask for participation and consultation in the hiring of staff; and for funding adequate to their needs. They hope to develop new avenues for dissemination of the work of the committee, utilizing Presbyterian Women and the agencies of the General Assembly.

The GAMC *Manual of Operations* gives the responsibility for distribution of policies as follows: [The committees should] “provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret [the social witness policies of the General Assembly and/or General Assembly policies on racial ethnic or women’s concerns].” The review committee finds that social witness policies and studies are approved by the General Assembly. This would be tasked to the GAMC, as reflected in our eighth recommendation.

Another issue identified as a concern of the advocacy committees is the issue of attendance of their representatives at closed meetings of the GAMC. The General Assembly Open Meeting Policy allows General Assembly entities like the GAMC to go into closed session for any of four reasons: property negotiation, personnel, litigation, and security. Corresponding members need not be included in closed sessions according to the General Assembly Open Meeting Policy. There are fifteen corresponding members of the GAMC, each of the three committees subject to this review is entitled to send their chair to the GAMC meetings as a corresponding member. For the other corresponding members, see the GAMC *Manual of Operations*. In the spring of 2006, corresponding members were excluded from GAMC budget deliberations on personnel reductions. The advocacy committees protested that their exclusion from those sessions adversely impacted their ability to perform their monitoring function. After the 2006 budget meeting, the GAMC revised its policy to allow the attendance of all corresponding members at closed meetings. But then in 2009, the GAMC reverted to the previous policy of not automatically including corresponding members in closed meetings. However, they can be invited in on any particular closed meeting, and in fact they have not yet been excluded since the 2009 policy change. The review committee finds that the monitoring function of the advocacy committees and ACSWP justifies their attendance at all closed meetings of the GAMC. Those who represent these three committees must adhere to the confidentiality requirements of closed sessions. This is the basis of our fourth recommendation.

C. *Resources Needed for the Committees to Do Their Work*

The provision of sufficient resources to support the work of these committees was the most difficult question the review committee sought to address. In the current funding pattern, the expense of the elected committees is funded by per capita offerings and the cost of paid staffing is funded by mission dollars. The review committee was well-informed of the anticipated declines in both sources of revenue, but the pattern continues to be a sensible one in terms of our polity and we believe it should be continued.

The advocacy committees perceive that there was a reduction in the staff budgeted for ACWC and ACREC from each having a full-time person to a half-time position each in the fall of 2008. The ELT would note that prior to that redesign those two individuals had programmatic responsibilities beyond their committee tasks. But the advocacy committees strongly feel their staffing was reduced. The ACSWP did not see such a reduction in 2008. Presently, ACSWP has three full-time staff persons, down from four in 2006, though ACSWP has also seen non-personnel budget cuts. We concur with both ACWC and ACREC that the current GAMC plan of funding one person who serves both committees half-time calls for a combination of talents and experience unlikely to be found in a single individual. Both advocacy committees presented a strong case for the need a full-time staff person for each committee. We concur with ACREC that their workload is increasing, as ACREC tries to deal with the increasing number of constituencies and emerging groups in the church and arising on the margins of the church that do not currently have representation at the ACREC table. In a similar way, ACWC’s work related to intersections of race and gender and the economic circumstances of women is also increasing. There is historical and present-day support for the concern that justice issues are particularly vulnerable to marginalization when budgets are tight and revenues are decreasing. The assigned work of the committees takes significant research and time in writing. Staff with gifts and training in these areas are needed to assist the elected members to efficiently and effectively complete the work they are assigned. The lament that the PC(USA) is asking these committees to “make bricks without straw” has validity.

The review committee debated its responsibility to the church in this regard. There was unanimity that we ought to uphold the PC(USA)’s continued commitment to justice and social witness. All of us recognize the financial trend lines of church revenue. It was noted that the call of the 218th General Assembly (2008) in commissioning this review did not charge us with taking into account the financial implications of this work. Ultimately, the decision-making involved in developing a budget for the overall work of the church means making priority judgments that go beyond the scope of reviewing three particular committees. Therefore, the review committee considered but declined to make an explicit recommendation that ACWC and ACREC each have a full-time staff person. We would affirm the call of the GAMC Executive Committee that all concerned need to “develop a better partnership in meeting the new realities that are confronting us.” Our conclusion is reflected in our second recommendation.

D. *Identified Ambiguities and Incompatibilities*

This section of the report notes issues the review committee finds need action to alleviate problems.

1. The three committees under review differ in access to the GAMC. The *GAMC Manual of Operations* calls for an annual meeting between ACSWP and the GAMC leadership but no such provision is made for the advocacy committees. Moreover, such a GAMC-ACSWP meeting has not taken place for some years, though one was scheduled for February 2010. Our final recommendation calls for similar forums to involve the advocacy committees as well.

2. The issue of staff hiring, oversight, and termination procedures was a major focus of the review. All groups interviewed noted this as an area of conflict. The GAMC Executive Committee and the ELT emphasized the responsibility lying with the Executive Director for this, while the committees under review emphasized their expectation of *mutually recognized* consultation about hiring and oversight, which they perceive as not being accorded them in recent staffing decisions. Shared understanding of this issue is needful to move into the future in a positive and faithful way. The review committee makes its third recommendation in support of this, while acknowledging the limitations on this for matters of oversight and termination.

3. Some of our interviews indicate misunderstanding of the assigned duties of the advocacy and advisory committees. Issues raised that are not included on the assigned duties include evangelism and new church development, in addition to the dissemination issue addressed above. Evangelism is certainly part of our common responsibility as church members; the review committee does not recommend making it a specific responsibility of the advocacy and advisory committees.

IV. Final Comments

The review committee was unanimous in its praise for the commitment of the elected members of the advisory and advocacy committees, their knowledge on a wide range of issues before the church, and the passion and energy with which they work for justice.

We also were well-received and assisted by both elected and staff members of the GAMC; as well as staff we consulted in the Office of the General Assembly. The church is well-served by these individuals as well.

Thanks are offered to God for each of these faithful servants.

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

FUNCTIONS	ACSWP	ACREC	ACWC
Prepare policy documents	<p>Explicit in two assigned tasks. Prepare policy statements, resolutions, study papers, social involvement reports, or Advice and Counsel Memoranda on the church’s social witness for study and recommendation to the GA at the request of the GA, the GAMC, or on its own initiative.</p> <p>Prepare special studies at the request of the GA, the GAMC, or its ministries on matters of social witness.</p>	<p>Explicit assigned task with regard to racial concerns. Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and Advice and Counsel Memoranda on racial concerns to the GA at the request of the GA, the GAMC, or on its own initiative</p>	<p>Explicit assigned task with regard to women’s concerns—Prepare policy statements, resolutions, reports, recommendations, and Advice and Counsel Memoranda on women’s concerns to the GA at the request of the GA, the GAMC, or on its own initiative</p>
Advise General Assembly (GA) and General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC)	<p>Explicit in two assigned tasks—Advise GAMC on matters of social witness policy or strategy, including interim statements concerning pressing social issues, the council may wish to consider between meetings of the GA. Facilitate two-way communication with all parties throughout policy development and advisory processes.</p> <p>Provide advice and counsel to the GA and its representative committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the GA that recommend policy direction or action on social witness.</p>	<p>Explicit in two assigned tasks—Advise GAMC on matters of racial ethnic concerns, including statements concerning pressing issues, the council may wish to consider between meetings of the GA.</p> <p>Provide advice and counsel to the GA and its representative committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the GA that impact issues of racial ethnic concern.</p>	<p>Explicit in two assigned tasks—Advise GAMC on matters of women’s concerns, including statements concerning pressing issues, the council may wish to consider between meetings of the GA.</p> <p>Provide advice and counsel to the GA and its representative committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the GA that impact women’s concerns.</p>
Maintain social policy compilation	<p>Maintain an up-to-date and accurate Social Policy Compilation of GA social witness policy and provide information to the church as requested.</p>	<p>ACREC assigned to assist ACSWP with regard to racial ethnic policies.</p>	<p>ACWC assigned to assist ACSWP with regard to policy on women’s concerns.</p>
Monitor policy implementation	<p>Assigned as a joint task with other bodies—Work cooperatively with all governing bodies in coordinating the interdependent process of social policy formation, implementation, and monitoring.</p> <p>Identify facets of the church’s social witness that enable or obstruct effective action. Analyze, in cooperation with the GA ministries, the effectiveness of social witness in governing bodies, institutions, and the GAMC.</p>	<p>Assigned exclusively to ACREC—Monitor the implementation of racial justice policies and programs relative to racial ethnic concerns.</p>	<p>Assigned exclusively to ACWC—Monitor the implementation of women’s policies and programs relative to women’s concerns.</p>
Advocacy	<p>The term “advocacy” is not used in the assigned ACSWP functions. The second half of the task of analysis of effectiveness of social witness has the element of advocacy. After consulting entities with primary ministry responsibility and the GAMC, report to the GA on the advisory committee’s findings, together with recommendations for improving social witness.</p>	<p>Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of racial ethnic concern.</p>	<p>Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women’s concerns.</p>
Provide Information (Similar function across committees with differentiation of information content.)	<p>Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the GA, and the Executive Director of the GAMC with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret the social witness policies of the GA.</p>	<p>Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the GA, and the Executive Director of the GAMC with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret GA policies on racial ethnic concerns.</p>	<p>Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the GA, and the Executive Director of the GAMC with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret GA policies on women’s concerns.</p>

(*) Source: GAMC *Manual of Operations*

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-19

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-19—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Item 09-19 deals with the report of the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with the recommendations of this report and urges the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve all nine recommendations presented by the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee Report without amendment.

Rationale

The report reflects the faithful work of the review committee, for which ACWC wishes to thank each member of the committee.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 09-19

Comment on Item 09-19—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

Recommendation 8

The General Assembly Mission Council shares this concern for the distribution of General Assembly policies and studies developed by the three committees, and will look for ways of addressing the concern within the context of existing resources. The GAMC will encourage program area and ministries to communicate policy information in their interpretive materials, include interpretation of policy information in workshops and conferences, and use the Web site more effectively for this purpose. The upgraded PC(USA) Web site provides both a more comprehensive and useable place to find information, and increased interactive features that can facilitate communication, distribution, and engagement with matters of church policy.

Recommendation 4

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) suggests that to amend the *GAMC Manual of Operations* in the manner directed by this recommendation would eliminate the ability for members elected by the General Assembly to discuss appropriate matters in closed sessions. Members elected by the General Assembly have the ultimate responsibility for decision making for the council. The General Assembly Mission Council requests that the General Assembly retain a means for these members to restrict their discussion to other elected members, should the subject matter require that degree of sensitivity, in accordance with the General Assembly’s Open Meeting Policy.

The General Assembly Mission Council has two categories of members: voting and non-voting. Voting members include those who have been elected by the General Assembly for service on the council, and four ex-officio members (the current and previous Moderators of the General Assembly, and a representative from both the Presbyterian Women and Presbyterian Men organizations). Non-voting members include corresponding members, ecumenical advisory members, and at-large members of the Audit and Stewardship committees, elected by the General Assembly.

Corresponding members are representatives from the five other General Assembly agencies and their senior executive, a representative of the Committee on Theological Education, the chairpersons from the Advisory and Advocacy Committees, and the GAMC Executive Director.

In March 2009, the GAMC voted to revise its *Manual of Operations* to allow the council the ability to have closed meetings, within the parameters of the General Assembly’s Open Meeting policy, limited to voting members and at-large members of Stewardship and Audit Committees, so that these sensitive matters involving property negotiation, personnel, civil and criminal litigation, or security, could be discussed, if necessary, within the context of members elected by the General Assembly.

The GAMC retained the ability to invite non-voting members into these discussions if needed.

As of April 2010, since amending the *Manual of Operations* in March 2009, the GAMC has only had one closed session limited to members elected by the General Assembly. This session was focused on the third year performance review of the GAMC Executive Director. The council felt that it was appropriate to discuss this personnel matter without the presence of corresponding members, (which would have included the staff colleagues of the executive director from the other five GA agencies, as well as the GAMC Executive Director.)

The GAMC values the work of these committees, and has commissioned several of its own members to serve as members of the Advisory and Advocacy Committees (three GAMC members serve on ACSWP, one serves on ACWC, and one

serves on ACREC). Even though there might be meetings in the future that do not include corresponding members, the GAMC would have the benefit of the perspective of the advisory and advocacy committees through these members of the GAMC who also serve on those committees, and could, if needed, vote to allow corresponding members in closed sessions.

Because the council seeks to preserve the capacity for conversations limited to members elected by the General Assembly, on sensitive matters, it encourages the 219th General Assembly (2010) not to approve this recommendation.

Item 09-20

[The assembly approved 09-20 with amendment. See pp. 72, 84–85.]

On Supporting Young Adults in Mission and Leadership Development in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the Presbytery de Cristo.

The Presbytery de Cristo overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the General Assembly Mission Council to provide budgetary support in the amount of [\$100,000 (\$50,000 for 2011 and \$50,000 for 2012) for scholarships for] [\$10,000 for each] Young Adult Volunteer[s], above and beyond currently budgeted support for the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program, for the costs of their service internationally and nationally through the Young Adult Volunteer Program (YAV) of the World Mission Office. These funds would help cover the cost of living expenses for [each] YAVs, which include housing and utilities, health insurance, and stipends for food and local transportation. (YAVs would continue to raise support for their year of service at a lesser, more attainable amount.)

~~[This request for funds is for up to 100 volunteers per year, not to exceed \$1,000,000 total per YAV calendar term (August–August). The GAMC should review and evaluate this funding mandate every second General Assembly year (every fourth year).~~

[Site coordinators should be treated as mission coworkers and GAMC should invite presbyteries to financially support them.]

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$50,000; 2012: \$50,000 (GAMC)]

Rationale

The Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) Program has both national and international components as part of World Mission, engaging in mission in the United States as well as expanding the opportunities congregations and individual members have to connect with World Mission partners in other countries.

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) has approved a Presbyterian World Mission Strategic Direction with the four directional goals of:

- communities of mission practice,
- faithful and effective mission,
- strategic engagement in critical global issues, and
- achieving organizational excellence.

The YAV Program already practices these directional goals through its existing program.

The report “Raising Leaders” developed by the Joint Committee on Leadership Needs for the Presbyterian church raised up the following goals for the development of young leaders—are all hallmarks of the YAV Program, with demonstrable results in each of these areas:

- cultivate missional leadership formation;
- stimulate character formation;
- form people in discipleship, spiritual disciplines, and missional practice;
- teach awareness of church systems, how they are formed, and how to cultivate change within them;
- imagine new forms of engaging our communities;
- prepare evangelists as new church development pastors and for other community-based ministries;

- develop cultural awareness, sensitivity, and intercultural competence;
- increase Biblical knowledge, literacy, and understanding; and
- shape creative worship leaders.

The YAV program aligns with the emerging Priorities for Mission being developed by the leadership within the World Mission Office as they

- work with youth and young adults,
- participate in leadership development,
- focus on particular global issues, and
- on mission that connects world mission partners with local and regional missions within the U.S.

Young Adult Volunteers already serve in ministries and churches engaged in mission practice and with World Mission partners overseas and in the United States.

Most YAVs go on to vocational ministry and leadership, and approximately one third go on to attend Presbyterian seminaries.

The Young Adult Volunteer Program teaches and develops leaders through the support and guidance of local mission co-workers and site coordinators versed in the local mission field and versed in the mission culture. It embraces a global perspective through both our international placements and the cross-cultural ministries with which our national placements are engaged.

National and local funds which traditionally support the YAV Program are no longer available and the sustainability of our ministries are at risk. At the same time, volunteerism is on the rise, as is competition for top candidates for service. The YAV program cannot keep pace with competitors for volunteers at current funding levels, yet it has been identified as a “High Priority” program. We believe sustainable funding is appropriate.

At its inception in 1994, the Young Adult Volunteer program was charged, “... to identify, assess, recruit, prepare, and deploy a large number of Presbyterians for service and learning experiences in cross-cultural, cross-economic settings; ... [t]o assist individuals and congregations to understand our cultural captivity as U.S. Christians... [,] to empower a new generation of Christian leadership for the church and for the world ... and to evangelize and revitalize congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 214, citations from *A Proposal to the General Assembly Council for Volunteers in Shared Ministry*). “... [And to] be the vanguard of an undertaking aimed at nothing less than changing the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 214).

GAMC COMMENT ON 09-20

Comment on 09-20—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) is very appreciative to the Presbytery de Cristo for its support of the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program. Item 09-20, as proposed by Presbytery de Cristo has a significant financial impact: one million dollars in 2011 and again in 2012.

If approved by the General Assembly, this overture would require the elimination of multiple programs within the GAMC mission budget. The GAMC requests that the GA disapprove Item 09-20 and respond to this request by drawing attention to the church-wide giving opportunities already in place to support the YAV program.

Rationale

The YAV program began in 1994 with goals “to identify, assess, recruit, prepare, and deploy a large number of Presbyterians for service and learning experiences in cross-cultural, cross-economic settings ... To assist individuals and congregations to understand our cultural captivity as U.S. citizens... to empower a new generation of Christian leadership for the church and for the world ... and to evangelize and revitalize congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ...” for “... as many as one hundred young adults [to] be introduced to the 206th General Assembly—the vanguard of an undertaking aimed at nothing less than changing the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)...” (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 214).

More than one thousand Young Adult Volunteers have joined in national and international service and learning during the past sixteen years. As these young adults continue to mature and respond to God’s call for faithfulness and transforma-

tion, many become church and community leaders, committed to the missional values learned and practiced during their time as YAVs.

There are currently six national YAV sites in cities around the U.S. and six international sites with global partners in other countries. YAVs serve for one year with a commitment to spiritual growth, simple living, mission service and learning, vocational discernment, and leadership development.

The YAV program is currently funded through a combination of unrestricted contributions, endowments, 25 percent of the Pentecost Offering, grants from presbyteries and participating community agencies within the U.S., and fund raising on the part of YAV participants.

In a very real sense, the more that Presbyterians give, the more Young Adult Volunteers the General Assembly Mission Council will be able to support. An extra commitment opportunity account is available for support: #E049075. Funds given through this account are used for programmatic site support or to directly support young adult volunteers through reimbursement of outstanding student loans, housing and food allowance, and/or a travel subsidy. The YAV program needs the support of the whole church to expand this important ministry. The GAMC requests that the General Assembly respond to this overture by drawing attention to these giving opportunities.

Item 09-21

Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church

A. *Relating to Budgets for General Assembly Mission Program*

[The assembly approved Item 09-21, Recommendation A.1. See pp. 71, 81.]

1. **Presbyterian Mission Program—General Assembly Mission Program Receipts and Expenditures Actual Compared to Budget for 2008 and 2009.**

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) incorporate into the Minutes the report of the General Assembly Mission Program Receipts and Expenditures Actual Compared to Budget for 2008 and 2009.

[The display that is found in gamc-budget-charts-A-1.pdf is the report of actual revenue and expenditures for the years 2008 and 2009. See pp 706–09.]

Rationale

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted policy governing Mission Budgets at the General Assembly level. That policy provides that:

- B. The General Assembly Council shall:
 - 1. Report to each General Assembly:
 - a. Actual total financial resources used to support the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program and the expenditures during the most recently completed year. (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 375)

2. **Presbyterian Mission Program—General Assembly Mission Budget and Program 2011 and 2012.**

[The assembly approved Item 09-21, Recommendation 2, with amendment. See pp. 80, 85.]

[Upon the recommendation of] [F][t]he General Assembly Mission Council[, the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination now] recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the 2011 General Assembly Mission Budget and Program in the total amount of \$82,097,234 and the 2012 General Assembly Mission Budget and Program in the total amount of \$80,550,613.

[The charts that are found in gamc-budget-charts-A-2.pdf show the 2011 and 2012 General Assembly Mission Budget and Program. See pp. 710–13.]

[As a result of prudent and careful review, the cost of General Assembly actions approved to the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program are as follows:]

[2010 Budget \$52,087

[2011 Budget \$295,861

[2012 Budget \$207,683

[The detail of the Financial Implication report can be found in the Plenary folder in PC-Biz under 00-FI.]

[The Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination further recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the General Assembly Mission Council to make the adjustments necessary to incorporate into the General Assembly Mission budgets for 2010, 2011 and 2012 the items with financial implications that have been approved by the 219th General Assembly. The necessary adjustments may include identifying additional sources of revenue, redirecting existing budget; or a combination of both.]

Rationale

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted Policy Governing Mission Budgets at the General Assembly Level. That policy provides that:

- B. The General Assembly Council shall:
3. Recommend to the General Assembly the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program for the next succeeding budget cycle. Displayed in the recommendation shall be:
 - a. All projected financial sources; and
 - b. Anticipated uses of financial resources in light of mission objectives.

The General Assembly Council is required by the Constitution to “prepare and submit a comprehensive budget to the General Assembly” (*Book of Order*, G-13.0202f).

B. Relating to Reserved or Committed Funds

[The assembly approved Item 09-21, Recommendation B. See pp. 71, 81.]

Unrestricted and Committed Funds

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) receive the report of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation regarding unrestricted and committed funds as of December 31, 2009.

[The charts that are found in gamc-budget-charts-B.pdf show the Unrestricted and Committed Funds. See pp. 714–18.]

Rationale

The report of the unrestricted funds is divided between uncommitted and committed funds. The following file, gamc-budget-charts-B.pdf, indicates those funds as well as the activity of those funds and the status of the total reserves as of closing December 31, 2009. The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted the following policy:

- A. Presbyterian Mission Program Fund
1. A fund composed of all unrestricted and uncommitted receipts and assets intended for the support of the General Assembly mission program.
 2. Sources to maintain this fund shall include all unified revenue available for the General Assembly Mission Program, including but not limited to:
 - a. unified income including receipts from congregations, presbyteries, or individuals;
 - b. unrestricted gifts, legacies, bequests
 - c. unrestricted investment income;
 - d. gift annuity excess reserves;
 - e. such nonrecurring income as the General Assembly Council shall direct by general or specific policy statement; and
 - f. under expenditure of the unified portion of the General Assembly Mission Budget.
 3. The Uncommitted Funds portion of the Presbyterian Mission Program Fund at year end must be equal to at least 30% of the Unified portion and direct mission support of the General Assembly Mission Budget, which minimum provides for:
 - a. Cash flow needed for mission purposes;
 - b. Guarantee of the current unified budget.”

C. *Relating to Support for General Assembly Mission*

[The assembly approved Item 09-21, Recommendation C.1. See pp. 71, 81.]

1. *John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds*

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) allocate the annual income realized in 2009 and projected for 2010 from the John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds in support of the budget for the general mission work of the General Assembly.

Rationale

Current practice is to recommend to each General Assembly the allocation of annual income from these two funds in light of wording in the donors' wills that requires this annual process.

Portion of the will of Edmund P. Dwight (May 23, 1903):

I will and bequeath to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, to be used for the establishment of the Christian Religion, that the light of the gospel may be made to join more perfectly...

Portion of the will of John C. Lord (January 2, 1873):

...to the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., for religious and charitable uses, to be called the John C. Lord Fund, the annual interest of which is to be disposed of and distributed by the said General Assembly at each annual meeting for the furtherance of the Gospel of our Blessed Saviour, at home or abroad, as the Assembly may deem best....

The applicable provisions of the two wills facilitate the annual income realized from these funds to be used in the General Assembly's General Mission Budget.

Income from these funds in 2009 was \$29,811.78 and it is projected that the income from these funds in 2010 will be approximately \$30,790.54.

[The assembly approved Item 09-21, Recommendation C.2. See pp. 71, 81.]

2. *Special Offerings 2009*

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) incorporate into its *Minutes* the following summary of receipts from Special Offerings for the years 2008 and 2009.

[The charts that are found in gamc-special-offerings-C-2.pdf show the summary of receipts for Special Offerings for the years 2008 and 2009. See p. 719.]

Rationale

Special Offerings enable an important part of the General Assembly Mission Program. In 2008, income from these offerings totaled approximately 21 percent of total income for the mission program of the church and 33.1 percent of the mission gifts from congregations. In 2009, income from these offerings totaled approximately 23 percent of total income for the mission program of the church and 34.8 percent of the mission gifts from congregations.

Item 09-Info**A. *Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel (PCCMP) 2008–2010 Report***

The PCCMP has been extraordinarily active in its support of chaplains since the 217th General Assembly (2006). Our chaplains have been deployed to warzones up to four times. At least two have been wounded. Several have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnoses. Chaplains, their families, and their congregations have served well and are strained and tired from this long war. Ever since 9-11, reserves and National Guard have been mobilized in large numbers. That continues today with at least forty-one reserve and National Guard chaplains mobilized from 2008 to 2010. We have been in near constant contact with most of them—assisting in their entry in the active military; speaking with their families, churches, and presbyteries; helping explain pension and United Services Employment Re-Employment Rights Act (USERRA) rights; and providing support when they returned from the military. With many forces deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Djibouti, and the region, the tempo of reserve component utilization may remain high for years. Disasters like the Haiti earthquake, New Orleans hurricane, and Samoan tsunami have only added to the call for military assistance. We've enjoyed assisting individuals, churches, presbyteries, and General Assembly offices in supporting deployed military members and chaplains. We've been gratified to see prayers offered, care packages sent, and chaplains "adopted" by churches.

Approximately fifty-eight of our active duty chaplains were deployed into Southwest Asia for actions regarding Iraq and Afghanistan from 2008 to 2010. Many are still deployed. Our military chaplains suffer the same hardships as other military; their ministry is often in harm's way. Some of them are quite exhausted after a war tour; some have symptoms of post-traumatic stress. We seek to be with them and find appropriate support. We hold annual retreats for chaplains attended by 60–110 chaplains and family members. We were at funerals for several retired chaplains. We look forward to contacts after chaplains redeploy and are reunited with their families.

The PCCMP has two core functions:

- The ecclesial duty of endorsement of clergy for service in the military and Veterans Administration (VA) chaplaincies.
- The pastoral function of supporting those same clergy during their time of service.

Over the past two years, we approved eleven persons for military chaplain candidate (seminarian) programs. We endorsed twenty-two people for the Army, Navy, and Air Force; some are in the reserves while others went immediately to active duty chaplaincy. We endorsed twelve people for the Veterans Administration (VA) chaplaincy and three people for the Civil Air Patrol (Air Force Auxiliary). Each approval or endorsement requires a collection of applications, transcripts, presbytery approval, and letters of reference. After the documents are gathered, we interview the candidates.

Our current data on chaplains by denomination is below. We provide endorsement and support to 47 seminarians and 341 clergy. Eighteen of the active duty personnel are female as are two of our VA chaplains. Most of our presbyteries have participants in one or more of the chaplaincy programs.

	Chaplain Candidate	Reserve/ Guard*	Active Military	Full Time VA	Part Time VA	Civil Air Patrol
PCUSA	42	107	109	17	46	31
Associate Reformed	5	4	12	1		2
Cumberland	1	3	10	2	1	3
Cumberland in America			1			
TOTALS	<u>48</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>132</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>36</u>

*Of these Reserve/Guard, 28 are currently mobilized

We attended General Assemblies or General Synod for all of our denominations. The chaplain ministry is well-received and supported by each denomination. Because of our covenant relationship, we also participate in the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) of the PC(USA) without vote. We will host our annual meeting in November 2010.

The ongoing pastoral care for chaplains is an extension of what presbyteries do through committees on ministry. We expect our chaplains to maintain a sound relationship with the PCCMP and their presbytery. We seek to keep a semiannual written contact with each active duty chaplain. We augment that contact with e-mail and telephone. We also make personal contact with each chaplain at least every other year with a visit to their duty station or a meeting at a gathering of chaplains. We also respond very quickly when chaplains and families are in crisis. We work hard to serve chaplains who are changing commands, moving from the U.S.A. overseas or the reverse. Quite a few stop by the office in the District of Columbia while in a move or when in Washington for military duty. The PCCMP also hosts an annual retreat for chaplains and their families; this facilitates networking and mutual support for our Presbyterian clergy who are often isolated from other Presbyterian contact.

The PCCMP works to interpret its mission and needs to the church. We had good support from the *Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church* (ARP) magazine, the *Cumberland*, *Presbyterians Today*, *Horizons*, and the Presbyterian News Service to explain what chaplains do. We've also been published in several seminary publications, the *Outlook*, and the *Layman*. We made visits to nine seminaries these past two years and to many presbyteries to interpret the chaplain story and PCCMP mission.

The PCCMP also maintains sound working relations with the chiefs of Chaplains offices for each branch of the military and the VA. It offers leadership in the Military Chaplain Association, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), and the Endorsers Council for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy (ECVAC). The NCMAF is the advisory body on religion to the secretary of defense.

Keeping the ministry vital with adequate funding has been difficult. We have redoubled our development efforts, using several regional volunteer assistants. We have also found a new fund source in the Combined Federal Campaign. However, the bedrock of our financial health remains with the PC(USA). We are most appreciative of our restored covenant relation-

ship (renewed in 2008) and the inherent financial support of this ministry and function of the church. We greatly appreciate the PC(USA) telling the story of chaplains and the PCCMP on their webpage and in mailings.

Anyone wishing more information can check at our website: www.pccmp.org or call our office in Washington D.C., 202-244-4177. We will also gladly mail a DVD showing our chaplains and agency at work with the military. It is very helpful to those contemplating military chaplaincy as a call and for churches including the PCCMP in their mission budgets.

Yours in Christ's Service,

Edward T. Brogan, Director
Chaplain, Colonel, USAF (Ret.)
Phone (202)244-4177
Fax: (202)237-0983
Web: www.pccmp.org

B. Report of the General Assembly Mission Council on Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees

As instructed by the 204th General Assembly (1992), the General Assembly Mission Council presents to the General Assembly annually, the work of all task forces, work groups, ad hoc committees, and similar bodies established by the General Assembly Mission Council, its divisions, or other assembly entities (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, pp. 144, 147, 277–78).

All ministries and the Executive Director's Office were requested to disclose information on how many task forces, work groups, ad hoc committees, and similar bodies were currently at work in their entity. Of the entities responding, sixty-five such groups are currently operating. Fifty-four of the groups were reported as having ongoing responsibilities. The other eleven groups have set completion dates with a written report expected by the entity, the General Assembly Mission Council, or the General Assembly itself. Whenever it is possible, the General Assembly Mission Council assigns tasks to an existing part of its structure. All persons serving on a board, committee, task force, or work group with an expected life of more than two years are selected through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process.

1. *Evangelism & Church Growth*

- a. Youth Task Force—Ends with 219th General Assembly (2010).
- b. Ongoing responsibilities: Mission Development Resource Committee, Ghost Ranch Governing Board, Stony Point Center Governing Board, Mountain Retreat Association Board of Trustees of Stock (Montreat).

2. *Compassion, Peace & Justice*

- a. General Assembly Mission Council/General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations Engagement Process Team—Ends with 219th General Assembly (2010).
- b. Ongoing responsibilities: Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee.

3. *Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women*

Ongoing responsibilities: National Asian Presbyterian Council, National Black Presbyterian Caucus, Native American Consulting Committee, National Hispanic Presbyterian Caucus, National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus, National Cross Caucus, African American Advisory Committee, Hispanic Advisory Committee, Native American Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee on Southeast Asian Ministries, Coordinating Committee on Korean American Presbyteries, National Korean Presbyterian Council, Association of Hispanic Presbyterian Administrators, Native American Task Force on Native American Ministries, Native American Presbyterian Women, Native American Indian Youth Council, Native American Young Adults, National Asian Youth Council, National Cambodian Presbyterian Council, Chinese Presbyterian Council, National Filipino Presbyterian Council, National Taiwanese Presbyterian Council, National Thai Presbyterian Council, National Vietnamese Presbyterian Council, Advisory Committee for Middle Eastern Ministries, Advisory Committee for New Immigrant Groups, Portuguese Language Coordinating Committee, South Asian/Pakistani Advisory Committee, African Immigrant Pastor/Spouse Association, Secondary School Roundtable, Presidents Roundtable, National Hispanic/Latino Presbyterian Men's Organization, National Hispanic/Latino Presbyterian Women's Organization, National Hispanic/Latino Presbyterian Youth & Young Adult Organization, Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Committee, Coordinating Committee of the National Network of Presbyterian College Women, Coordinating Committee of Racial Ethnic Young Women Together.

4. *Theology Worship & Education*

Ongoing responsibilities: Committee on Theological Education.

5. *World Mission*

Ongoing responsibility: Human Trafficking Work Group, Media Security Task Force, U.S. Advisory Committee/Jinshian Memorial Program.

6. *Vocation*

Ongoing responsibility: Educator Certification Council.

7. *Executive Director's Office*

a.(1) Advisory and Advocacy Committee Review Committee—ends with 219th General Assembly (2010)

(2) On-going responsibility: General Assembly Mission Council/Middle Governing Body Meeting Planning Team—September 2010. This is a short-term team that is established each year to plan for one meeting.

b. *Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy*

(1) Teams and Work Groups:

(1) Gun Violence Resolution Team—Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

(2) HIV/AIDS Resolution Team—Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

(3) Public Education Resolution Team—Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

(4) Theology of Compensation Update Resolution/Study Team—Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

(5) Human Rights Work Group—Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

(6) Nature and Value of Human Life Work Group—Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

(7) Economic Crisis Resolution Team (also following up Just Globalization Study Guide preparation)—Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

(2) Ongoing responsibilities: Theological Educators for Presbyterian Social Witness (TEPSW)—annual conference with ongoing exchange of papers among seminary ethics professors and other ACSWP consultants; Colloquium on Policy Interpretation related to peacemaking, often co-sponsored with Peacemaking Program.

c. *Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns:*

Status of Women Task Force—Report to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

C. *Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Report of Progress for 2008–2009*

1. *Introduction*

Out of the various “calls” to mission, justice, equality, affirmation, love, hope, and charity, the partnership of congregations and governing bodies works to achieve the goals of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.

2. *Our Goals*

As outlined in the Churchwide Plan for Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity, approved by the General Assembly in 1985, the church has accepted the EEO goals of 40 percent women and 20 percent racial ethnic as established by the General Assembly Mission Council.

3. *How the Information Is Reported*

Entities of the General Assembly are reported separately as well as jointly. The following categories are reported:

- General Assembly Mission Council PC(USA);
- Office of the General Assembly (OGA);

- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Board of Pensions (BOP);
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (FDN);
- Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC);
- Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, Inc. (PILP);
- synods;
- presbyteries;
- theological institutions;
- conference centers
- Jarvie Commonweal Service
- Hubbard Press

4. *Our Results*

For 2008 and 2009, all reporting entities met the 40 percent goal for women. General Assembly Mission Council, Office of the General Assembly, conference centers, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (FDN), theological institutions, Jarvie Commonweal Service and synods met the 20 percent goal of racial ethnic persons. Churchwide totals met the 40 percent goal for women and the 20 percent goals for racial ethnic persons.

*2009 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis
Prepared by Research Services, A Ministry of the General Assembly Mission Council*

A. *Overview*

By action of the 197th General Assembly (1985), the General Assembly Mission Council is required to report annually the equal opportunity information of all PC(USA) agencies, theological institutions, presbyteries, and synods.

At the request of the Office of Human Resources, Research Services handled the collection of data for the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis for 2009. Based on the success of Web-based data collection for previous years (2005 through 2008 were handled by Research Services), we followed similar procedures.

A Web-based data collection instrument was developed, tested, and deployed by Research Services. A point of contact in each organization or entity was invited by email to provide data for the organization. (The original invitation is included here as Attachment A.) Initial e-mail invitations were sent January 20, 2010. Two reminder e-mails were sent to all non-responding organizations on January 28 and February 3, 2009. Responses were accepted until February 19, 2010.

B. *Invited Organizations*

The following agencies and organizations were requested to provide their workforce analysis data: Board of Pensions, General Assembly Mission Council, Hubbard Press, Jarvie Commonweal Service, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment & Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, Office of the General Assembly, and all conference centers, theological institutions, presbyteries, and synods associated with the PC(USA).

C. *Response Rate*

Of 211 invited organizations, complete data were received from 144 organizations, for a response rate of 68 percent of all organizations. However, seven e-mail invitations were returned as bad e-mail addresses for which we could not find new e-mail addresses. This means EEO/AA data was provided by 70 percent of organizations to which e-mail invitations were delivered. Attachment B shows organizations that provided complete data. Of responding organizations, a majority (60 percent) used the Web form, and 40 percent (or 58) submitted hard copy by fax, e-mail, or interoffice mail.

D. *Results*

Attachment C shows the results for responding organizations and presents the percentages of employees by gender and racial ethnic category.

E. *Recommendations for the Future*

The changes and improvements put in place in recent years limited many of the problems that occurred previously. This year we received few calls from organizational representatives asking questions about the terms used on the form. Further, the ability to bypass the Web-based survey and fax the required information was something that quite a number found helpful.

Requesting this information in January seems to be more effective than doing so in December. This year, we received far fewer complaints about being a bad time of year for this process.

Nonetheless, two problems remain: (1) Using e-mail to invite more than 200 organizations to respond requires having current e-mail addresses for each organization. Despite using the most recent e-mail lists, considerable time was spent correcting e-mail addresses, and some could not be corrected. (2) Some organizational representatives questioned whether the General Assembly action applies to their organization. The action specifically mentions "agencies of the General Assembly, related schools, theological institutions, and synods." The inclusion of conference centers and presbyteries in this process was questioned by some. Others argued that theological institutions are essentially independent of the General Assembly and should not be included.

Attachment A

Original E-mail Invitation and Sample Form

January 2010

To: General Assembly Mission Council
Office of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Publishing Corporation
Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation
Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Hubbard Press
Jarvie Commonwealth Service
Synods
Presbyteries
Conference Centers
Theological Institutions

Subj: Important General Assembly Mission Council 2009 EEO/AA Workforce Analysis Information Needed

The General Assembly Mission Council requests your workforce analysis data for the 2009 EEO/AA Workforce Analysis Report (the numbers of full-time and part-time, exempt and non-exempt employees by gender and race/ethnicity). We are **required** to compile and report the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) workforce analysis data under the General Assembly's directive and commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action (197th General Assembly (1985) Minutes, Part 1, Journal, pg. 202, Oversight of Equal Employment Opportunity Implementation, 27.149).

We are compiling this information electronically again this year. Please follow the instructions below. A copy of the form is attached to this email. We suggest using this to gather the needed information before you access the survey on the Web. Please forward this information to the appropriate person in your organization if you are not the person responsible for your organization's workforce analysis data.

- Go to the survey Web site at: surveys.pcusa.org/eoaa2009.aspx
- Enter the password **XXXX** assigned to your organization.
- Complete the workforce analysis form. (Definitions are provided below and on the attached form.)
- If you prefer, complete the form attached and fax it back (502-569-8736).

The deadline for your organization's information is Friday, January 29, 2010. [later extended into February]

If you need additional information or have questions, please contact Roxanna Farris (888-728-7228, x 5131 or roxanna.farris@pcusa.org).

If you have trouble with the survey Web site, please contact Research Services (888-728-7228, x 2040 or research@pcusa.org).

Note: Sometimes an organization's firewall prevents transmission of responses to the survey site. If the survey returns you to a page after you've entered your responses, please re-enter your responses. It should work on the second attempt. We apologize for this problem.

We appreciate your assistance and cooperation.

Lisa Robbins
Human Resources Director
General Assembly Mission Council

EEO/AA End-of-Year 2009 Report

To be completed online at: www.pcusa.org/eoaaareport (Definitions provided on next page.)

First, provide data about your organization’s exempt employees, those not eligible for overtime pay.

Q-1. Please report your total number of exempt *male* employees in each category below—*regular full-time* and *regular part-time* exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

Exempt Males:	Full-time	Part-time
a. American Indian and or Native Alaskan (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
b. Asian (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
c. Black and/or African American (not Hispanic/Latino) males	_____	_____
d. Hispanic and/or Latino males	_____	_____
e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic/Latino) males	_____	_____
f. Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latino) males	_____	_____
g. White (not Hispanic/Latino) males	_____	_____

Q-2. Please report your total number of exempt *female* employees in each category—*regular full-time* and *regular part-time* exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

Exempt Females:	Full-time	Part-time
a. American Indian and or Native Alaskan (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
b. Asian (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
c. Black and/or African American (not Hispanic/Latina) females	_____	_____
d. Hispanic and/or Latina females.....	_____	_____
e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic/Latina) females	_____	_____
f. Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latina) females	_____	_____
g. White (not Hispanic/Latina) females	_____	_____

Second, provide data about your organization’s non-exempt employees, those eligible for overtime pay.

Q-3. Please report your total number of non-exempt *male* employees in each category below—*regular full-time* and *regular part-time* non-exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

Non-exempt Males:	Full-time	Part-time
a. American Indian and or Native Alaskan (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
b. Asian (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
c. Black and/or African American (not Hispanic/Latino) males	_____	_____
d. Hispanic and/or Latino males	_____	_____
e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic/Latino) males	_____	_____
f. Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latino) males	_____	_____
g. White (not Hispanic/Latino) males	_____	_____

Q-4. Please report your total number of non-exempt *female* employees in each category below—*regular full-time* and *regular part-time* non-exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

Non-exempt Females:	Full-time	Part-time
a. American Indian and or Native Alaskan (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
b. Asian (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
c. Black and/or African American (not Hispanic/Latina) females	_____	_____
d. Hispanic and/or Latina females.....	_____	_____

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- e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic/Latina) females _____
- f. Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latina) females _____
- g. White (not Hispanic/Latina) females _____

Definitions for Use in Completing the Form

Racial Ethnic Categories: These are current categories defined by the federal government for EEO AA reporting. Note that each employee can be counted in only *one* category.

- **American Indian and/or Alaska Native (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Black and/or African American (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic and/or Latino:** All persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **Two or More Races (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons who identify with more than one of the other racial categories.
- **White (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Other Definitions:

- **Exempt:** Employees who are *not* entitled to overtime pay (i.e., professional staff including clergy).
- **Non-exempt:** Employees who are entitled to overtime pay (e.g., secretarial, clerical, and custodial staff).
- **Full-time:** Employees who work at least 30 hours weekly.
- **Part-time:** Employees who work fewer than 30 hours weekly.

Questions? Call Roxanna Farris at (888) 728, x5131

Trouble with the Survey? Call Research Services at (888) 728-7228, x 2040

Completed forms may be returned by fax. Please provide your contact information:

Organization: _____

Your name: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax completed form to: (502) 569-8736

Thank you for your help!

Attachment B

2009 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis

Responding Presbyteries

Alaska	Glacier	New Harmony	Santa Fe
Albany	Greater Atlanta	New Hope	Seattle
Arkansas	Great Rivers	Newark	Shenandoah
Baltimore	Heartland	Newton	Shenango
Beaver-Butler	Homestead	North Central Iowa	Sierra Blanca
Blackhawk	Hudson River	North Puget Sound	South Alabama
Boise	Huntingdon	Northern Kansas	South Dakota
Boston	Indian Nations	Northern New England	Southern Kansas
Carlisle	Inland Northwest	Northern New York	Southern New England
Cascades	John Knox	Northern Plains	St. Andrew
Central Washington	Kiskiminetas	Northern Waters	St. Augustine

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Charleston-Atlantic	Lakawanna	Northumberland	Susquehanna Valley
Charlotte	Lake Erie	Ohio Valley	Transylvania
Cherokee	Lake Huron	Olympia	Tres Rios
Cimarron	Lehigh	Palo Duro	Trinity
De Christo	Long Island	Peaks	Tropical Florida
Denver	Mackinac	Pittsburgh	Utah
Detroit	Maumee Valley	Prospect Hill	Washington
Donegal	Miami	Providence	West Jersey
East Tennessee	Mid-Kentucky	Pueblo	West Virginia
East Iowa	Mid-South	Redstone	Western Colorado
Eastern Oklahoma	Milwaukee	Riverside	Western Kentucky
Eastminster	Mississippi	Salem	Western New York
Flint River	Missouri River Valley	San Diego	Western North Carolina
Florida	Monmouth	San Fernando	Western Reserve, the
Genesee Valley	Muskingum Valley	San Francisco	Winnebago
Geneva	New Brunswick	San Joaquin	Yukon
Giddings-Lovejoy	New Covenant	San Jose	

Non-Responding Presbyteries

Abingdon	Grand Canyon	New York City	Savannah
Atlantic Korean-American	Hanmi	North Alabama	Scioto Valley
Central Nebraska	Holston	Northeast Georgia	Shepards & Lapsley
Cayuga-Syracuse	James	Pacific	South Louisiana
Central Florida	John Calvin	Palisades	Southeastern Illinois
Chicago	Kendall	Peace River	Stockton
Cincinnati	Lake Michigan	Philadelphia	Tampa Bay
Coastal Carolina	Los Ranchos	Pines	Twin Cities Area
Dakota	Middle Tennessee	Plains & Peaks	Upper Ohio Valley
Des Moines	Midwest Hanmi	Presbiterio del Noroeste	Utica
Eastern Korean	Minnesota Valleys	Presbiterio del Suroeste	Wabash Valley
Eastern Oregon	Mission	Redwoods	Whitewater Valley
Eastern Virginia	Missouri Union	Sacramento	Wyoming
Elizabeth	National Capital	San Gabriel	Yellowstone
Foothills	Nevada	San Juan	
Grace	New Castle	Santa Barbara	

Responding Synods

Alaska Northwest	Mid-America	Rocky Mountains	Sun
Covenant	Mid-Atlantic	Southern California and Hawaii	Trinity
Lakes and Prairies	Northeast	Southwest	
Lincoln Trails	Pacific		
Living Waters	Puerto Rico		

Non-Responding Synod

South Atlantic

Responding Theological Institutions

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary	Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary	Pittsburgh Theological Seminary	San Francisco Theological Seminary
Columbia Theological Seminary	McCormick Theological Seminary	Princeton Theological Seminary	

Non-Responding Theological Institutions

Auburn Theological Seminary	Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico	Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education
Dubuque Theological Seminary, University of	Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary	

Responding Conference Centers

Ghost Ranch – Abiquiu

Ghost Ranch – Santa Fe

Stony Point Center

Non-Responding Conference Centers

Montreat

Responding Entities

Board of Pensions
FoundationGeneral Assembly Mission
CouncilHubbard Press
Jarvie Commonweal
OGAPILP
PPC

Attachment C

The 2008 Equal Employment Opportunity Affirmative Action Workforce Staff Analysis Chart can be found on pp. 720–23 as an attachment as follows: gac-2009_EEO_AA_charts.

D. Report of Changes to the Appendixes of the General Assembly Mission Council Manual of Operations

The *General Assembly Mission Council Manual of Operations*, page 1, states, “The General Assembly Mission Council may change those appendixes to the *Manual of Operations* that are within its purview following a first reading, which may be electronic, and adoption at a subsequent plenary session. First reading and action may take place during the same session of the General Assembly Mission Council. The General Assembly Mission Council Executive Committee shall submit a written report of changes to the appendixes to the next General Assembly.”

In accordance with the above, the General Assembly Mission Council Executive Committee reports the following changes to the Appendixes of the *Manual of Operations*, as approved by the General Assembly Mission Council between the 218th General Assembly (2008) and the 219th General Assembly (2010):

1. *GAMC Meeting of March 24–25, 2009:*

Appendixes 1 and 5—The GAMC approved changes to the Appendix 1.D. Closed Meetings as follows (Deletions are shown with a double strike-through and additions are in italic):

“D. Closed Meetings

“Closed meetings shall be held in accordance with the General Assembly Open Meeting Policy (see ~~Appendix 5 below~~). In closed meetings, only *voting* members of the Council, (~~both voting and non-voting~~) at-large members of Stewardship Committee, and Audit Committee, and other persons explicitly invited by the Council ~~to serve it~~ are to be present. The Council ~~may~~ will determine, by majority vote, ~~that it wishes to go into~~ *if its members wish to deliberate in* a closed meeting. Minutes kept of a closed meeting may be approved only in a closed meeting. All present in a closed meeting are honor-bound to keep ~~the confidentiality of the discussion of the~~ *the confidential all discussions occurring during the* closed meeting. Ordinarily, when the use of a closed meeting can be anticipated, the GAC chair or Executive Director will provide advance notice to the GAC that a closed meeting is recommended *and the reason for closing*.

“A separate policy exists governing non-business gatherings. Refer to Appendix ____, Media and Visitor Policy for Non-Business Gatherings.”

Appendix 5—General Assembly Open Meeting Policy—The GAMC approved deleting this policy from the *GAMC Manual of Operations*, and to place the policy within Appendix 1 immediately following “D. Closed Meetings” as listed above.

Background for This Action

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) is subject to the policies of the General Assembly. The present GAMC Closed Meeting Policy is much broader than permitted by the General Assembly Open Meeting Policy. Changing the policy to that which is stated by the General Assembly Open Meeting Policy allows for others to be invited to attend the closed session as deemed appropriate.

2. *GAMC Meeting of February 23–26, 2010*

The GAMC voted to approve changes to Appendixes 1 and 3 as follows:

a. *Appendix I, Section II. Closed Meetings* (current page 6)—Add a note following the GA Open Meeting Policy to include the action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) directing entities to post their open meetings on the PC(USA) Calendar Web page.

Background for This Action

Including the action of the General Assembly keeps this directive with the policy so that it is not lost or forgotten.

b. *Appendix I, Section V.e.*—(current pages 10, 11), Delete 3. Personnel Committee, re-number the following committees, and adjust the *Manual* as follows:

- *Appendix I, Section III, B. Vice-Chair* (current page 7)—Delete #3 “Serve as the Chair of the GAMC Personnel Committee”, and insert a new # 3, “Lead and moderate the Executive Committee in all personnel matters as listed in Section IV.A.1.d. (15).”

- *Appendix I, Section V. A.1.d.* (current page 9), add a new #15 to the duties of the Executive Committee: “Act regarding personnel matters of the GAMC as follows: [list duties of Personnel Committee as found in former Appendix I, Section V.e], and renumber the following responsibilities of the Executive Committee.

Background for This Action

Including Personnel in the responsibilities of the Executive Committee instead of having the Executive Committee act as an independent Personnel Committee, allows for ease of acting upon personnel matters, reporting to the GAMC, and record-keeping. The vice chair of the GAMC will still lead the Executive Committee in discussion/action on personnel matters.

c. *Appendix I, Section V. A. 3. “General Assembly Mission Council Nominating Committee, b. Responsibilities, #14*—(current page 12). Change the number of members nominated to the Mountain Retreat Association, Inc.’s Board of Directors from 4 to 2.

Background for This Action

This change was requested by Pete Peery, president of Montreat, and Linda Valentine, GAMC Executive Director. It has the support of Linda Scholl, GAMC Nominating Committee chair. The change will allow the Mountain Retreat Association Board to include additional members to bring diversity and expertise.

d. *Appendix I, Section V. A. 3. “General Assembly Mission Council Nominating Committee, b. Responsibilities*—(current page 12). Add a new #16, “Nominate for General Assembly Mission Council election, one GAMC voting member to the Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. Board of Directors for a three-year non-renewable term”, and renumber the remaining responsibilities.

Background for This Action

The Presbyterian Women voted to incorporate this past summer, effective July 16, 2009. The incorporation charter requires the board to have a GAMC voting member as a member of the board. Since the charter was effective July 16, Carol Adcock, GAMC chair, appointed Joyce Smith to the board. The new #16 will allow the GAMC member to be nominated by the GAMC Nominating Committee for election by the full GAMC. This is the same process used to nominate and elect GAMC members to other agency boards.

e. *Appendix 3, “A Vision for Governance for the General Assembly Council,”* remove references to Appendix 3, found on pages 3 & 5, and renumber appendixes.

Background for This Action

The “Vision for Governance for the General Assembly Council” is out of date. The *Manual*, itself, speaks to the organization of the General Assembly Mission Council.

Item 09-NB

[The assembly approved Item 09-NB. See pp. 72, 83.]

Item 09-New Business. Convocation on Criminal Justice.

That the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provide up to \$10,000 in 2011 to support a broad convocation of interested individuals, to be called by PHEWA, to consider and propose the creation of a Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) network on criminal justice for education and advocacy ministries to the 220th General Assembly (2012) and recommend a funding strategy.

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$10,000; 2012: \$0 (GAMC)]

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

**General Assembly Mission Program Receipts
Actual Compared to Budget as of December 31, 2008**

Receipts	MISSION BUDGET								
	Unrestricted			Restricted			Grand Total		
	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	YTD 2007	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	YTD 2007	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	YTD 2007
I. Support from Congregations & Presbyteries									
Basic Mission Support									
Shared Mission Support	12,700,000	11,567,671	12,932,359	-	-	-	12,700,000	11,567,671	12,932,359
Directed Mission Support	-	-	-	5,000,000	4,300,998	4,791,612	5,000,000	4,300,998	4,791,612
	12,700,000	11,567,671	12,932,359	5,000,000	4,300,998	4,791,612	17,700,000	15,868,669	17,723,971
Churchwide Spec. Offerings									
Christmas Joy	-	-	-	4,800,000	4,987,578	5,215,040	4,800,000	4,987,578	5,215,040
One Great Hour of Sharing	-	-	-	9,400,000	8,245,099	8,989,242	9,400,000	8,245,099	8,989,242
Peacemaking	-	-	-	1,100,000	1,177,333	1,361,494	1,100,000	1,177,333	1,361,494
Pentecost	-	-	-	650,000	863,861	842,483	650,000	863,861	842,483
Witness	-	-	-	-	32,465	32,609	-	32,465	32,609
	-	-	-	15,950,000	15,306,336	16,440,868	15,950,000	15,306,336	16,440,868
II. Supplementary Support (Beyond Budget) From Congregations & Presbyteries & Individuals									
Other Specific Appeals									
Emergency and Disaster Relief	-	-	-	2,500,000	3,783,911	3,222,791	2,500,000	3,783,911	3,222,791
Add'l Giving Offering, ECO	-	-	-	7,500,000	6,763,268	6,768,900	7,500,000	6,763,268	6,768,900
Mission Initiative Joining Hearts & Hands	-	-	-	1,500,000	1,715,355	1,450,939	1,500,000	1,715,355	1,450,939
Special Missionary Support	-	-	-	-	353,292	331,317	-	353,292	331,317
Hunger	-	-	-	600,000	514,417	625,392	600,000	514,417	625,392
Theological Education Fund	-	-	-	2,200,000	1,888,936	2,071,902	2,200,000	1,888,936	2,071,902
	-	-	-	14,300,000	15,019,179	14,471,241	14,300,000	15,019,179	14,471,241
Add'l Forms of Giving									
Presbyterian Women	1,274,450	1,000,381	1,042,450	450,000	24,000	42,000	1,724,450	1,024,381	1,084,450
Bequests and Annuities	2,500,000	998,055	2,917,043	150,000	230,250	473,119	2,650,000	1,228,305	3,390,462
Other Gifts	-	-	-	90,000	19,932	-	90,000	19,932	-
Validated Mission Support	-	-	-	850,000	215,246	1,780,828	850,000	215,246	1,780,828
Grants from Outside Fdns.	-	-	-	-	2,751,174	122,450	-	2,751,174	122,450
	3,774,450	1,998,436	3,959,493	1,540,000	3,240,602	2,418,397	5,314,450	5,239,038	6,377,890
III. Interest and Dividends									
PC (USA) Restr. Endow. Fds.	-	-	-	7,315,847	7,201,177	8,168,777	7,315,847	7,201,177	8,168,777
PC (USA) Unres. Endow. Fds.	7,975,378	8,049,365	7,869,845	-	-	-	7,975,378	8,049,365	7,869,845
Pby. Mission Program Fund	340,000	368,333	611,067	-	-	-	340,000	368,333	611,067
Outside Trusts	1,200,000	1,198,223	872,309	135,000	155,468	155,901	1,335,000	1,353,691	1,028,210
Jarvie Commonweal Fund	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	100,000	-	-
Junishian Fund	-	-	-	2,205,758	2,015,821	2,148,233	2,205,758	2,015,821	2,148,233
Short Term Investment	600,000	1,065,967	759,883	1,200,000	1,231,542	1,165,567	1,800,000	2,297,509	1,925,450
	10,215,378	10,681,888	10,113,104	10,856,605	10,604,008	11,638,478	21,071,983	21,285,896	21,751,582
IV. Other									
Conference Ctr. Oper. Rcpts.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Partner Churches and Other	-	-	-	800,000	651,060	725,922	800,000	651,060	725,922
Hubbard Press	35,000	45,000	35,000	-	-	-	35,000	45,000	35,000
Sales: Curriculum	-	-	-	4,250,000	2,676,332	3,361,477	4,250,000	2,676,332	3,361,477
Sales: Program Services and MEP	-	-	-	8,886,764	7,706,775	10,415,051	8,886,764	7,706,775	10,415,051
Sales: Resources	-	5,612	20,158	2,000,000	1,970,741	2,401,691	2,000,000	1,976,353	2,421,849
Other Income	-	201,593	50,020	-	-	-	-	201,593	50,020
	35,000	252,205	105,178	15,936,764	13,004,908	16,904,141	15,971,764	13,257,113	17,009,319
TOTAL RECEIPTS	26,724,828	24,500,200	27,110,134	63,583,369	61,476,031	66,664,737	90,308,197	85,976,231	93,774,871
V. Prior Year Accumulations	4,316,331	5,541,356	1,389,703	7,617,387	1,821,043	4,243,286	11,933,718	7,362,399	5,632,989
VI. Admn. Cost Allocation	800,000	848,721	788,655	-	-	-	800,000	848,721	788,655
TTL RCPTS, PY ACCUM & ADJS	31,841,159	30,890,277	29,288,492	71,200,756	63,297,074	70,908,023	103,041,915	94,187,351	100,196,515

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION PROGRAM EXPENDITURES BY ENTITY For the Period Ended December 31, 2008									
MISSION BUDGET									
BUDGETED ENTITY	UNRESTRICTED			RESTRICTED			GRAND TOTAL		
	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	2007 Actual	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	2007 Actual	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	2007 Actual
I Executive Director									
Executive Administrator	799,462	780,587	1,022,335	1,017,072	1,325,550	598,232	1,816,534	2,105,137	1,620,567
	799,462	780,587	1,022,335	1,017,072	1,325,550	598,232	1,816,534	2,105,137	1,620,567
II Communication and Funds Dev.									
Deputy Executive Director Office	280,384	499,078	172,593	-	10,053	115,588	280,384	509,131	288,181
Communication	2,797,091	2,815,572	1,705,462	1,199,034	955,976	1,284,920	3,996,125	3,771,548	2,990,382
Funds Development	1,367,043	1,082,847	904,368	3,429,965	2,841,395	3,232,691	4,797,008	3,924,242	4,137,059
	4,444,518	4,397,497	2,782,423	4,628,999	3,807,424	4,633,199	9,073,517	8,204,921	7,415,622
III Mission									
Deputy Executive Director Office	243,724	207,699	159,810	171,446	207,392	162,038	415,170	415,091	321,848
Military Chaplains	230,000	230,000	250,000	-	-	-	230,000	230,000	250,000
Theology Worship and Education	2,239,228	3,307,533	1,659,076	8,221,552	6,085,622	8,562,840	10,460,780	9,393,155	10,221,916
Evangelism and Church Growth	2,613,151	2,105,466	2,471,922	5,328,082	4,902,781	5,008,632	7,941,233	7,008,247	7,480,554
Compassion, Peace and Justice	1,196,866	694,997	766,673	17,090,256	18,592,555	21,625,289	18,287,122	19,287,552	22,391,962
World Mission	6,107,657	5,833,708	5,739,510	21,113,999	16,522,786	17,948,544	27,221,656	22,356,494	23,688,054
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	2,419,943	2,257,402	2,235,322	2,555,789	2,601,004	2,477,532	4,975,732	4,858,406	4,712,854
	15,050,569	14,636,805	13,282,313	54,481,124	48,912,140	55,784,875	69,531,693	63,548,945	69,067,188
IV Shared Services									
Human Resources	671,867	614,057	535,684	12,188	31,456	158,016	684,055	645,513	693,700
Finance and Accounting	1,828,216	1,471,560	1,472,418	1,104,312	1,079,497	1,108,140	2,932,528	2,551,057	2,580,558
Information Technology	2,638,445	2,609,671	2,325,347	404,655	253,461	415,777	3,043,100	2,863,132	2,741,124
Presbyterian Distribution Services	717,351	820,016	781,571	1,394,918	1,472,690	1,412,391	2,112,369	2,292,706	2,193,962
Mail, Print Services	166,640	203,472	161,113	555,384	189,087	488,199	722,024	392,559	649,312
Facilities	742,469	896,457	939,341	282,803	372,495	353,195	1,025,272	1,268,952	1,292,536
	6,764,988	6,615,233	6,215,474	3,754,260	3,398,686	3,935,718	10,519,248	10,013,919	10,151,192
V Other									
Shared Expenses	600,000	541,795	775,596	-	-	-	600,000	541,795	775,596
Insurance	921,884	672,800	764,915	1,571,995	1,180,507	1,245,826	2,493,879	1,853,307	2,010,741
Restricted Fund Allocation	-	-	-	-	296,521	378,984	-	296,521	378,984
Investment Management Fees	250,000	228,250	262,888	-	-	-	250,000	228,250	262,888
Presby Fdn Investment Management Fees	-	-	4,951	-	-	78,054	-	-	83,005
Board of Pensions	-	-	-	2,147,305	2,268,271	2,388,891	2,147,305	2,268,271	2,388,891
ECC Agency	-	-	-	3,600,000	2,092,221	1,627,754	3,600,000	2,092,221	1,627,754
Mission Partnership	3,009,738	3,017,310	3,417,617	-	15,754	30,783	3,009,738	3,033,064	3,448,400
Reduction in Force	-	-	759,980	-	-	205,707	-	-	965,687
	4,781,622	4,460,155	5,985,947	7,319,301	5,853,274	5,955,999	12,100,923	10,313,429	11,941,946
Total Expenditures	31,841,159	30,890,277	29,288,492	71,200,756	63,297,074	70,908,023	103,041,915	94,187,351	100,196,515

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

General Assembly Mission Program Receipts
Actual Compared to Budget as of December 31, 2009

Receipts	MISSION BUDGET								
	Unrestricted			Restricted			Grand Total		
	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	YTD 2008	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	YTD 2008	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	YTD 2008
I. Support from Congregations & Presbyteries									
Basic Mission Support									
Shared Mission Support	11,000,000	10,288,565	11,567,671	-	-	-	11,000,000	10,288,565	11,567,671
Directed Mission Support	-	-	-	4,000,000	3,982,083	4,300,998	4,000,000	3,982,083	4,300,998
	11,000,000	10,288,565	11,567,671	4,000,000	3,982,083	4,300,998	15,000,000	14,270,648	15,868,669
Churchwide Spec. Offerings									
Christmas Joy	-	-	-	4,800,000	4,537,815	4,987,578	4,800,000	4,537,815	4,987,578
One Great Hour of Sharing	-	-	-	8,000,000	7,901,896	8,245,099	8,000,000	7,901,896	8,245,099
Peacemaking	-	-	-	1,000,000	1,017,849	1,177,333	1,000,000	1,017,849	1,177,333
Pentecost	-	-	-	870,000	859,362	863,861	870,000	859,362	863,861
Witness	-	-	-	-	27,420	32,465	-	27,420	32,465
	-	-	-	14,670,000	14,344,342	15,306,336	14,670,000	14,344,342	15,306,336
II. Supplementary Support (Beyond Budget)									
From Congregations & Presbyteries & Individuals									
Other Specific Appeals									
Emergency and Disaster Relief	-	-	-	2,500,000	1,903,224	3,783,911	2,500,000	1,903,224	3,783,911
Extra Commitment Opportunity (ECO)	-	-	-	11,100,000	7,223,281	6,763,268	11,100,000	7,223,281	6,763,268
Mission Initiative Joining Hearts & Hands	-	-	-	202,950	952,595	1,715,355	202,950	952,595	1,715,355
Special Missionary Support	-	-	-	300,000	291,902	353,292	300,000	291,902	353,292
Hunger	-	-	-	500,000	506,312	514,417	500,000	506,312	514,417
Theological Education Fund	-	-	-	1,800,000	1,743,159	1,888,936	1,800,000	1,743,159	1,888,936
	-	-	-	16,402,950	12,620,473	15,019,179	16,402,950	12,620,473	15,019,179
Add'l Forms of Giving									
Presbyterian Women	900,000	916,287	1,000,381	52,000	15,000	24,000	952,000	931,287	1,024,381
Bequests and Annuities	2,500,000	231,701	998,055	200,000	148,862	230,250	2,700,000	380,563	1,228,305
Other Gifts	-	-	-	-	55,947	19,932	-	55,947	19,932
Validated Mission Support	-	-	-	261,244	121,244	215,246	261,244	121,244	215,246
Grants from Outside Fdns.	-	-	-	1,400,000	142,104	2,751,174	1,400,000	142,104	2,751,174
	3,400,000	1,147,988	1,998,436	1,913,244	483,157	3,240,602	5,313,244	1,631,145	5,239,038
III. Interest and Dividends									
PC (USA) Restr. Endow. Fds.	-	-	-	7,081,274	6,063,620	7,201,177	7,081,274	6,063,620	7,201,177
PC (USA) Unres. Endow. Fds.	7,400,139	7,505,666	8,049,365	-	-	-	7,400,139	7,505,666	8,049,365
Pby. Mission Program Fund	250,000	319,442	368,333	452,957	235,494	-	702,957	554,936	368,333
Outside Trusts	800,000	1,347,686	1,198,223	135,000	151,252	155,468	935,000	1,498,938	1,353,691
Jarvie Commonwealth Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jimishian Fund	-	-	-	2,088,814	1,828,056	2,015,821	2,088,814	1,828,056	2,015,821
Short Term Investment	750,000	1,155,460	1,065,967	900,000	763,531	1,231,542	1,650,000	1,918,991	2,297,509
	9,200,139	10,328,254	10,681,888	10,658,045	9,041,953	10,604,008	19,858,184	19,370,207	21,285,896
IV. Other									
Partner Churches and Other	-	-	-	600,000	398,785	651,060	600,000	398,785	651,060
Hubbard Press	400,000	400,000	45,000	-	-	-	400,000	400,000	45,000
Sales: Curriculum	-	-	-	2,792,500	2,842,924	2,676,332	2,792,500	2,842,924	2,676,332
Sales: Program Services	-	-	-	8,554,589	9,349,983	7,706,775	8,554,589	9,349,983	7,706,775
Sales: Resources	-	5,288	5,612	2,975,000	2,030,237	1,970,741	2,975,000	2,035,525	1,976,353
Other Income	-	139,351	201,593	-	-	-	-	139,351	201,593
	400,000	544,639	252,205	14,922,089	14,621,929	13,004,908	15,322,089	15,166,568	13,257,113
TOTAL RECEIPTS	24,000,139	22,309,446	24,500,200	62,566,328	55,093,937	61,476,031	86,566,467	77,403,383	85,976,231
V. Prior Year Accumulations	505,177	471,468	5,541,356	19,842,940	8,210,653	1,821,043	20,348,117	8,682,121	7,362,399
VI. Admin. Cost Allocation	-	-	848,721	-	-	-	-	-	848,721
TTL RCPTS, PY ACCUM & ADJS	24,505,316	22,780,914	30,890,277	82,409,268	63,304,590	63,297,074	106,914,584	86,085,504	94,187,351

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION PROGRAM EXPENDITURES BY ENTITY For the Period Ended December 31, 2009 MISSION BUDGET									
BUDGETED ENTITY	UNRESTRICTED			RESTRICTED			GRAND TOTAL		
	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	2008 Actual	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	2008 Actual	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	2008 Actual
I Executive Director									
Executive Administrator	933,861	832,991	780,587	1,650,030	1,373,441	1,325,550	2,583,891	2,206,432	2,106,137
	933,861	832,991	780,587	1,650,030	1,373,441	1,325,550	2,583,891	2,206,432	2,106,137
II Communication and Funds Dev.									
Deputy Executive Director Office	392,535	347,728	499,078	-	-	10,853	392,535	347,728	509,931
News Service	292,257	199,846	241,784	2,915	2,815	-	295,272	202,671	241,784
General Assembly Communication	-	34	190,245	-	-	-	-	34	190,245
Executive Office Communication	580,939	502,082	497,940	-	-	16	580,939	502,082	497,940
Creative Services	1,042,098	885,049	1,190,884	32,228	216,250	31,264	1,075,426	1,101,239	1,222,868
Mission Communication	1,107,149	859,855	689,653	-	7,448	145	1,107,149	867,303	609,798
Mission Interpretation	119,993	530,622	72,615	3,859,514	3,196,138	2,917,893	3,979,507	3,705,760	2,989,708
Development	-	211,035	324,042	1,088,862	451,259	7,156	1,088,862	662,294	331,198
Development Services	339,855	342,383	251,526	-	-	-	339,855	342,383	251,526
Church Financial Campaign Service	-	(49,295)	517,710	538,232	415,337	537,118	538,232	365,111	1,054,828
Mission Initiative Jointing Heats & Halls	-	-	-	80,200	54,030	104,579	80,200	54,030	80,579
	3,875,926	3,829,410	4,397,497	5,822,051	4,343,277	3,807,424	9,307,977	8,172,687	8,204,921
III Mission									
Deputy Executive Director Office	202,270	185,953	207,699	172,526	171,434	207,292	375,815	357,387	415,093
Vacation	214,750	214,750	242,196	1,037,773	1,437,913	1,675,863	1,852,523	1,652,663	1,910,461
Theology Workshop and Education	1,827,130	1,752,645	3,149,681	703,821	5,384,588	5,747,781	9,465,261	7,632,423	8,897,462
Evangelism and Church Growth	1,061,922	1,704,714	1,950,359	5,200,854	4,344,392	3,357,147	7,062,776	6,049,106	5,307,506
Compassion, Peace and Justice	860,182	691,008	694,997	24,064,099	16,723,582	18,592,555	24,950,281	17,414,590	19,287,552
World Mission	3,032,787	2,032,789	5,833,708	2,145,120	16,380,826	16,522,786	24,485,907	19,412,615	22,256,494
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	2,452,514	1,770,065	2,558,365	4,052,747	3,282,640	2,808,614	6,506,261	5,052,705	5,369,779
	10,479,664	9,352,924	14,636,805	64,220,360	48,226,385	48,921,140	74,699,024	57,579,309	63,548,945
IV Shared Services									
Human Resources	537,850	511,693	614,057	49,920	48,322	31,450	587,770	560,015	645,513
Finance and Accounting	656,212	688,910	1,471,560	2,112,489	1,905,031	1,879,497	2,738,701	2,593,941	2,551,057
Information Technology	2,018,113	2,359,844	2,609,671	326,427	227,753	253,461	2,844,790	2,387,597	2,861,132
Presbyterian Distribution Services	739,447	674,820	820,306	1,446,139	1,170,692	1,472,690	2,187,656	1,849,512	2,292,766
Mail, Print Services	149,069	182,456	212,472	365,000	241,284	189,087	414,069	434,760	392,558
Facilities	666,109	652,307	896,457	547,415	562,892	372,495	1,213,524	1,214,339	1,268,953
	5,337,040	5,071,030	6,615,553	4,649,390	4,159,194	3,998,686	9,986,430	9,320,224	10,013,939
V Other									
Shared Expenses	125,010	98,378	541,795	-	29,872	-	125,010	128,250	541,795
Insurance	792,607	648,514	672,800	1,733,491	1,177,655	1,180,507	2,526,098	1,818,139	1,853,207
Restricted Fund Allocation	-	-	-	191,271	296,521	-	-	191,271	296,521
Investment Management Fees	178,197	182,714	228,250	-	-	-	178,197	182,714	228,250
Presby Fdn Investment Management Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Board of Pensions	-	-	-	2,133,946	2,036,720	2,061,271	2,133,946	2,036,720	2,068,271
ECC Agency	-	-	-	2,580,000	1,751,230	2,892,221	2,580,000	1,751,230	2,892,221
Mission Partnership	2,784,011	2,772,953	3,017,310	-	15,735	15,734	2,784,011	2,788,528	3,033,064
Reduction in Force	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3,879,825	3,694,559	4,460,155	6,267,437	5,201,283	5,853,174	10,147,262	8,896,853	10,315,439
Total Expenditures	24,505,316	22,780,914	30,890,277	82,409,268	63,304,590	63,297,074	106,914,294	86,085,594	94,187,251

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION PROGRAM
2011 RECEIPTS BUDGET

SOURCE OF FUNDING	MISSION BUDGET		GRAND TOTAL
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	
I BASIC MISSION SUPPORT			
Shared Mission Support	10,000,000		10,000,000
Directed Mission Support		3,800,000	3,800,000
II CHURCHWIDE SPECIAL OFFERINGS			
Christmas Joy		4,300,000	4,300,000
One Great Hour of Sharing		7,100,000	7,100,000
Peacemaking		900,000	900,000
Pentecost		900,000	900,000
III OTHER SPECIFIC APPEALS			
Emergency and Disaster Relief		2,500,000	2,500,000
Extra Commitment		9,180,000	9,180,000
Mission Initiative-MJHH		500,000	500,000
Special Missionary Support		140,000	140,000
Hunger		600,000	600,000
Theological Education Fund		1,750,000	1,750,000
IV ADDITIONAL FORMS OF GIVING			
Presbyterian Women	492,443	457,557	950,000
Bequests & Annuities	2,500,000	200,000	2,700,000
Other Gifts			
Validated Mission Support		12,000	12,000
Grants from Outside Foundations		130,000	130,000
V ENDOWMENTS, INTEREST & DIVIDENDS			
PC(USA) Restricted Endowment Funds		5,823,146	5,823,146
PC(USA) Unrestricted Endowment Fund	6,746,678		6,746,678
Presbyterian Mission Program Fund	250,000		250,000
Outside Trusts	800,000	150,000	950,000
Jinshian		1,739,343	1,739,343
Short Term Investments	600,000	700,000	1,300,000
VI OTHER			
Enterprise Fund, Hubbard	50,000		50,000
Partner Churches and Other		473,824	473,824
Sales: Curriculum		2,622,500	2,622,500
Sales: Program Services		7,344,854	7,344,854
Sale: Resources		1,694,454	1,694,454
PMPF Allocation		199,931	199,931
TOTAL CURRENT RECEIPTS	21,439,121	53,217,609	74,656,730
UTILIZATION OF PRIOR YEAR ACCUMN	1,138,988	6,301,516	7,440,504
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDING	22,578,109	59,519,125	82,097,234

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION PROGRAM
2011 MISSION EXPENDITURE BUDGET

BUDGETED ENTITY	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	GRAND TOTAL
I Executive Director			
Executive Administrator	831,217	1,030,697	1,861,914
Total Executive Director	831,217	1,030,697	1,861,914
II Communications and Funds Development			
Deputy Executive Director	328,319	0	328,319
News Service	214,251	0	214,251
General Assembly Communication	0	0	0
Executive Office Communication	480,433	0	480,433
Creative Services	872,212	0	872,212
Mission Communication	889,329	0	889,329
Mission Interpretation	196,022	3,274,875	3,470,897
Development	0	1,104,944	1,104,944
Development Services	285,924	93,871	379,795
CFCS	0	539,390	539,390
MJHH	0	80,200	80,200
Total Communications and Funds Development	3,266,490	5,093,280	8,359,770
III Mission			
Deputy Executive Director	190,228	175,109	365,337
Vocation	182,538	1,715,624	1,898,162
Theology Worship and Education	1,415,908	6,244,196	7,660,104
Evangelism and Church Growth	1,754,136	3,479,467	5,233,603
Compassion Peace and Justice	870,864	10,177,486	11,048,350
World Mission	3,681,646	19,255,652	22,937,298
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	2,134,154	3,144,662	5,278,816
Total Mission	10,229,474	44,192,196	54,421,670
IV Shared Services			
Human Resources	539,147	55,576	594,723
Finance and Accounting	729,498	1,838,860	2,568,358
Information Technology	1,750,258	277,121	2,027,379
Presbyterian Distribution Services	573,849	1,302,316	1,876,165
Mail, Print Services	166,292	265,000	431,292
Facilities	725,526	473,577	1,199,103
Total Shared Services	4,484,570	4,212,450	8,697,020
V Other			
Shared Expenses	510,000	0	510,000
Insurance	673,750	1,344,070	2,017,820
Investment Management Fees	251,940	0	251,940
Board of Pensions	0	1,896,432	1,896,432
ECO Agency	0	1,750,000	1,750,000
Mission Partnership	2,330,668	0	2,330,668
Total Other	3,766,358	4,990,502	8,756,860
Total Expenditures	22,578,109	59,519,125	82,097,234

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION PROGRAM
2012 RECEIPTS BUDGET

SOURCE OF FUNDING	MISSION BUDGET		GRAND
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL
I BASIC MISSION SUPPORT			
Shared Mission Support	9,800,000		9,800,000
Directed Mission Support		3,800,000	3,800,000
II CHURCHWIDE SPECIAL OFFERINGS			
Christmas Joy		4,200,000	4,200,000
One Great Hour of Sharing		7,100,000	7,100,000
Peacemaking		900,000	900,000
Pentecost		900,000	900,000
III OTHER SPECIFIC APPEALS			
Emergency and Disaster Relief		2,500,000	2,500,000
Extra Commitment		9,680,000	9,680,000
Mission Initiative-MJHH		510,000	510,000
Special Missionary Support		140,000	140,000
Hunger		600,000	600,000
Theological Education Fund		1,750,000	1,750,000
IV ADDITIONAL FORMS OF GIVING			
Presbyterian Women	489,476	460,524	950,000
Bequests & Annuities	2,500,000	200,000	2,700,000
Other Gifts			
Validated Mission Support		12,000	12,000
Grants from Outside Foundations		100,000	100,000
V ENDOWMENTS, INTEREST & DIVIDENDS			
PC(USA) Restricted Endowment Funds		5,284,566	5,284,566
PC(USA) Unrestricted Endowment Fund	6,074,266		6,074,266
Presbyterian Mission Program Fund	250,000		250,000
Outside Trusts	800,000	150,000	950,000
Jinshian		1,566,859	1,566,859
Short Term Investments	600,000	600,000	1,200,000
VI OTHER			
Enterprise Fund, Hubbard	50,000		50,000
Other Income			
Partner Churches and Other		493,767	493,767
Sales: Curriculum		2,676,500	2,676,500
Sales: Program Services		7,453,577	7,453,577
Sale: Resources		1,714,481	1,714,481
PMPF Allocation		171,458	171,458
TOTAL FROM CURRENT RECEIPTS	20,563,742	52,963,732	73,527,474
UTILIZATION OF PRIOR YEAR ACCUM'N	1,597,759	5,425,380	7,023,139
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDING	22,161,501	58,389,112	80,550,613

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION PROGRAM
2012 MISSION EXPENDITURE BUDGET

BUDGETED ENTITY	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	GRAND TOTAL
I Executive Director			
Executive Administrator	801,447	911,746	1,713,193
Total Executive Director	801,447	911,746	1,713,193
II Communications and Funds Development			
Deputy Executive Director	336,929	0	336,929
News Service	217,104	0	217,104
General Assembly Communication	130,000	0	130,000
Executive Office Communication	494,407	0	494,407
Creative Services	715,486	0	715,486
Mission Communication	889,527	0	889,527
Mission Interpretation	196,818	3,334,323	3,531,141
Mission Initiative	0	80,200	80,200
Development	0	1,148,509	1,148,509
Development Services	292,645	96,259	388,904
CFCS	0	539,390	539,390
Total Communications and Funds Development	3,272,916	5,198,681	8,471,597
III Mission			
Deputy Executive Director	198,022	174,651	372,673
Vocation	175,236	1,554,512	1,729,748
Theology Worship and Education	1,362,937	6,164,781	7,527,718
Evangelism and Church Growth	1,683,970	3,392,404	5,076,374
Compassion Peace and Justice	836,029	9,781,645	10,617,674
World Mission	3,606,229	18,599,720	22,205,949
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	2,048,788	3,239,150	5,287,938
Total Mission	9,911,211	42,906,863	52,818,074
IV Shared Services			
Human Resources	560,626	55,948	616,574
Finance and Accounting	690,470	1,875,737	2,566,207
Information Technology	1,694,585	280,269	1,974,854
Presbyterian Distribution Services	552,415	1,326,306	1,878,721
Mail, Print Services	172,818	265,000	437,818
Facilities	632,271	582,434	1,214,705
Total Shared Services	4,303,185	4,385,694	8,688,879
V Other			
Shared Expenses	489,600	0	489,600
Insurance	695,785	1,388,030	2,083,815
Investment Management Fees	255,996	0	255,996
Board of Pensions	0	1,848,098	1,848,098
ECO Agency	0	1,750,000	1,750,000
Mission Partnership	2,431,361	0	2,431,361
Total Other	3,872,742	4,986,128	8,858,870
Total Expenditures	22,161,501	58,389,112	80,550,613

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U. S. A.)
 PRESBYTERIAN MISSION PROGRAM FUND
 FUNDS COMMITTED FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS
 AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2009

UNRESTRICTED				
	UNCOMMITTED FUNDS	COMMITTED FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS	PROGRAMMATIC LOAN FUND	COMBINED TOTAL
1 Balance as of 1/1/09	7,168,813	9,863,712	2,914,208	19,946,733
2 Market value adjustment in investments	2,159,551			2,159,551
3 Net increase (decrease) in loans/receivables	2,002,128		(2,002,128)	-
4 Net (increase) decrease in provision for uncollectible loans			100,000	100,000
5 New allocation	(47,371)	47,371		-
6 Use of allocations		(857,592)		(857,592)
7 Unused allocations restored	4,266,763	(4,266,763)		-
8 Transfer from Plant Fund		290,525		290,525
9 Adjustment to Mission Treasurer and non-budget accounts	(359,444)			(359,444)
10 Increase (Decrease) YTD	8,021,627	(4,786,459)	(1,902,128)	1,333,040
11 Subtotal	15,190,440	5,077,253	1,012,080	21,279,773
12 Excess unrestricted revenues/(expenditures) from GA Mission Budget	-			-
13 Balance December 31, 2009	15,190,440	5,077,253	1,012,080	21,279,773

14 Reserve requirement:
 Unrestricted receipts \$ 22,309,446
 Directed mission support receipts 3,982,083
 Total \$26,291,529
 30% Reserve requirement

7,887,459



09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
 PRESBYTERIAN MISSION PROGRAM FUND
 FUNDS COMMITTED FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS
 AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2009



GRANTS	Original Designation	Balance 1/01/09	Designated	Payments	Balance
1 Balance of Designation of \$2,185,123 for bequest received (4/03)					
a. Allocation for funding the Mission Initiative for 2005 (12/04)	450,000	26,438			26,438
2 Balance of allocations of \$1,093,000 (4/03), \$814,210 (2/04), \$150,000 (12/04), and reallocations (9/06), (2/08), and (10/08) to support the Independent Abuse Review Panel					
a. 2008	336,800	92,222			92,222
b. 2009	325,000	325,000		(235,494)	89,506
c. 2010	125,000	321,526			321,526
3 Balance of allocation of \$175,000 for the Incubator Fund (Funds Development) (1/02)					
a. Allocation for Older Adult Ministries Capital Campaign	75,000	25,000			25,000
4 Allocation of \$130,000 to fund the Israel/Palestine Peace Project (12/04)	130,000	431			431
5 Sales of Resources		576,525	47,371	(63,218)	560,678
6 Sales of Resources designated to balance the 2010 Mission Budget		491,671			491,671
7 Allocation of \$3,452,113 (4/08) to balance the 2009 Mission Budget	3,452,113	3,452,113	(2,946,936)	(471,468)	33,709
8 Allocation of \$3,506,832 (4/08) and \$215,000 (9/09) to balance the 2010 Mission Budget	3,506,832	3,506,832	(1,291,832)		2,215,000
9 Alloc of \$286,200 for the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks (3/07)	286,200	5,290	(5,290)		-
10 Alloc of \$95,400 for the First Presbyterian Church of Yuma, CO (3/07)	95,400	1,763	(1,763)		-
11 Alloc of \$95,400 for the Synod of Rocky Mountains (3/07)	95,400	1,763	(1,763)		-
12 Alloc of \$996,653 for the National Mission Partnership Funds (3/07)	996,653	996,653	(18,430)	(92,000)	886,223
Interest Earned on National Mission Partnership Funds	7,568	40,485	(749)	4,588	44,324
13 Allocation of \$115,625 for World Mission from proceeds from sale of Ithaca, NY property (3/09)	115,625	-	115,625		115,625
14 Allocation of \$174,900 for World Mission from sale of Morningside Gardens Apartments (9/09)	174,900	-	174,900		174,900
15 TOTAL		9,863,712	(3,928,867)	(857,592)	5,077,253

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
 SALES OF RESOURCES
 AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2009

	Balance 1/01/09	Additions (Payments)	Balance
Executive Administrator			
Social Witness Policy	14,100.42	1,229.65	15,330.07
Research Services	56,084.00	(43,283.00)	12,801.00
Total	<u>70,184.42</u>	<u>(42,053.35)</u>	<u>28,131.07</u>
Deputy Executive Director Communications and Development			
Media Services	131,969.84	(19,935.00)	112,034.84
Mission Education & Promotion	351,939.15	(55,235.00)	296,704.15
Church Financial Campaign	-	49,225.49	49,225.49
Funds Development	3,967.57	-	3,967.57
Total	<u>487,876.56</u>	<u>(25,944.51)</u>	<u>461,932.05</u>
Deputy Executive Director - Mission	18,464.39	52,150.84	70,615.23
TOTAL	<u>576,525.37</u>	<u>(15,847.02)</u>	<u>560,678.35</u>

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
 PROGRAMMATIC LOAN FUND
 AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2009

RECEIVABLE		Balance 1/01/09	Increase (Decrease)	Balance
1	Receivable from PILP	51,807	(51,807)	-
2	Sheldon Jackson College	100,000	(100,000)	-
3	Receivable from Congregational Ministries Publishing	2,862,401	(1,850,321)	1,012,080
4	Provision for Uncollectible Loans	(100,000)	100,000	-
5	TOTAL PMPF	2,914,208	(1,902,128)	1,012,080
OTHER				
6	Ghost Ranch Conference Center (Abiquiu & Santa Fe)			806,498
7	Stony Point Center			1,359,366
TOTAL				2,165,864



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
 SELF INSURANCE FUND
 AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2009

1	Balance as of 1/01/09		4,249,019
2	Revenues:		
3	Income from investments	101,127	
4	Unrealized gain (loss)	<u>795,359</u>	
5	Total revenues		896,486
6	Expenditures:		
7	Foundation investment fees	(579)	
8	Shared Services management fees	(5,525)	
9	Risk Management recoveries	(138,306)	
10	Insurance claims paid	<u>(56,989)</u>	
11	Total expenditures		<u>(201,399)</u>
12	Funds available 12/31/09		<u><u>4,944,106</u></u>

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
Years Ending December 31, 2007, 2008 & 2009

	2007	2008	%	2009	%
One Great Hour of Sharing					
Presbyterian World Service	2,588,146	2,390,490	-7.64%	2,266,649	-5.18%
Self Development of People	2,587,445	2,362,232	-8.70%	2,266,094	-4.07%
Presbyterian Hunger Program	2,898,181	2,644,755	-8.74%	2,534,278	-4.18%
Promotion	466,006	435,278	-6.59%	439,779	1.03%
Administrative Fee	449,465	412,345	-8.26%	395,096	-4.18%
Total	8,989,242	8,245,100	-8.28%	7,901,896	-4.16%
Christmas/Joy Offering					
Board of Pensions	2,388,891	2,268,271	-5.05%	2,036,720	-10.21%
Minority Education	2,350,690	2,226,378	-5.29%	2,014,724	-9.51%
Promotion Cost	214,750	243,547	13.41%	259,479	6.54%
Administrative Fee	260,709	249,381	-4.35%	226,893	-9.02%
Total	5,215,040	4,987,577	-4.36%	4,537,816	-9.02%
Peacemaking Offering					
Peacemaking	1,096,472	907,541	-17.23%	756,235	-16.67%
Promotion Cost	199,218	212,101	6.47%	211,948	-0.07%
Administrative Fee	65,804	57,691	-12.33%	49,673	-13.90%
Total	1,361,494	1,177,333	-13.53%	1,017,856	-13.55%
Witness Offering					
Global Mission Unit	15,742	15,421	-2.04%	13,025	-15.54%
Education & Congregational Nurture	5,944	6,168	3.77%	5,210	-15.53%
Evangelism & Church Development	9,294	9,252	-0.45%	7,815	-15.53%
Promotion Cost	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Administrative Fee	1,630	1,623	0.00%	1,371	100.00%
Total	32,610	32,464	-0.45%	27,421	-15.53%
Pentecost Offering					
Receipts	688,280	660,537	-4.03%	627,553	-4.99%
Promotion Costs	112,674	160,227	42.20%	188,718	17.78%
Administrative Fee	42,156	43,097	2.23%	43,091	-0.01%
Total	843,110	863,861	2.46%	859,362	-0.52%
TOTALS	16,441,496	15,306,335	-6.90%	14,344,351	-6.28%
Designations					
Hunger	529,136	504,933	-4.57%	497,369	-1.50%
Emergency Relief	2,687,294	3,250,332	20.95%	1,483,940	-54.34%

Note: This report reflects actual receipts and all related adjustments and pass through donations.

Appendix C: 2008 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Staff Analysis Report

2/25/2010

		Exempt										Non-Exempt										Grand Total	Grand %
		Male				Female				Total Exempt		Male				Female				Total Non-Exempt			
		Full Time	Part Time	Total	Total %	Full Time	Part Time	Total	Total %	Total	Total %	Full Time	Part Time	Total	Total %	Full Time	Part Time	Total	Total %	Total	Total %		
CHURCHWIDE TOTALS	Native American	1	0	1	0.0%	3	1	251	10.1%	5	0.2%	0	0	0	0.0%	3	0	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	8	0.3%
	Asian	28	5	33	1.3%	24	3	27	1.1%	60	2.4%	7	3	10	0.4%	12	5	17	0.7%	27	1.1%	87	3.5%
	African American	41	6	47	1.9%	83	11	94	3.8%	141	5.6%	24	7	31	1.2%	100	10	110	4.4%	141	5.6%	282	11.3%
	Hispanic	30	7	37	1.5%	26	4	30	1.2%	67	2.7%	23	11	34	1.4%	39	15	54	2.2%	88	3.5%	155	6.2%
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl.	1	0	1	0.0%	1	0	1	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0	0	0.0%	1	0	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	3	0.1%
	2 or More Races	3	0	3	0.1%	6	0	6	0.2%	9	0.4%	2	0	2	0.1%	3	1	4	0.2%	6	0.2%	15	0.6%
	White	469	143	612	24.5%	550	146	696	27.9%	1308	52.4%	102	43	145	5.8%	339	154	493	19.8%	638	25.6%	1946	78.0%
Totals		573	161	734	29.4%	693	165	858	34.4%	1592	63.8%	158	64	222	8.9%	497	185	682	27.3%	904	36.2%	2496	100.0%
Total Racial Ethnic Women		104	18	122	4.9%	143	19	409	16.4%	284	11.4%	56	21	77	3.1%	158	31	189	7.6%	266	10.7%	550	22.0%
						693	165	1105	44.3%							497	185	682	27.3%			1787	71.6%

Note: Figures include data received as of 2/18/10.

Research Services, PC(USA)

C-4

Item 10-01

[In response to Item 10-01, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See p. 34.]

Alternate Resolution: The General Assembly strongly condemns the gratuitous trivialization of the use of the name of the Lord in the media and directs MRTI to communicate this condemnation to any companies in which it owns stock that own media content or media distribution companies and asks the appropriate office of the General Assembly to make available materials for use by local congregations for conversations with children, youth, and adults to help them determine the effects of media content for their lives.

On Protesting the Blatant Disregard for the Sanctity of Our Lord's Name in Motion Pictures and Public Broadcasting—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

The Presbytery of the Grand Canyon overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to protest in the strongest possible terms the blatant disregard for the sanctity of our Lord's name in motion pictures and public broadcasting by the entertainment industry and direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to send letters to officials of organizations representing the motion picture and public broadcasting industries and members of the United States Congress that express the desires of this overture.

Rationale

Approval by the General Assembly would be an important stand on an issue that is sensitive to many members.

In a time when Presbyterians are often seen by others as bowing to the norms of secular culture, the overture takes a stand against an abhorrent practice.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 10-01 calls for the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to communicate to film and radio executives a strong protest against “the blatant disregard for the sanctity of our Lord's name,” and to communicate this as well to members of Congress.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly to approve Item 10-01 with the following amendment: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of the Grand Canyon overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to protest in the strongest possible terms the blatant disregard for the sanctity of our Lord's name in motion pictures and public broadcasting by the entertainment industry and direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to send letters to officials of organizations representing the motion picture and public broadcasting industries and members of the United States Congress that express the desires of this overture[, supporting measures to allow consumers and citizens not to subsidize degrading and offensive material. In particular, cable TV subscribers should not be forced to pay for objectionable “basic” channels when they ask that such channels be blocked, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should continue to apply considerations of common good, fairness, human dignity, and consumer protection, as well as free speech, in performing its regulatory function. This action should also be referred to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Washington Office and Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment for implementation.]”

Rationale

The proponents of this overture are correct in understanding that many Presbyterians are offended by much of what passes for entertainment in film and on television. They also seem aware that it is not our Presbyterian way simply to denounce things. Thus, beyond the good basics of writing the corporations and our elected representatives, the proposed addition speaks to ways to improve a situation that has evolved, or devolved, over the past fifty years.

1. Market and technology factors have diversified the range of media and delivery systems for all cultural products. Broadcast TV is only used by 20 percent of households, for example, with satellite at 15 percent and cable TV at 65 percent. The internet, DVD players, and other factors make it hard to restrict viewer and listener choices—even in countries with totalitarian regimes.

2. Until 1993, radio and broadcast frequencies were considered public goods that could be used in the public interest by private companies, with those companies obeying some limits on negative content and providing some amount of positive content. In 1993, such frequencies were auctioned off at “fair market value,” with limited public access exceptions. This

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contributed to the erosion of policies, such as the “fairness doctrine,” that required channels to provide opposing viewpoints that limited the amount of unchallenged exaggeration, lying, and abusive language.

3. Under the second Bush Administration, FCC Chairman Keith Martin sought to get a rule passed, as summarized in ACSWP’s amendment, that would allow cable TV subscribers not to pay for “basic” channels they found offensive. This remains one of the few ways to resist the general toleration of lower standards on television. It is technically and financially feasible to block channels and cost-out their percentage of cable bills; claims that this is censorship are simply inaccurate.

4. The degradation of cultural values through cursing, humiliating “reality” programs, pornography, and grotesque levels of violence and horror is of serious consequence to the capacity for worship and respect for human dignity. Various Christian networks and websites provide alternatives but it should be understood that major corporations set the terms for most of what is available on TV, radio, and the Internet.

5. Christian ethicist Alisdair MacIntyre summarizes some of the costs of the loss of concepts such as honor, insult, blasphemy, and obscenity, among others, in “Corporate Modernity and Moral Judgment: Are They Mutually Exclusive?” in *Ethics and Problems of the 21st Century*, K.E. Goodpaster and K.M. Sayre, eds. (Notre Dame & London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979). Many others have also addressed the value of the First Amendment in relation to the costs and benefits of corporate media and cultural trends.

Item 10-02

[The assembly approved Item 10-02 with amendment. See pp. 34, 36.]

On Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the First Social Pronouncement of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

The Presbytery of Chicago respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the first social pronouncement of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at the 1910 General Assembly. The social statement, based on the Social Creed of 1908 passed at the organizing of the Federal Council of Churches, called attention to fourteen social problems related to industrial issues facing the nation. In the light of this precedent, we call for the promotion and education within our congregations and presbyteries of the new Social Creed for the Twenty-first Century passed by our 218th General Assembly (2008), which calls attention to the twenty social problems related to globalization. ~~[We also ask the assembly to direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to distribute the resource, *Connecting to the Creed*, to presbyteries and congregations. [We also ask for *Connecting the Creed* to be posted and provided in digital form by the Office of the General Assembly and printed in limited quantity for presbytery resource centers and other uses. Further, the General Assembly urges the General Assembly Mission Council to include a celebration of the *Social Creed for the Twenty-first Century* at the next Big Tent.]~~

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$0; (2011) \$1,700; (2012) \$0 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Rationale

Industrial conditions in the early 20th century set concerned Christians to calling the churches to appropriate action to remedy the social ills impacting an industrializing U.S. In 1908, at the creation of the Federal Council of Churches, the organizing assembly passed the Social Creed of the Churches. The Social Creed, which outlined specific industrial issues within U.S. society, laid the foundation for the churches’ social and education policies in the next decades.

In 2008, in recognition of a century of social awareness and action on behalf of these issues, the National Council of Churches and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) passed a contemporary Social Creed speaking to the social issues confronting citizens in the 21st century.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 10-02 from the Presbytery of Chicago overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first social pronouncement of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Social Creed of 1908; to promote the Social Creed for the 21st Century adopted by the 218th General Assembly (2008); to educate presbyteries and churches about it; and to direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to distribute *Connecting to the Creed* to presbyteries and congregations.

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The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 10-02 be approved with the following amendment: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Chicago respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the first social pronouncement of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at the 1910 General Assembly. The social statement, based on the Social Creed of 1908 passed at the organizing of the Federal Council of Churches, called attention to fourteen social problems related to industrial issues facing the nation. In the light of this precedent, we call for the promotion and education within our congregations and presbyteries of the new Social Creed for the 21st Century passed by our 218th General Assembly (2008). We also ask the assembly to direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to distribute the resource, *Connecting to the Creed*, to presbyteries and congregations. [Further, the General Assembly urges the General Assembly Mission Council to include a celebration of the Social Creed for the 21st Century at the next Big Tent.]”

Rationale

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved the Social Creed for the 21st Century at the 100th anniversary of the Social Creed of 1908. The 1908 creed focused attention on issues of social justice related to the nation’s industrialization, particularly the rights of workers. In a similar spirit, but with a broader focus, the Social Creed for the 21st Century addresses serious social issues facing Christians at the start of a new century. It is important to the contemporary church’s understanding of the tradition from which it has come and to which it belongs that it celebrate this one hundred years’ tradition of faithful witness to “... the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0200). The Big Tent gathering between General Assemblies is a highly appropriate forum for celebration and education about the Social Creed.

Materials describing this history and facilitating its study are available on the Web site of the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy at <http://www.pcusa.org/acswp>, including the following: *Connecting to the Social Creed*; the Social Creed for the 21st Century in English, as well as in Korean and Spanish; *Toward a New Social Awakening*, a 28 minute DVD; Social Creed poster; *Prayers for a New Social Awakening*, edited by Rev. Christian Iosso and Rev. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty; and *To Do Justice: Using the Creed in Deed*, edited by Rev. Rebecca Todd-Peters and Rev. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty. The advantage of distributing the resource requested is that it is already designed, with some copies already in print.

Item 10-03

[The assembly approved Item 10-03 with amendment. See pp. 34, 37.]

On Urging the United States Congress to Cap Interest Rates on Credit Card Lending—From the Presbytery of Salem.

~~[The Presbytery of Salem respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to adopt a statement urging the United States Congress to pass a law to cap interest rates on credit card lending and direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to the president of the United States and the U.S. Congress.]~~

[The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urges the United States Congress to enact legislation to cap consumer credit interest rates governing credit cards, payday loans, auto title loans, home equity loans, and other frequently usurious practices, to support a consumer finance protection agency independent of banks and other financially interested parties to ensure that such legislation is implemented, and to encourage publicly-owned banks and credit unions to provide more consumer choice and more regional and local investment, and to direct the Stated Clerk and appropriate General Assembly Mission Council offices to communicate this action to the president of the United States, the U.S. Congress, and state governors and state banking commissions.]

[The 217th General Assembly (2006) of the PC(USA) approved a report, *A Reformed Understanding of Usury for the Twenty-First Century*, calling for measures including, but not limited to, ‘... efforts to provide more effective and less costly financial services to people who are now forced to utilize high-cost alternative financial resources...’ and advocate ‘... change of state and federal policies and legislation that allow lenders to take advantage of either the naïveté or financial plight of borrowers ...’ (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 804–805).]

[The 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the ACSWP to produce print and interactive online resources (or make available existing resources) that can be used to educate consumers about predatory lending and encourage healthy borrowing practices and actively promote these resources throughout the church.]

[The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) urges the credit industry to develop specific credit products with low interest rates and appropriate maximums that extend credit and credit counseling to persons in poverty.]

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Rationale

The biblical witness condemns usury as stealing—usury defined as charging any interest on a loan, except to a foreigner.

The Reformed tradition differentiated between loans to individuals and businesses, defining interest as exorbitant interest, and forbidding charging interest to poor persons. The tradition permitted charging interest to businesses because the business and the lender would receive mutual benefit.

The *Book of Order* of the PC(USA) in G-2.0500a(3) and (4) lifts up “[a] faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God’s creation”; and “[t]he recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God.”

The 217th General Assembly (2006) of the PC(USA) advocated church-wide education on financial stewardship and further advocated for federal and state policies on fair lending practices.

A faith grounding mandates us to care for the poor, and, as it indicts us personally and corporately not only for complicity in the sin of usury but also for our failure to live in ways that allow balance between profit and need, the Presbytery of Salem calls on the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) to approve a statement urging the United States Congress to pass a law to cap interest rates on credit card lending.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 10-03 calls for the 219th General Assembly (2010) to urge the United States Congress to pass a law to cap interest rates on credit card lending.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve this overture with the following amendments: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline. Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through.]

“... the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [~~to adopt a statement urging~~] [urges] the United States Congress [~~to pass a law~~][to enact legislation] to cap [consumer credit] interest rates [governing credit cards, payday loans, auto title loans, home equity loans and other frequently usurious practices] [~~on credit card lending~~][to support a consumer finance protection agency independent of banks and other financially interested parties to ensure that such legislation is implemented, and to encourage publicly-owned banks and credit unions to provide more consumer choice and more regional and local investment,] and [to] direct the Stated Clerk [and appropriate General Assembly Mission Council offices] to communicate this action to the president of the United States, and the U. S. Congress [and state governors and state banking commissions].”

The ACSWP also advises the assembly to replace the second paragraph of the *Rationale*, for clarity of reference, with a more specific reference to the report approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006), *A Reformed Understanding of Usury for the Twenty-First Century*. The ACSWP suggests the following substitute wording: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and strike-through. Text to be added is shown with brackets and underline.]

“~~[In 2008, in recognition of a century of social awareness and action on behalf of these issues, the National Council of Churches and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) passed a contemporary Social Creed speaking to the social issues confronting citizens in the 21st century.]~~ [The 217th General Assembly (2006) of the PC(USA) approved a report, *A Reformed Understanding of Usury for the Twenty-First Century*, calling for measures including, but not limited to, “... efforts to provide more effective and less costly financial services to people who are now forced to utilize high-cost alternative financial resources...”, and advocate “... change of state and federal policies and legislation that allow lenders to take advantage of either the naïveté or financial plight of borrowers ...” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 804–805).]

Rationale

These changes would allow the church to speak more broadly in support of legislation to restrict interest on payday loans, car title loans, and other usurious practices, and to address the need to protect all consumers and borrowers from overly complex and risky financial investments. This is a very complex subject, especially in the current economy.

The ACSWP also notes the basis for action in the major report “Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development,” approved by the 208th General Assembly (1996). This report deals primarily with policies for global

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human development; however, many of the biblical and theological principles cited in this report are applicable in the matter of individual indebtedness. The following brief excerpt is an example:

... The repayment of debts and interest at the expense of the basics of life raises serious questions of justice... Justice is an expression of love in social relationships and in community and national life. It is not merely a legalistic rendering of another's "dues" but is fairness combined with compassion and kindness. It is both an individual responsibility and a responsibility of government. And while justice is to be done at all, the persons of prime concern are those most vulnerable: the poor, the needy, the hungry, the widow, the fatherless, and the sojourner or stranger...

In the prophets we find implicit condemnation of those who afflict the poor for nonpayment of debt...

Without making simplistic comparison between that [biblical] time and our time, we have to confess that greed, expressed in ever more sophisticated ways, remains prominent. The burdens and benefits of production and distribution are not shared so that all may participate in sustainable sufficiency... (*Minutes*, 1996, pp. 539–540)

Recently, both the *Christian Century* ("The People's Interest," by Jess J. DeConto, January 12, 2010) and *Sojourners* ("Leveling the Playing Field," interview with Elizabeth Warren, April 2010) provide stories on Christian efforts to improve economic fairness.

Item 10-04

[This item has been moved to 11 Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues–B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World as Item 11-09.]

Item 10-05

[This item has been moved to 11 Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues–B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World as Item 11-10.]

Item 10-06

[The assembly approved Item 10-06 with amendment. See pp. 34, 36-37.]

A Resolution to Study Violence Against Women and Children on the Mexico-U.S. Border—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

1. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to create a study group to examine the issue of violence against women and children along the United States-Mexico border], and in particular the circumstances in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico,] in consultation with [Presbyterian Border Ministries, the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico,] the Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus, Hispanic/Latino-a Congregational [~~Enhancement~~] [Support Office], Presbyterian Women, ACWC, and presbyteries along the border], seeking concrete actions that the PC(USA), its agencies, congregations and partners, both in the U.S. and in Mexico, can implement to effectively impact this tragic issue within our own church and culture, as well as our neighbors, in a timely manner].

2. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to create bilingual study materials in consultation with the Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus and Hispanic/Latino-a Congregational Enhancement for congregations directly dealing with and seeking education around issues of violence against women, including education surrounding issues connected to "machismo" cultures.

[3. Direct GAMC to continue their work on the border and denounce violence against women and children on the Mexican-United States border.]

[Financial Implications: (2010) \$10,980; (2011) \$24,470; (2012) \$0 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Rationale

The 208th General Assembly (1996) directed the former General Assembly Council (GAC) to "give priority to new programs and funding to those programs that benefit women and children, particularly the women and children in economically impoverished and marginalized communities" (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 610).

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For more than fifteen years, women in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico have been disappearing. Amnesty International reported in 2006 that over eleven years, more than 400 women and girls were killed or disappeared. The scene of violence and murder in Juárez has only escalated throughout 2009 as a result of combat against drug cartels, including an increase in the numbers of women both murdered and disappeared. On the occasions when these women or girls are found, they have typically been brutally raped, mutilated, and murdered. Some suspect human trafficking plays a role in these disappearances. Others believe the disappearances could be related to cult activity. Still others wonder if the violence is not connected to the increase of women working in the city's factories while men continue to struggle to find work.

Whatever the case, the situation continues to be an unresolved tragedy that affects the daily lives of people living on the border. Aside from the disappearance of women along the border, women in the midst of the violence there are subject to unjust labor conditions, sexual slavery, hate crimes, and separation from family and children.

Clearly, this is an issue that affects those who find themselves already largely marginalized by society—women and children. As the Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus has also noted, this is an issue that directly affects men and women within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), particularly those living on or near the border, but also all who claim the call to follow Christ and serve “the least of these” (Mt. 25:40).

As a denomination, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has not taken any official action related to this situation since 2004–2005, when a letter was sent to government officials urging action regarding this situation. The Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus brought this situation back to the attention of ACWC, who now recommends the church again take action. The ACWC asked that the Stated Clerk and Moderator of the General Assembly write a letter asking the governor of Chihuahua and the president of Mexico to take action to resolve the violence.

In direct response to the letter received from the Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus, ACWC also commends to the church the importance of examining and educating people about cultural traditions that may contribute to discrimination and violence against women. As noted by the Hispanic-Latino Caucus, there is a need for “re-education” surrounding the culture of “machismo” within Hispanic-Latino communities.

The issue of violence against women and girls along the border has for too long gone unaddressed or under-addressed by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is time for the church to draw its attention there, to confront the violence and the systemic nature of that violence fostered by some Hispanic-Latino cultures. In light of our commitment as a denomination to giving priority to funding programs that benefit women and children in marginalized communities, giving attention to and seeking justice for the women and children of Juarez seems only fitting.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 10-06

Comment on Item 10-06—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) affirms that the church should denounce violence against women and children on the Mexico-U.S. border and around the world. The scope of the recommendations of the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC), however, is vast. The issue of violence exists on both sides of the border. Studying this matter will not ensure that this situation will be addressed by the Mexican government or those with the responsibility of providing a safe environment for women, children, and the citizens of Mexico, particularly those in Ciudad Juárez. Further, the creation of bilingual study materials by the GAMC around issues of violence against women and “machismo” cultures, to be distributed to Presbyterians in the U.S., will not unravel the growing violence in Ciudad Juárez and other cities in Mexico, much of it linked to drug traffickers.

Violence against women and children along the Mexico-U.S. border might better be addressed by Presbyterian Border Ministry, a joint ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, <<http://www.presbyterianborderministry.org>>. We commend Presbyterian Border Ministry in their assistance to visiting mission teams up and down the border region, helping them to become more aware of the situation and the causes of violence in the region. This has led some groups to advocacy, appealing to the U.S. government to take responsibility for arms trafficking, and pressuring the Mexican government to take responsibility for the violence against women in Juárez. We also commend and encourage churches on both sides of the border at Juárez, Mexico, and in El Paso, Texas, to continue to urge local and state authorities to investigate each case and to utilize radio, correspondence, and rallies to highlight this important issue.

Item 10-07

[The assembly approved Item 10-07 with amendment. See pp. 34, 35.]

A Resolution to Explore the Intersection of Gender and Race—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) [direct the Office of General Assembly to] request that presbyteries explore local resources and conduct training in cultural proficiency on the intersection of race with gender, using as a resource the book, *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God*, in recognition of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s decade of hearing, singing, and celebrating the voices and contributions of women of color.

Rationale

The 218th General Assembly (2008) declared 2009 to 2019 a “Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God” in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In response to this declaration, the Women of Color Joint Working Group was formed as a permanent committee called to monitor the church’s response to issues and concerns of racial ethnic women in the church. (See *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Report of the Women of Color Consultation Task Force to the 218th General Assembly (2008)*; *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 964–77).

Since the Women of Color Joint Working Group was created, they have been working on promoting this decade of recognizing racial ethnic women. Unfortunately, efforts to spread the news throughout the church have yet to be very successful. For this reason, ACWC is requesting that presbyteries be asked to draw their attention to this General Assembly declaration and actively work to dismantle the racism and sexism that exists within the church and society.

The book, *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God*, published by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), documents some of the history of the experience of women of color in the PC(USA) and makes suggestions on confronting the unique experiences of racism and sexism that women of color experience. While the Women of Color Joint Working Group is officially responsible for monitoring the church on these matters, it is essential that the church as a whole collaborate in these efforts.

Given that at the time of the 219th General Assembly (2010), we will be one and a half years into the “Decade of Hearing and Singing” with little to no recognition having been given to this General Assembly mandated celebration, the time for the church to act on what it has put into writing is well overdue. Asking presbyteries to join in this celebration by actively working to educate church members on the intersection of gender and race is one small and overdue step in hearing and singing new songs to God.

The book *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God* is available for free through The Presbyterian Marketplace (<http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace>), or the document can be downloaded free online at: <http://www.pcusa.org/acwc/wocctaskforcereport02-22-08.pdf>.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 10-07 be approved.

Rationale

This item is regarding a joint task force originally formed with the cooperation of ACREC and ACWC to study the position of women of color in church and society. The ACREC has been represented in the study and the task force and urges the church to explore the intersection between gender and race.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 10-07

Comment on Item 10-07—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) agrees with the intent of Item 10-07, and offers the following insertion to direct which entity will be responsible for responding to the action: [Text to be added is shown as italic with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) [direct the Office of General Assembly to] request that presbyteries explore local resources and conduct training in cultural

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proficiency on the intersection of race with gender, using as a resource the book, *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God*, in recognition of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s decade of hearing, singing, and celebrating the voices and contributions of women of color.”

This amendment will assure that if the General Assembly approves this action, it will be referred to the Office of General Assembly. The GACOR is lodged and staffed through the Office of General Assembly and will commit itself to monitoring this requested action.

Recognizing a similar function within its own mission and mandate and outlined in its Manual of Operations, the General Assembly Committee on Representation has a sister committee at each level of the denominational structure with the exception of the session.

The GACOR uses the tools of cultural proficiency in its Biennial Synod COR Trainings to equip committees on representation for their work. Recognizing the deeper understanding made possible when race and gender are examined together and as they intersect and affect women of color in particular, the GACOR supports the action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) in approving the report and recommendations of the Women of Color Consultation Task Force, *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God*.

Each committee on representation includes a function to be “... a continuing resource to the particular governing body” (G-9.0105c.) and in doing so, encourages training at every governing body level to encourage diverse and inclusive leadership and equip the body for inclusiveness.

Item 10-08

[The assembly approved Item 10-08. See pp. 34, 35.]

*A Resolution Supporting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)—
From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Office of the Stated Clerk to send a letter to the president and Congress calling on the United States government to ratify, without reservations, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Rationale

The United Nations (UN) has a commitment to promoting human rights, and within that commitment, recognition that securing and promoting the rights of women specifically still requires intentional focused attention throughout the world. For this reason, the work of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women has been essential for providing crucial declarations that protect women’s rights.

In December of 1979, the UN adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a document created by the Commission on the Status of Women as a comprehensive agreement to end discrimination against women and girls around the globe. Since then, 186 countries have ratified the convention, committing themselves to the standards laid out by the document that call for equal treatment of women in all spheres of life, including education, employment, health care, and legal rights in confronting violence. Only eight countries in the UN have not ratified CEDAW, including Iran, Somalia, Sudan, and the United States of America.

The U.S. failure to ratify the treaty signals an unwillingness to commit to the standards of just treatment for women spelled out by the document. As a denomination committed to struggling against sexism, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has explicitly articulated in the Articles of Agreement (Section 5.6) its commitment to work against gender-based discrimination. It was appropriate, then, that the 199th General Assembly (1987) asked that the U.S. ratify CEDAW.

With the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of CEDAW on December 2009, attention was again drawn to the failure of the U.S. to ratify this international treaty and commit the country to these global standards for women’s rights. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) requests that the PC(USA) reaffirm its commitment to gender equality and to continue its prophetic mission for justice by submitting a renewed request to the U.S. government for the ratification of CEDAW.

Item 10-09

[The assembly approved Item 10-09 with amendment. See pp. 34–35.]

Living Through Economic Crisis: The Church's Witness in Troubled Times: A Social Involvement Report for the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010), affirming the values of human rights, covenant community, public responsibility, vocation-affirming work, and sustainability, approve the following recommendations to be communicated by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and advocated by appropriate offices of the General Assembly Mission Council:

1. That the Stated Clerk be requested to send a copy of this social involvement report to each [~~pastor~~ congregation] in the denomination.

2. That the appropriate PC(USA) ministry area or areas, including the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), [~~the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns,~~] be directed to develop a study for the 220th General Assembly (2012) that assesses the long-term implications of our current economic trends and practices, including their impact on the church itself, and provides appropriate recommendations for consideration by members, congregations, presbyteries, and local, state, and federal government. This assessment should center on the role of fairness and justice in our economy, with particular attention to growing inequality, the decline of the middle class, the tax structure, the shifting makeup of the labor force and its effects on employee rights, the role of regulatory agencies in protecting the public interest, and access to environmental resources that is equitable and sustainable. [The study should also reflect the concern of the impact of the economic crisis on women and incorporate case studies of both women and men.]

3. That congregations be invited to create within their midst ways of supporting [~~individual, unemployed persons and, if appropriate, their families~~]persons and families impacted by unemployment, under-employment, and economic downturn].

4. That congregations and families be urged to meet together to discuss actions and behavioral changes that they might undertake to lower their consumption, live more simply, and share their resources more generously.

5. That all members, congregations, and presbyteries be requested to advocate for the preservation and strengthening of public services essential for the public good, e.g., education, libraries, fire and police protection, and others as appropriate to local circumstances.

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$9,045; (2011) \$27,885; (2012) \$3,110 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Rationale

A. Troubled Times

Headlines in every community, small town, rural area, and urban city, put in bold print what lives in many homes as personal pain and wrenching fear: State jobless rate climbs higher, National unemployment now at 10.2 percent, Underemployment at 17 percent, One in four families suffer job loss in past year, Many youth have no career ladder to climb, Pension losses estimated in trillions, Weak job market fuels more foreclosures, Personal bankruptcies at record high, State budgets strapped, Cities struggle to provide basic services, No police response to breaking and entering, Requests for food assistance soar, 49 million Americans hungry, Poverty rising.¹

These losses to human well-being and dignity impact each of our congregations in some way. Few pastors today have lived through such difficult times. In the past one could count on community resources to help with a family in stress. Today community service organizations themselves are struggling to survive. Community amenities that soften the hard edges of life, such as libraries, recreational centers, neighborhood parks, youth sports, and school bands, are being cut from government budgets just as more families need them. Even the basic foundations of community life, police and fire departments, school systems and community colleges, public transportation, and infrastructure, are being cut back. Many communities are unable to maintain what were once considered essential services.

As we wrestle with how to respond to the growing human needs in our own communities and congregations, we learn that other populations are also battered by the consequences of suddenly unreliable economic theories. Hard won reductions in poverty achieved in many countries during the 1990s have been too quickly reversed.² More than one billion people worldwide are undernourished and need greater emergency food response. We are told that a child dies every six seconds from malnutrition.³ But we have been hearing about world hunger for a lifetime. Now, as hunger, job loss, homelessness,

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underemployment, loss of health insurance, and other blows to family well-being appear in our own neighborhoods, perhaps we begin to realize that for some in the human family such deprivation, and worse, has been a way of life for generations. What media describe as a new economic crisis is not at all new for too many people. It is not new to some of our communities and churches even here in the United States. Some of our urban and rural churches, having struggled for decades with depression level conditions as daily realities, are further tightening their already too-tight belts to keep doors open and compassion flowing to ever growing numbers of God's children in need.⁴ As in the Great Depression, a growing number of congregations will be forced to close.

Other headlines project a vastly different reality. "Wall Street profits return, big bonuses likely." "Wealth gap widens: Chasm between wealthiest households and everyone else has grown more than 50 percent since 1960s." "Wealth inequality is vast and growing."⁵ Compensation at the largest investment banks for 2009 is projected to total around \$140 billion. This continuing reward structure increases the danger of our becoming more of a class society, with limited social mobility for many and political control by powerful interests and elites. We learn that the United States has the highest rate of economic inequality among all industrialized nations.⁶ In spite of our wealth, we learn that a comparison of national health indicators ranks the United States as number thirty-seven in the community of nations.⁷ We wonder why that is and whether it matters. How are Christians to evaluate this economy, our roles in it, and our responsibilities to it? And if the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a "middle class church," how do we adapt when the middle class declines?

These questions are sharpened as we face the realization that the billions of dollars spent to stabilize the economy, through the Troubled Asset Recovery Program (TARP) and other parts of the stimulus package, have helped an even-more concentrated financial sector return to profitability while unemployment remains dramatically high and the U.S. manufacturing sector continues to evaporate. While the decline of manufacturing began earlier and is due partly to a deliberately undervalued Chinese currency, the tilt toward massive balance of payments deficits and high consumer debt also reflects the growth of the financial sector over the past thirty years. Even with gigantic infusions of public money, bank lending has been limited and consumer finance protections have been stubbornly resisted, particularly in the area of credit card fees. Of more consequence to overall economic stability, the incentives for speculative currency "bets," leveraged buyouts, junk bonds, collateralized debt obligations, and credit default swaps—components of the credit meltdown—remain largely unregulated and allowed to impact consumer finance. It is this nonproducing part of the economy, "Wall Street," and its finance lobby, which spent \$476 million on the 2008 election campaign alone, that has benefited while "Main Street" and most family budgets have suffered.⁸ No wonder that many prominent economists, including some who were instrumental in conceptualizing our current laissez-faire economic model, now admit that their theories were flawed.⁹ Others go further in labeling our economically troubled times as a "global crisis of American capitalism."¹⁰

B. *The Church's Witness*

At a moment like this, it may be that we are more willing to ask questions that have long engaged the minds of Presbyterians, even if rarely heard in our society at large. When we are stretched to understand how, who, and, more deeply, the meaning of it all, perhaps we are better prepared to reconsider the insights and wisdom of our biblical and theological traditions regarding the oikonomia, the economy: its impact on our lives through production, distribution, and consumption behaviors.¹¹ As Christians, especially Christians of the Reformed tradition, this may be the moment to reaffirm that the management of our lives through any economy is always part of our response to God's oikonomia, God's own work of creation, redemption, and reconciliation. Economic systems are not "laws unto themselves ... free of religious and moral constraints . . ."¹² To believe so is a denial of God's sovereignty. Our Reformed tradition teaches us that we are called to shape the economic system, as we are called to shape every aspect of our lives, as a service to God. In 1993, the 205th General Assembly reaffirmed this principle:

Churches in the Reformed tradition are sustained by worship, make corporate confessions of faith, and are known for their engagement with the public order. This is not without reason. For Reformed Christians, God is at the center of life in all its varied facets. God is active in the world as its creator and redeemer, neither staying on the sidelines nor being contained within certain boundaries. Churches seek to witness to God in public life because God is present there.¹³

Therefore, we Presbyterians evaluate any economic system not simply on the basis of the material goods and services it provides, but especially on the basis of its human consequences: what it is doing to people, what it is doing with people, and what it is doing for people, particularly the most vulnerable among us. In our tradition, economic behavior, like all behavior, must be subject to moral scrutiny. For this reason the church must speak to the present economic crisis, to the devastation it has brought, and to the hope to which we bear witness: that in Christ a more just order is arising.

C. *Economics in Biblical and Reformed Traditions*

Despite the complexity of modern life, the rise of a global economy, and the invention of financial instruments not fully understood by even the smartest Wall Street inhabitants, the church continues to speak from its unshakable foundation:

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and all those who live in it" (Ps. 24:1, NRSV).

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From this foundation, this insistence that all humans belong to God and all creation is owned by God, the church asserts that the secular economy—the business of production, marketing, distribution, and consumption—exists within and under God’s management. Biblical examples of economic values abound. The Jubilee traditions in Leviticus 25 speak to the social harm caused by unrelieved debt and its resulting servitude. They speak to the response of the righteous. Those who have legally accumulated wealth due to the misfortunes of others are called upon to return it to those families from whom it originally came. Centuries of prophetic indictments of poverty caused by landowners’ abandonment of social responsibilities and absence of compassion equate justice with true knowledge and worship of God (for example, Am. 5:21–24). Jesus describes assistance to the neediest, the sick, the naked, and the imprisoned, as service to the Son of Man (Mt. 25:31–46). He proclaims woe to the rich and sated after blessing the poor and hungry (Lk. 6:20–26). Biblical economic values demand nothing less than the establishment of economic well-being for all, those present today and those who will follow us, as the purpose of society’s economy and its faithful response to God.

Thus, any economy, regardless of size or form, is judged by its capacity to serve the needs of people, particularly the most vulnerable. This has been the historical witness of the Reformed tradition. For example, the Westminster Larger Catechism interpreted the commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” to include these positive economic activities:

... giving and lending freely according to our abilities and the necessity of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods; ... frugality; ... and an endeavor by all just and lawful means to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own” (7.251).¹⁴

In a 21st century response to contemporary lending practices, the 217th General Assembly (2006) stated that “a proper understanding of usury for this (or any other century) will attend to the business practices surrounding lending.” It proposed three criteria for evaluating lending practices: does the law or practice (a) “take advantage of the financial distress of those economically disadvantaged,” (b) “balance the economic benefit of both the lender and the borrower,” and (c) “lead to the conduct of financial transactions in a fair and just manner” including truthfulness, nondiscrimination, full and clear disclosure, and no coercion?¹⁵ Sadly we recognize the dramatic relevance of these moral principles for our times. Would that the subprime lenders and lax regulators had listened to the church—or that we had spoken more clearly!

In light of growing knowledge about our surrounding physical environment, the church has come to recognize that the gospel’s message of commitment to and responsibility for others exists within the context of earth’s limited capacity to provide resources and reabsorb our wastes. The earth simply cannot sustain itself under the weight of the unlimited consumption and subsequent waste produced by 6.8 billion people. Therefore, a just distribution of material goods and the wealth to acquire them,

... put[s] moral limits on economic activity for the sake of human well-being, future generations, and nonhuman life. It calls for a renewed emphasis on the Reformed norm of frugality and lifts up the norm of sufficiency so that all may participate in the ‘good life,’ calling for abundant living in caring communities in a way that is less materialistic and more frugal.”¹⁶

A year of revelations about financial arrangements pursued for profit, without regard for risk to individuals and communities, yet rewarded by salaries, bonuses, and stock options beyond the ken of 95 percent of our U.S. households, reveals just how far from the moral standards of frugality and sufficiency our economic practices have drifted.¹⁷

When economic conditions have not been just, the church has spoken out forcefully. The Social Creed of 1908 denounced the appalling conditions of the working poor and demanded a living wage, safe working conditions, the right of all people to self-maintenance, and the “abatment of poverty.”¹⁸ The 208th General Assembly (1996) denounced the very existence of poverty as “... ‘intolerable,’ a moral scandal of maldistribution and unsustainability, that disregards human dignity, solidarity, and equity, as well as ecological integrity.” And, yet, the church confessed with anguish, poverty “has been condoned by churches and societies!”¹⁹ In 2006 and 2008, the General Assembly approved *Just Globalization* and then *A Social Creed for the 21st Century*, both of which speak to wrongful economic conditions that continue to deny millions basic conditions of dignity while threatening the health of the planet.²⁰

In summary, these two principles, (1) economic justice for all (the establishment of economic conditions that support the human flourishing of all), and (2) sustainability (the establishment of conditions of economic justice today that will not destroy the earth’s capacity to provide abundant life to future generations), remain the basis of the biblical and Reformed imperative to promote social righteousness in economic matters.²¹ They remain the plumb lines against which economic practices in the 21st century must be judged. They are the product of a way of thinking about God, neighbor, self, and all of creation derived from Reformed beliefs and values that refute many economic assumptions and practices commonly accepted by our society today.

D. *The Church’s Message for Troubled Times*

A number of biblical and theological themes provide the moral principles to guide the church’s witness in these trying times.

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1. *Protecting the Human Rights* of all safeguards the dignity with which God has created each. Grounded in the biblical affirmation that all humans are created by God and in God's image, the church teaches that all humans have certain rights that are essential to living with dignity as children of God. In 1978, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. adopted a Declaration of Human Rights that included the right to basic needs such as work, food, clothing, and shelter, as well as the right and responsibility to participate in one's community. Subsequent church policies have lifted up other needs as human rights, such as adequate health care and the right of older persons to adequate material resources.²² *Hope for a Global Future* reaffirmed that such rights include "the satisfaction of basic biophysical needs, [and] physical security."²³ The fulfillment of these human rights by society is the first priority of a just economy, and should guide economic decisions regarding the production, distribution, and consumption of resources. The lack of such fulfillment where resources are adequate becomes evidence of injustice that the church denounces as "moral scandal." Yet, as these are human rights, Christians in the United States must gage our use of the earth's resources in light of the rights of all other humans to the resources that sustain their lives. We are all challenged by the church's statement of this first principle in its *Resolution on Just Globalization*: "The satisfaction of basic needs is indispensable for human development. Sufficiency for all requires that poverty be eradicated and that the affluent live more frugally...."²⁴

2. *Living in Covenant Community* presents us with moral guides for our use of private property. Who owns the land? The Bible recognizes the goodness of private ownership of property. In agricultural societies, owning land permitted people to work and sustain themselves in dignity, owning the products of their labor. The Jubilee traditions testify to the importance of this concept. Today, the economic basis of maintaining our lives with dignity may take many forms: land, stocks and bonds, money, jobs, social safety nets. Yet, all of these ultimately depend on "land" as the material basis of human life. The biblical witness is equally emphatic that the land, that is, all forms of property, belongs first and ultimately to God (Lev. 25:23), as do our very lives. As these two concepts merge, Christians see that our personal ownership of property, regardless of the form it takes, is relative and finite. We own it for a short while; and we own it subject always to God's purposes. We own it mortgaged to a much larger household, the oikonomia of God who declared that "there will be no poor among you ..., if only you will obey the voice of the LORD your God ..." (Deut. 15:4 RSV).

Covenant is the biblical concept that points to this quality of community. Covenant is the name for human community defined by the individual's commitment to the well-being of all within the community. Covenant is the context in which individuals flourish in community as one family. In the covenant community, the organization of society is based on our recognition that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, and they are ours. We acknowledge that shalom, that peace that grows out of our just and loving relationships with one another and God, is rooted in our actual interconnectedness and interdependence. In covenant community the unjust suffering of any diminishes all. There is no place in covenant community for the secular celebration of possessive individualism. The singular pursuit of self interest, even in the economy, has no biblical warrant. Indeed, the Bible warns against the seductive nature of possessions and wealth, as well as the idolatry that results when we identify ourselves with them and endlessly strive to obtain them. With realism we recognize the power of financial incentives, but Jesus' greatest commandments broadcast the greater incentives of love.

3. By *Engaging with the Public Order* we work to create a common good. As Christians in the Reformed tradition, we have been guided by John Calvin's concept of a third use of God's law: namely, that through the gift of God's grace, we can strive to live more faithfully not only as individuals, but as community.²⁵ Seeing God at work in all of life, we see the public arena of laws and policies as instruments through which the good of all should be discerned, provided and defended. Good laws and policies guide believers and non-believers to live together in mutual regard for the good of all. It is because government works for the good of all that Calvin considered service in it the "highest vocation."

For example, recognizing that an unfettered, competitive market system inevitably tends to consolidate wealth and power in the hands of fewer people, the Reformed tradition has emphasized the importance of the role of government to establish and maintain conditions that nurture human development and safeguard equality of opportunity: "A fundamental task of government is to organize and preserve the basic social support systems that enable individuals and their mediating institutions to thrive together cooperatively and fairly."²⁶ This typically takes the form of government support for those institutions that serve the common good, such as schools, infrastructure, public recreational facilities, product safety, defense, and even, as we have now seen, the rescue of private companies deemed "too big to fail." It also takes the form of regulations that protect our health and safety, promote civil rights, safeguard us as homeowners or renters, workers, consumers and savers, and provide special care to us as children, the sick or disabled, and the elderly. In a large and complex society, government also responds to the needs of those for whom a supposedly rational and efficient economy does not work. Among the many who are not adequately supported by our current economic model are: low-wage workers (one in four workers earned poverty-level wages in 2007),²⁷ the unemployed, the underemployed, the young, the elderly, the sick, and the disabled.

In this economic crisis, these public interest functions of government have been revealed once more as essential to the good quality of our society. Richard A. Posner, long a leading figure in the conservative "Chicago School" of economics, argues that "we need a more active and intelligent government to keep our model of a capitalist economic from running off the rails."²⁸ Deregulation has proven itself as harmful as over-regulation. The revolt against taxation has been as devastating

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to the common good, to schools, to roads, and to our capacity for response to the basic needs of our citizens, as is the wasteful use of government revenues. In the Reformed tradition, government is seen as having a positive role to play in creating the social conditions that support and encourage us to live cooperatively for one another, as God has commanded and Jesus has modeled. It is through regulation and taxation that government carries out our covenant responsibilities to protect the social foundation that supports individual and family well-being. Realism, again, says that we bear each other's burdens partly through taxation, given the time-proven limits of charity.

Let us be clear: historically, the United States has been economically and socially healthier when it has been more egalitarian and when broad, high-quality public education increased productivity in every sphere. Thus the role of government is not simply about taxation and redistribution, but includes planning and public investment to create infrastructure, public utilities and transportation grids, and to encourage research. To be an opportunity society, we need to be a stewardship society, one that measures not only aggregate financial numbers but also monitors the social impacts of unemployment and poverty. The disincentives of inequality lead some to resentment and discouragement, limited horizons and literal depression, the rise of addictions and the increasing break-up of families. It leads others to a hardening of hearts, disinterest in the common good, and a false sense of self-worth and entitlement. A "great recession" seems an appropriate time to review the effectiveness of public subsidies, public debt, and arbitrary restrictions on governmental creativity. This may be a time to examine the ideological preference for subsidizing the private sector. From a pragmatic standpoint, for example, could direct public investment in "green jobs," and sectors such as public health, student loans, and public transportation be more socially efficient in some cases, and leave fewer Americans behind?

4. *Work* of all kinds is a calling through which we serve God, neighbor, and self. In Reformed theology, work, all work, is understood as a vocation: a response of gratitude to God and of love to neighbor. Through work we contribute not only to the material well-being of our society, but also to its moral quality, particularly its ability to nurture human development. With this understanding of the value and purpose of what we do when we work, we can pursue our earthly callings with vigor. In Christ, however, we reject secular judgments about the value of people and their work based on monetary measures of success expressed in the accumulation of wealth and possessions.

Work is also the way we carry out our responsibility to care for our families. Work, in this sense, embraces both unpaid and paid activities. The economy, often thought to encompass only paid work, includes and impacts both. In the current crisis, middle-income families subject to pay or job loss are experiencing the increase in unpaid work that occurs when family income declines and public services are reduced or eliminated. Perhaps this experience reveals to some of us the hard, time-consuming, but unpaid, work the poor must always do to survive. Because our church values the unpaid work of families, it has called for "a society in which the well-being of every child is nurtured and supported. ... in which families have sufficient time together at home to nurture relationships, to care for children and other dependents, and to worship God together."²⁹

Yet it is through paid work that most families gain their essential access "to sufficient economic resources to support the household and care for dependents."³⁰ Paid work clearly impacts the quality of our communities and our families. It has the power to enhance or deny human dignity and well-being. All of our uniquely human capacities, our cultural creativity, spirituality, and moral sensitivity, require a sufficiency of basic material support (needs). Therefore, the assumption that efficiency and profit are the only legitimate goals of economic institutions is false. The church challenges any economic system that ignores its responsibility to provide the material conditions that support human dignity and encourage the development of human capabilities. For these reasons, the church has long called for economic and political policies that support full and fair employment, including the following principles from *God's Work in Our Hands*:

- The foundation upon which all just employment policies are built is access to employment at a level of compensation that allows people to live in dignity and security. ...
- Inequalities in compensation and working conditions demand the strictest scrutiny. ...
- All conditions of paid employment, including compensation and working conditions, should sustain and nurture the dignity of individuals, the well-being of households and families, the social cohesiveness of communities, and the integrity of the global environment.³¹

To achieve these and other just employment conditions, the church affirms that people must have the opportunity to participate in economic decisions that will impact them. Thus, the church has long endorsed the right of all workers to choose to organize for collective bargaining.³² A *Social Creed for the 21st Century* reaffirms "The rights of workers to organize, and to share in workplace decisions and productivity growth."³³

In contrast to these principles, recent decades have seen stagnation in the wages of most nonsupervisory workers and a weakening of workers' organizations. The percentage of workers covered by employer-based health insurance is declining, as is the percentage covered by pensions. Fewer pensions provide a guaranteed income at retirement. Job elimination has often

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become the first step in cost reduction. However, in these same decades, the compensation of executives has soared even as the middle class feels increasingly squeezed. In 2007 the average CEOs of major companies earned 275 times what average (nonsupervisory) workers made. Twenty years earlier the ratio was 71 to 1.³⁴ Clearly, the benefits of increased productivity have shifted away from most workers and communities to concentrate within the highest levels of management and the primary owners of stock.³⁵ And when the capital gains or profits from securities are taxed at only half the rate for “earned income,” economic inequality is further reinforced.

Christian discipleship calls us to challenge these practices. We do that when we embody our biblical and Reformed values in our own institutions and work for their embodiment in our secular economy. Christian faith calls us to pray for the imagination, courage and commitment that such discipleship will require.

5. The challenge of *Sustainability* revives the importance of a tradition of frugality. For some, unfortunately, the word frugality has come to mean a rigidity and austerity that wrings out joyful living. However, in the Reformed tradition its true meaning refers to the virtue of living with moderation as recipients of Christ’s love and as loving neighbors of all others. Its meaning calls upon us as individuals, households, and economic institutions to apply an ethical discipline to our production, distribution, and consumption. It calls upon us to consider the good of all, the covenant community, in which we live—now a global community. John Calvin summarized frugality this way: “We are the stewards of everything God has conferred on us by which we are able to help our neighbor, and are required to render account of our stewardship. ... the only right stewardship is that which is tested by the rule of love.”³⁶

Today, the word “sustainability” expands our understanding of frugality to include the protection of the planet and the real limits of the environment to support an ever-expanding human economy. In the face of poverty and ecological devastation, frugality oriented towards sustainability is an urgent moral responsibility for each of us. Clearly this ethic raises a moral challenge to lifestyles that consume many times over the consumption level of average Americans. However, as those of us who are “average” learn that our lifestyles would require the resources of four or more planets if copied by everyone on earth, we too are confronted by the moral challenge of this ethic. In contrast to endless consumerism, the values of frugality and sustainability challenge us to redefine our material needs in light of the needs of others who are our neighbors and God’s children. It challenges us to redefine our material needs in light of the needs of future generations. And it challenges us to redefine our material needs in light of the needs of the earth that first and ultimately belongs only to God.

E. *The Church’s Call to Witness*

Biblical and Reformed values raise significant questions about the way our economy functions, its assumptions, and its values. As one Presbyterian study document put it almost three decades ago, “What is clear is that our corporate economic life is now committed to and fosters a new notion of humanity, one deeply antithetical to our Christian convictions.”³⁷

If that is true, even if only in part, then we as Christians are called to envision a new economic paradigm, a new way of incorporating biblical values into economic life. While this challenge is great, it is not impossible. Indeed, the knowledge and wisdom it will require could emerge now out of the experience of our congregations and communities in this time of unjust loss and suffering. As a human creation, a dysfunctional economy can be reshaped by a Christian response of witness and action. What can we do, as individuals, congregations, and denomination?

First, we can acknowledge our responsibilities. We can neither look away from these issues, nor claim a stance of neutrality. As individuals, families, congregations, and denomination, we are the economic actors who participate in making things the way they are. Some of us benefit materially a good deal more than others of us from a system that today has produced a level of inequality not seen since the 1920s. Some of us are experiencing an extent of material loss and insecurity that we never imagined could happen to our responsibly led lives. Some of us have suffered such conditions long before the present recession, particularly in our racial ethnic communities. As members of one Body, we must look to one another and discover the connections between our different experiences. Answering the question, “Am I my sister’s and brother’s keeper?” requires that we come to know our sisters and brothers, globally as well as locally, and learn how our lives intersect, for better or worse, through our economic choices.

Second, we can study and learn together. Economics is not the monopoly of economists. How a society organizes the economic activity that sustains life will be rooted in the beliefs and values of all its members. Experts can be helpful in explaining how things work and how they came to be this way. They can provide important social analysis that helps us to understand the issues we face. There will be disagreement among them, requiring us to read diverse sources and perhaps frustrating us. At this time, after the successive collapse of speculative “bubbles” in the technology and housing markets, beliefs in the “rational expectations” and “efficient markets” theories have been widely discredited.³⁸ In reaction, the economics field is shifting back to valuing the stabilizing role of government stimulus and the security of public investment. But we must remember that experts have no greater moral expertise in these times than do the people of God gathered to discern the will of God. Even if markets were rational, infallible, and self-correcting, experts cannot answer for us the ethical question: how should things be?

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We understand that our biblical and theological values call us to behave at variance with some of the values shaping our society and its economy. As we seek ways to live our values, we can make use of our church's social witness policies. We can seek out the organizations working with those who struggle daily to sustain themselves and their families, in our neighborhoods and around the world. We can and should educate ourselves on these issues. Guided by our alternative vision of economic life, we can turn back to experts and ask the question "how?" How can we today, as individuals, as congregations, as citizens, and as economic actors in many locations, bring our Christian values into our economic behavior?

Third, we can choose to produce, distribute, and consume differently. We do not work to earn money for social status; rather, we work to help our neighbors and give glory to God. We do not see wealth as a reward and a license to consume, but as a social responsibility. We recognize that individuals flourish best in a society that defends the human rights of all and maintains the common good. We have learned to look at any product or service and see within it our sisters and brothers whose labor made it available to us and the sun, rain, and earth from which it came. We can raise moral questions about who produced what we use and under what conditions. We can question and resist the growing inequality in our society. We can reflect on the power of consumerism in our own lives. We can resist the frivolous use of the earth's resources.

Fourth, we can advocate for public policies that reflect our economic values. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long and distinguished history of serious study about and theological reflection on the issues of its day. As Christians in the Reformed tradition, we understand our responsibility to help shape the common good through our support for democratic government, our engagement in political processes, our social witness to those processes, and our principled advocacy at all levels of government. Therefore, it is appropriate for us to apply these understandings to the current economic crisis and to advocate, as individuals, congregations, and denomination, for those policies and practices of business and government that best embody them. We advocate for such policies with faith that God is working through us in these times to establish more fully God's oikonomia among us.

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Endnotes

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32. Ibid.
33. *A Social Creed for the 21st Century*, <http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/pdf/ga218summary.pdf>.
34. Mishel, Bernstein, Shierholz, p. 220.
35. Ibid., 275. Between 1989 and 2004, 77 percent of the growth in stock wealth went to the wealthiest 10 percent of households. In 2004 households with incomes above \$250,000 (i.e., 2.5 percent of all households) owned 44 percent of all stock.
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ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Item 10-09 deals with living through economic crisis: the church’s witness in troubled times.

It is advised that a member of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) be included on the study committee to reflect the concern for the impact of the economic crisis on women. It is further advised that the study incorporate case studies of both women and men that illustrate the challenges of the economic crisis to communicate its depth and breadth and ways congregations have responded to individual and family needs.

Rationale

There have been many reports of how the economic crisis has impacted men more than women. However, it has been shown from data gathered at the onset of the financial crisis in 2007 that “over half of the 37 million Americans living in poverty were women.”¹ Furthermore, women in America are lagging behind women in other developed countries with the gap in poverty rates between men and women among the highest in the Western world. This feminization of poverty holds across race, skill-level, and educational attainment. Female poverty reaches particularly disturbing levels among black and Hispanic populations. Recent data shows that 26.5 percent of African American women are poor compared to 22.3 percent of African American men; 23.6 percent of Hispanic men.² This sits atop mounting job losses that are disproportionately impacting the poorest women, especially female-headed households and single mothers.

According to Alexandra Cawthorne, a research associate in Poverty & Prosperity and Women’s Health & Rights programs at the Center for American Progress,

Women face higher levels of poverty for a number of inter-related reasons, including industry clustering, unpaid work burdens and outright discrimination. Nearly half (43 percent) of the 29.6 million employed women in the United States in 2007 were clustered in just twenty occupational categories, earning \$27,383 on average.³

Much research has been done to show that the well-documented pay gap between men and women across industries is exemplifies discrimination toward women.⁴

Applying a gender lens to the ACSWP study, “Living Through Economic Crisis: The Church’s Witness in Troubled Times” will reflect a more accurate and inclusive witness.

Endnotes

1. Ajit Zacharias, Thomas Masterson and Kijong Kim, *Who Gains from President Obama’s Stimulus Package and How Much?: Special Report* (Annandale-on-Hudson: Levy Economics Institute: 2009): http://www.levyinstitute.org/pubs/sr_06-12-09.pdf.
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Item 10-10

[The assembly approved Item 10-10 with amendment. See pp. 34, 35.]

Neither Poverty Nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends, in order to strengthen Presbyterian unity in mission and solidarity in ministry, that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following measures for churchwide study and action on the theology of compensation:

1. That the full text of the study, “Neither Poverty nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church,” be received by the assembly, included in its *Minutes*, posted and provided in digital form by the Office of the General Assembly, and printed in limited quantity for presbytery resource centers and other uses.

2. In order to affirm the covenantal vision that unites all those serving the church:

a. Commend those agencies that are demonstrating a theological sense of connectedness and solidarity in mission by implementing alternate compensation plans that exhibit signs of the church’s covenant community, such as the pay structure for overseas personnel in World Mission, the 5:1 salary ratio found in the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and the practice of the Board of Pensions (BOP) in basing pensions of ministers who were not highly compensated during their active pastorates on the median effective salaries of ministers in the PC(USA), understanding that all congregations and ministers are assuring that those who labored faithfully should be adequately supported in retirement.

b. Request the Board of Pensions (BOP) to require that pension dues be paid on all effective salary, removing the cap for those who receive higher compensation.

~~[c.—Direct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), as a matter of justice,]~~

~~[(1) to implement in its personnel policies the directive to provide ratios between highest paid and lowest paid church employees, both salaried and non salaried, which was directed to the General Assembly Council by the 207th General Assembly (1995) in the policy statement, *God’s Work in Our Hands*, (IV. Implementation Action Plans, A.4.b.(1)) (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, p. 438); and~~

~~[(2) to establish the goal of achieving, in a reasonable period of time, a 5:1 ratio between highest paid and lowest paid church employees beginning with new General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) positions, understanding this to be a partial return to earlier policy and a practical embodiment of missional solidarity.]~~

~~[d.] [c.]~~ Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to convene the leadership of all six agencies related to the General Assembly to review together the fourteen current principles of compensation in the ‘Report from the General Assembly Advisory Committee on Church-wide Compensation’ (213th General Assembly (2001); *Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 558–59) and to explore the possibility of setting ratios for compensation ~~[in light of the 5:1 ratio recommended in 2.c.(2) (above)]~~ in order to promote greater covenantal unity within our one church and in our mission together.

~~[e.] [d.]~~ Request the leadership of the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), as well as the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, to join in the interagency consultation of Recommendation 2.~~[d.] [c.]~~ above, and to consider the assembly’s action on compensation within their own boards, reporting on such consideration in their agency reports to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

~~[f.] [c.]~~ Request the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) to convene an appropriately structured discussion among the seminaries on the matter of compensation ranges and sharing economic burdens during recession periods, reporting a digest of their findings to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

~~[g.] [f.]~~ Request the Office of Vocation, in an effort to support the development of just new models of compensation for pastoral ministry in small and struggling congregations

(1) to encourage discussion in its on-line communities of new ways to include solidarity concerns (such as those in this theology of compensation) in the ministry of congregations and in developing new ministries and congregations; and

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(2) to invite presbytery- and synod-wide planning approaches that include the participation of congregations with smallest budgets, tent-making pastors, and the underemployed.

~~[h-]~~ [g.] Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), in coordination with the Office of Vocation, to review the compensation practices of other churches and nonprofit organizations in response to the economic recession and secular patterns of inequality in order to assess the potential for interchurch solidarity and witness and to encourage broader theological and ethical discussion of the themes in this report, inviting especially responses from those working in the fields of economic justice and business ethics.

~~[i-]~~ [h.] Urge that presbyteries do the following:

(1) Establish maximum as well as minimum terms of call, with the proviso that congregations providing calls that exceed the maximum would contribute an amount that matched the overage to a presbytery fund to be used to support pastors in congregations of that presbytery unable to afford its minimum terms of call.

(2) Consider the possibility of having differential minimum terms of call that acknowledge differing realities within presbyteries, such as cost-of-living variations.

(3) Conduct an analysis of past and present instances in which their presbytery set aside their minimum terms of call or allowed them to be circumvented. This review should include an analysis of the circumstances and the methods by which the terms of call were set aside or circumvented and how these actions affected racial ethnic and women pastors, in particular.

(4) Determine current ratios between highest-paid and lowest-paid pastors in the presbytery including commissioned lay pastors, and between highest-paid and lowest-paid staff members of the presbytery, the foregoing based on full-time equivalent salaries.

(5) Report the results of all of the above to the Office of the General Assembly through the annual statistical report questionnaire sent to the stated clerks of presbyteries.

~~[j-]~~ [i.] Encourage sessions and congregations to

(1) reflect on the ways their lives together as a congregation are impacted by differences in compensation as discovered through analyzing ratios of their highest-paid and lowest-paid staff members, based on full-time equivalent salaries;

(2) consider establishing a ratio between maximum and minimum salaries for church employees as approved by the session; and

(3) report the results to the Office of the General Assembly through the annual statistical report questionnaire submitted by the clerks of session.

~~[k-]~~ [j.] Direct the Moderator and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to issue a pastoral letter to members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urging them to stand as a witness against excessive compensation in church and in society.

Rationale

These recommendations and report are in response to the following referral: *2008 Referral: Item 09-08. Report, God's Work in Women's Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, Recommendation 2.i. That the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in Consultation with Theology, Worship, and Education Ministry Area and the Office of Vocation, Update the PC(USA)'s 1983 "Theology of Compensation" Report to Provide Theological Guidance to Church and Society with Regard Particularly to the Impact of Secular Market Assumptions on the Compensation Practices of the PC(USA)—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 897-923).*

This resolution with recommendations and study paper is submitted to the 219th General Assembly (2010) in response to the directive of the 218th General Assembly (2008):

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That the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Theology, Worship and Education Ministry Area and the Office of Vocation, update the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s 1983 "Theology of Compensation" report (*Minutes*, 1983, Part 1, pp. 82, 116, 689–704) to provide theological guidance to church and society with regard particularly to the impact of secular market assumptions on the compensation practices of the PC(USA). (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 899)

The title for this report comes from Proverbs 30:8, quoted in Walter Brueggemann's 1983 *Theology of Compensation*, the most in-depth treatment of this topic in recent years and a vital part of the basis for current compensation policies in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Yet the economies of both church and society have changed dramatically in the twenty-seven years since his writing. Most importantly, the common assumption that a minister's call would involve climbing a career ladder of congregations of increasing size, has met the cultural and demographic reality of a smaller denomination in a context of significant economic inequality, the reality lived daily by countless Presbyterians. This theological and ethical study reflects on the reality of the church and, seeking to move beyond the idolatry of secular models of success, in its recommendations proposes actions for the church to take in response.

Even before the credit meltdown of September 2008 and the ensuing Great Recession, data from the Office of Vocation confirmed a growing gap between congregations able to afford full-time, seminary-trained pastors and those relying on part-time ministers, commissioned lay pastors, and dedicated elders. Survival has become the focus of many congregations and presbyteries. The ability of the church to manage, let alone reverse this trend of downward mobility, is in question.

The study and recommendations present a theological analysis based in Scripture and our Reformed heritage, particularly that of John Calvin, of the secular market assumptions at work in the church, including those models of career and salary inequality that distort so many of our expectations. Reformation and change, though difficult, are vital to continued health and growth in the church, but must be based on a biblical and theological understanding of our mission. Hence, any plan for change, for re-focusing the church's mission, incentives, and internal accountability, will arise from the context of our mutual vocation and mission. We are called to resist the world's trends, and not operate on the world's terms. It means facing the disconnections within the church and among its agencies with honesty and humility, re-claiming as the Body of Christ the covenantal vision that is affirmed in the heart of the Gospel.

The study is written to appeal to the lay reader, though many ministers may be unaware of how much realistic and remarkably relevant economic thinking Calvin did, especially in his great commentaries. He understood, as did Jesus and his great interpreter, Paul, that while the Kingdom is not about bread alone, it is about breaking bread together. For in breaking of bread and the in-breaking of the Spirit, the unity and equality of the members is revealed, "that the members may have the same care for one another" (1 Cor. 12:25). How do we embody that mutual exchange and mutual support that are characteristics of this one body? We ask that each reader, each congregation, each council consider whether in our practice we are operating from a theology of solidarity or a theology of individualism or even a theology of abandonment—and whether we can reassert some of the deep connectionalism that is stronger than market forces. Are we indeed in the market but not of it? And even in a market culture, does the church not have a witness to make that it is God who determines value, not wealth, nor power, nor ideology—idols that demand too many sacrifices.

The current theology of compensation is partly an aspirational compromise between merit-based and egalitarian approaches. It encompasses a rationale for regionally varied minimum salaries, non-binding ratios for minimum to maximum salaries in national agencies, a pension system that redistributes retirement income upward for pastors of lower pre-retirement income, and a market-based system of pastoral compensation that reflects differences in ability, experience, background, and congregational resources. The Board of Pensions (BOP) and Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), both agencies of the General Assembly, are increasingly hierarchical and have pay scales that are significantly beyond the salaries of any other employee in the denomination. Although a few pastors are very well paid, many receive compensation at or only slightly above presbytery minimum. Yet even presbytery minimum salaries are increasingly unaffordable by many congregations. Those congregations frequently find it necessary to have a part-time pastor, a commissioned lay pastor, bi-vocational or tent-making minister, or non-Presbyterian pastor. Some have no on-going relationship with a pastor at all.¹

This resolution leads the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to say that we must live in covenant community with God and with one another. With the intention of being good stewards of the church's resources, we have moved toward the efficiencies and values of the marketplace. However, this has led to practices that threaten the solidarity of the church, as well as solidarity with our neighbors locally, nationally, and internationally. We believe that the church is called to ministry, not for itself alone, but for and with and in the world that God created and loves. We engage in this ministry as partners, recognizing that partnership requires consideration of just compensation. As we do, we demonstrate our understanding that all are called and all are valued as workers for God's kingdom in and through the Body of Christ.

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Study Paper

Neither Poverty Nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church

Remove far from me falsehood and lying;

Give me neither poverty nor riches;

Feed me with the food that I need,

Or I shall be full, and deny you,

And say, "Who is the Lord?"

Or I shall be poor, and steal,

And profane the name of my God.

Prov. 30:8–9

A. *The Challenge and the Task*

1. *We Are Challenged*

a. *By Our Culture*

- "... the average baseball salary fell just short of \$3 million this year, reaching \$2,996,000, according to the annual report of the players' association" (*The Plain Dealer*, December 2009, p. D6, Cleveland newspaper).
- Executive bonuses—especially in the form of stock and option grants—represent the most prominent form of legal corruption that has been undermining our large corporations and bringing down the global economy. Get rid of them and we will all be better off for it² (Henry Mintzberg *Wall Street Journal*, November 30, 2009).
- "Having ever been unemployed makes you permanently less connected to your community" (Robert Putnam, professor at Harvard University, as quoted in *Newsweek*, December 21, 2009, p. 53).

b. *In Stories from the Church*

- A modest-sized center-city church with a large endowment needed a new head of staff. The chair of the search committee, a CEO of a large firm, decided to not use church processes. "When we need a new leader in my business, we hire a head hunter. He'll find us the person we want, someone who knows what it's like to head up a business of this size, and he'll be able to tell us how much we should pay for a really great guy!"
- A congregation decided to enroll its entire staff, including employees of the church's day-care facility, in the Board of Pensions plan. "It's the right thing to do," elders decided. The church opted for the two-step option, enrolling non-ordained staff only in the medical benefits provision at first, knowing that several years later they would be required to enroll everyone in the full plan, and that the cost to the church would increase significantly. When that time came, the circumstances of the congregation had changed and they could not afford to pay for all staff persons to be part of the Board of Pensions plan. After long deliberations, the session decided that their only alternative was to reduce the number of staff in the day-care center and reduce the number of children who could be served by the center.
- A recent seminary graduate waited for almost three years before receiving a call from a congregation. During those three years, she worked as a part-time church secretary and preached weekly in a small congregation. She barely earned enough money for her living expenses and depended on money borrowed from family members when her car had to be repaired and her computer had to be replaced. When she accepted a call and was ordained, it was to a church that paid the presbytery minimum salary. "I love the people of my church," she said, "but I'm not sure I'll be able to stay here for the long term. I have a lot of debts to pay off."

c. *By What Pastors Say*

- "I have served small churches since 1988 and with a growing family, growing debt load, and the cost of living, have been very concerned about my terms [of call]."
- "My wife and I both work to support our family. I will not even consider a call that does not adequately provide for us. That includes living in the community where the church is."
- "God provides all things, but he seems to provide a lot more to leaders in large, rich, white churches than smaller, poorer, or minority churches. As a denomination is our treasure going where our heart really is? Are our best leaders serving the haves or the have nots?"
- "Smaller congregations struggle to even meet established presbytery minimums, especially factoring in pension dues."

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- “Why are pastors paid so differently in the first place? In a nearby PC(USA) church with four pastors, one is paid three times as much as another. Is his work three times more valuable to God’s kingdom? Are we really all ordained to the same status, just with different functions? Or is there really a hierarchy with the rich at the top?”³

d. *Yet We Remember the Witness of John Calvin*

- “... the lawful use of all benefits consists in a liberal and kindly sharing of them with others. No surer rule and no more valid exhortation to keep it could be devised than when we are taught that all the gifts we possess have been bestowed by God and entrusted to us on condition that they be distributed for our neighbors’ benefit” (John Calvin).⁴

- “Let this ... be our rule for generosity and beneficence: We are the stewards of everything God has conferred on us by which we are able to help our neighbor ...” (John Calvin).⁵

- “To covet wealth and honors, to strive for authority, to heap up riches, to gather together all those follies which seem to make for magnificence and pomp, our lust is mad, our desire boundless” (John Calvin).⁶

e. *And What the Bible Teaches*

- “... those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil⁷, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains” (1 Tim. 6:9–10).

f. *Even*

- “Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ... There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need” (Acts 4:32, 34–35).

g. *The Challenge: Inequality*

What do we mean by “inequality”? When people talk about “inequality,” they are typically thinking about financial inequalities: income and wealth. It is easy to document that such inequalities exist in the U.S., have always existed, and, after a period of narrowing the gap between WWII and the early 1970s, have been increasing. For example:

- Measuring the share of income (wages, salaries, and capital gains) going to the top 1 percent of households, economists Piketty and Saez find that income concentration in 2006 was higher than in any year since 1913, except 1928: the top 1 percent of households received 23 percent of household income.⁸

- In 2007 the share of family income (wages and salaries) going to the top 20 percent of families was 47.3 percent. The bottom 80 percent shared the remaining 52.7 percent.⁹

- In 2004 the top 20 percent of households owned 90.7 percent of all common stock (including that in pensions) and the bottom 80 percent of households owned the remaining 9.4 percent. The top 0.5 percent of households owned 27.6 percent of all common stock.¹⁰

- In international comparisons with nineteen other nations belonging to the OEDC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), the U.S. is found to have the greatest inequality in household income based on several types of measures: Gini coefficient; the 90-10 ration (how many times more income a household in the 90th percentile has compared to one in the 10th percentile); comparison of 10th percentile household to median income household of a country; and the ratio of 90th percentile household to median household. In fact, these authors find that “inequality in the United States is so severe that low-income households in the United States are actually worse off than low-income households in all but four peer countries.”¹¹

- While the median family income for white families in 2007 was \$64,427, it was much less for black families (\$40,143) and Hispanic families (\$40,566)¹²

- Income inequalities can also be correlated with other inequalities, such as income mobility (lifetime and intergenerational); access to health insurance, health outcomes and life expectancy; and educational achievement.¹³

- Race and gender inequalities intersect with income and wealth inequalities such that women (of all races/ethnicities) and people of color are disproportionately represented among those in lower income and wealth quintiles.

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h. *Is Inequality Equitable? Some say, “Sure!”*

However, the above is not really new information to most Americans. Income and wealth inequality have been (and are) an acceptable aspect of U.S. culture for several reasons. Here are some beliefs common in U.S. society:

- The fact of inequality does not settle the ethical question of whether the inequality is unjust.

Perhaps it is true that the top 20 percent (and especially that top 1 percent) works harder in both time and complexity of tasks, is more educated and skilled, more creative, and adds much greater value to the economy than does the other 80 percent. Perhaps the other 80 percent is average or less in these characteristics, sicker, less educated, less interested in a life devoted to work. Inequality may be merited.

- Economic inequality serves as motivation.

Horatio Alger stories, and perhaps President Obama’s, support faith in upward mobility for anyone. Anyone can become president. Rather than challenging the wealth of the rich, Americans hope to become one of them.

- Inequality does not necessarily mean that some are suffering actual material deprivation.

Inequality, like poverty, is relative. Absolute poverty, or deprivation, is signaled by malnutrition, starvation, early death. Relative poverty describes the poor in the U.S. as only poor in comparison to others in the U.S.; but not poor in comparison to those absolutely poor in low-income countries.

- Some say that a better measure of inequality is consumption. The poor in the U.S. today have access to goods unheard of in the 1920s or ’60s. Doesn’t everyone have a refrigerator and TV? Therefore, inequality of income/wealth does not really describe actual standards of living, some say. (But here the data become murky as liberal economists find growing inequality in consumption while Will Wilkinson of the Cato Institute says it is not.¹⁴)

- Inequality is the result of freedom.

Freedom allows individuals to choose different paths and interests in life. The economic rewards of these choices will differ. So, some women prefer to give more time to domestic responsibilities than to employment, some men do the opposite; some choose to stay in school, others prefer to start working at an early age. Inequality is the result of our exercise of our liberties. The coercion necessary to force equality on society would undermine our freedoms, as well as democracy itself.

- Income distribution is simply the pattern that results from millions of people making individual choices.

No one is “distributing” income from on high. For example, when a poor immigrant enters the U.S., or a low-income person wins the lottery, the income gap increases—although no one is worse off.

- Equality of opportunity is essential in a democratic society, but not equality of result.

Equality of opportunity does not mean radical leveling of incomes and wealth; it means access to a baseline level of opportunity (education, for example).

i. *Challenges: Values and Vision*

We of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the early 21st century face difficult questions of values; how we should live our lives in consonance with our understanding of the biblical mandates for the Body of Christ and as members of the individualistic and powerful United States of America. We are bombarded by conflicting statements found in many forms of media, offering scholarship and expertise that tug in different directions. Are we to adhere in literal fashion to the Bible and/or John Calvin? Does accepting our role as Christians mean that we must find ourselves at odds with our role as citizens? How can we mesh the ideal with the reality in which we live our lives? Does our loyalty to the biblical witness mean that we must consider living differently?

We find ourselves in a dilemma. We wish to be faithful to God’s calling, faithful to the model of life we find in Jesus. Yet we live in a society that uses money to measure our worth. Our self-esteem is often bound up in what we earn monetarily, comparing ourselves to others in our families, to our neighbors, to former classmates, to co-workers. We hear of those who are rewarded for their labors in the marketplace with amazingly large salaries, and wonder why it is that our intense, faithful labors and hard work are not similarly rewarded. Even more troubling, we know and hear of those who are living without even the basic necessities of life—who are not at fault, yet have nowhere to live, inadequate or no food, barely adequate clothing, and little basic health care. How are we to act when faced with such discrepancies?

Proverbs 29:18a said, “Where there is no [vision] the people [perish],” but what that vision is remains somehow unclear, unwise, unreasonable, or, at the very least, unattainable. In the face of this dilemma, of this uneasiness caused by conflicting

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values, we have set out to try to discern God’s will for our lives together in this time, for this people and this community, and in the face of a culture that is at best confused and at worst in great conflict one part with the other. If we believe we can discern the ideal as found in the understanding of justice proclaimed in both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, it is often hard to see how we are to apply a “Sunday world” to the weekday world in which we live. For we know the world has changed, expanded, and become complicated, a world in which the ideal of biblical times may not be attainable. Yet we ignore the teachings of our faith and the wisdom of the elders at our peril.

The relationship of the church to the society in which we live has also changed. From the primitive Christian experience of being persecuted outsiders, we moved through eras when Christianity grew in importance, even to becoming partners with governments or becoming the government itself. Through the centuries, as peoples of one area of the world mingled with those of other areas, as religions came into close physical proximity of one another, those areas where Christianity had become dominant have tended to become less religious, and Christendom has given way to tolerance of other religions, with many governments expressing a strong desire to be secular and apart from the dominant religion of the people. In this latter view, Christianity in the United States of America may almost be seen as an anachronism, a belief system that once held sway, but cannot now speak with any authority to this complex, globalized, secular, intertwined economic world. It is less certain, however, that the nature of humanity has changed so completely, that there is nothing to be learned or discerned from the tradition, teaching, and faith that we espouse. Rather, we believe that a careful consideration of our heritage informed by a thoughtful reading of the Scriptures may assist both our church, its members, and the society to which we belong to live fuller lives, lives where sufficiency for all is found and where equity is the standard. This is our vision.

A vision will not be useful to the church, however, if it is not grounded in some understanding of its origins, backed by scholarship and resources, and tested in current experience and understanding. This paper will provide some of that background in order for the church to study the complex topics of money, monetary compensation for working people, and the wants and needs of people in different regions under different circumstances. The Presbyterian church has spoken of this topic in the past and has strong policy backed by equally strong theological statements.¹⁵

j. *Presbyterian Policy*

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor denominations have studied and spoken about money, compensation, and vocation many times. In 1910 the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America adopted the *Social Creed*, as drafted by the Federal Council of Churches with Presbyterian assistance in 1908. The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved a revised version of this ecumenical creed. Both statements were based on justice for workers in terms of compensation, as well as other issues of social concern.

Other policy statements about compensation were developed in the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) in response to institutional structural change in 1975, with a final policy adopted in 1976. (Expanded discussion of these policy statements will be found in Appendix A.) Issues of parity, sufficiency, and sharing of resources among all the parts of the church were discussed, asking that the ministers be assured a “moderate standard of living.”

Other major studies were undertaken in preparation for and at the time of the Reunion in 1983 by both the UPCUSA and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS), presented to and adopted by the reunion assembly. The policy of the PCUS was accompanied by a major theological discussion of compensation by the Reverend Dr. Walter Brueggemann, a minister in the United Church of Christ. The policy statements as adopted by the 195th General Assembly (1983) were issued as study documents, including a *Special Mission Board Report on Compensation for Lay Employees*.

Since these major reports and policy documents were adopted and published, the work on compensation has been largely confined to implementation in smaller reports, by means of budgets, and through the personnel policies of the General Assembly and its entities. In part, the implementation of these policies have tended to move away from the egalitarian framework of the earlier denominations, particularly the PCUS, with relaxing and then removal of the guidelines concerning the distance between the highest and lowest paid salaries of servants of the church. What began as a ratio of 3:1 changed to “approximately four times the salary range of the lowest position”¹⁶ and then was removed entirely in 1999 in favor of “a reasonable relationship” between the salaries of all church employees.¹⁷

k. *Brueggemann’s Theology of Compensation*

[Note: Quotes in this section, unless otherwise marked, are taken from *Theology of Compensation*, by Walter Brueggemann.]

The *Theology of Compensation* paper, written by Walter Brueggemann for the General Assembly Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. just prior to the 1983 reunion, turns on a different axis than the merit versus equality report of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., which also had been prepared and was presented at the reunion General Assembly in 1983. Brueggemann focuses on the distinction between church and culture, with the Reformed tradition understood as a justice-seeking agent of social as well as church reform. The General Assembly Mission Board introduced

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Brueggemann's work with the warning that it could be "unsettling," in characterizing our culture as one of "consumer capitalism," but that his critique, while espousing a position, was based on neither liberal or conservative ideology.

The paper begins by affirming that "the fundamental purpose of human life is 'to glorify God and enjoy him forever.'" For the first, "a theology of compensation is rooted in our common call to glorify God, i.e. make God more visible and more central in the process of human community." The enjoyment includes the capacity "to use freely the gifts of God who is creator." Denying any split between spiritual and material, the paper then maintains that "God's glory is primarily evidenced in the just conduct of public life." Thus, "to glorify God is to shape on earth a community capable of humanness and humaneness according to the humanness disclosed in Jesus Christ," and this means "to enact God's holiness on earth in the form of justice." Elaborated again, the enjoyment of God's presence and God's gifts must be balanced in a given context: the well-off may need "rigorous disciplines of genuine relinquishment, renunciation and self-denial," while the disadvantaged may need more resources of all kinds. "So there is no 'final' theology of compensation."

Following that theological context, the paper looks at the cultural context: economic disarray, including inflation, concern for taxes, a recent recession, and a continuing arms race. Yet, while middle class church members feel "squeezed," it is partly because they see the expectation of affluence that converts desires to necessities and seeks more. Brueggemann contrasts this with the "give me neither poverty nor riches ..." of Proverbs 30: 8-9. Part of the squeezing process is due to the guiding "economic ideology of scarcity," although this is unsettlingly tied to using energy in a profligate way. We live not in a stewardship society of the church, but are enmeshed in a culture of competitive consumerism. Brueggemann suggests that "nuclear anxiety" contributes to a desire to achieve safety by "consum[ing] ourselves into numbness." Together a model of humanity has developed since 1945 that is "antithetical to our Christian convictions ... an idolatrous notion of Americanism." "The commanding notion is that *self* is what counts, that *security* is our goal, that *satiation* is unending and to be pursued without limit." "...Until the extraordinary alternative vision of reality (the scandal of Jesus of Nazareth) is faithfully preached and taught, we likely will not get free of our enmeshments."

The paper thus poses a stark choice between capitulation to "economic ideology of our culture" (affluence and consumer values) or "theological claims of discipleship and discipline" that need creative new embodiment. Choosing the latter, the paper then argues four points:

(1) That the "reversal" message of Jesus (his servanthood, "the last shall be first," "losing one's life to find it," etc.) applies to the pattern whereby the haves (and congregations) with more capital get more: wealth is thus to be shared in some unsettling ways.

(2) Alternative economic practice is larger than compensation for ministers. All church members have to wrestle with "how to give economic embodiment to the conviction that we are all members one of another." The Reformed tradition "eschews any economic distinction between laity and clergy," so that lay employees must be treated better in many cases, and vocation is an issue in all cases.

(3) Once the whole church is seen to be implicated, then ministers need to face the culture's assumptions of "inordinate inequality, not at all based on need but based on merit, success, luck, ability to pay..." "Such a criterion of success blurs the intrinsic value of persons..." In contrast, "the Church claims to be a different kind of community powered by a different kind of authority." Unless there is "some form of equalization among its authorized leadership," the careerist pattern "tends to create an economic elite" and an effective underclass of those often discriminated against.

(4) The church's own ordering of economics "is important as a sign in the world." The church needs to repent its way away from satiation to be spiritually able to risk, and if the church does start serious sharing, it will have much more for mission and "the common good of the church" (Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk. III).

Together, Brueggemann sees these four steps toward a beneficial "economic disestablishment" that then can be missiologically connected to need but economically disconnected from dependence. For ministers, this would mean a break from meritocracy for "other forms of discipline," ways of nurture and accountability not dependent on pay scale to reward productivity and "starve out the 'incompetent.'" Can such forms of candor and cushion move people to perform at their best? Some level of salary equalization also would be a "break between present income and future security." While a new ethos of sharing and accountability to the community will be hard to achieve, it is better than our context: "our economic institutions and habits are dysfunctional and seem to be disintegrative." The paper concludes with 2 Corinthians 8:9's translation of Jesus mission into economics: "though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."

1. *Answers from the Past: Work and Compensation*

Led by the insights of John Calvin, followers of the Reformed tradition honor God's Creation by living faithfully in the world, even while acknowledging its messiness and the sinfulness of its inhabitants. Living faithfully has always included seeing work as God's gift, but a gift that is exercised justly in relation to others and with concern for others. Responding to

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this reality, the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessors have spoken to the church and the world about the nature of work, its impact on both individuals and the entire community, and the importance of care for all who labor and for those who cannot. In our monetized, capitalistic society, compensation is a key to how we treat each other, to the relation of employee to employer, unemployed to employed, neighbor-to-neighbor, even family members to each other. But compensation comes from the workplace. How we consider the work, the vocation, of each person affects our view of the compensation that is the result of the work we do.

The 207th General Assembly (1995) approved a policy statement, *God's Work in Our Hands: Employment, Community, and Christian Vocation*, understanding work and compensation as a result of work as a sacred calling performed in a flawed world. The church's own struggles to discern its faithful response to issues of compensation needs to be seen in the context of its policies related to the Reformed understanding of work and employment more generally. *God's Work in Our Hands*, therefore, was approved as a response to large economic trends, such as the development of a global workforce, the shift from manufacturing jobs to service sector jobs in the United States, the decline or stagnation in the wages of most workers, and the increased necessity for two adult wage earners in order to provide adequate support for a family.

When work is understood as vocation, as a way to serve God and neighbor, the conditions of work must ensure that vocation is fair, sustaining, and participatory. Therefore, the General Assembly called for "the strictest scrutiny" of inequalities in compensation and working conditions, and for the "employment at a level of compensation that allows people to live in dignity and security." Moreover, compensation should so sustain individuals, households, and families that the "social cohesiveness of communities" is nurtured.¹⁸

God's Work in Our Hands approved a number of recommendations, requesting action of church bodies as well as encouragement to the secular society. Among items directed to its own entities, the General Assembly called for the General Assembly Council (now called the General Assembly Mission Council or GAMC) to "include and implement the 1988 churchwide compensation policy guidelines that call for establishing salary ranges and ratios between highest-paid and lowest-paid church employees, both salaried and non-salaried."¹⁹ Our findings in conversation with the entities of the GAMC indicate that currently this directive is implemented only in part.

The question for this paper is whether that policy is still relevant, useful, and applicable to a twenty-first century world. If it is not, policies need to be modified. If we still believe these policies are those we in the church are called upon to live by, we all need to be aware of and affirm them again. As church members, we must understand these policies through our faith heritage, as interpreted by Scripture and expressed theologically. And we must also see that our own church house is in order as we seek to change society.

As Christian believers of the Reformed tradition, we understand ourselves to be of the realm of our God; created in the image of the Holy One; living in and fully a part of the world that God created and stated was good; a world in which God sent Jesus the Christ, designated as Son, to us as model and sign of who we are and whose we are. Because of all these gifts given by the Creator God, we do not and cannot reject the world in which we live.

Because we are heirs of the entire biblical tradition, however, we also cannot escape the knowledge that we live in and participate in the sin that permeates the world as it permeates the being of each of us individually. We have a singular task: to be faithful to the dictates of our God and the example of Jesus the Christ, while heeding the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We live out that task in many ways, in answer to the gifts given to each, in response to the Word and the words put in our hearts by a loving God. For at a long ago time, there was a new covenant forged by our forbears and reported by Jeremiah, "... this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31:33). Therefore, God's Word and God's Spirit are as close to us as the air we breathe, pulsating through us with every heartbeat. We live our lives in and of the world, yet conscious always of being a part of the realm and reign of God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We have chosen to be members of the body of Christ through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), defining our life together as a denomination. We have stated what we understand the nature of our bond to be, as well as the power and authority of our corporate statements and actions. As the General Assembly said in 1927:

The Presbyterian Church is not a unity in the sense that it consists of an undivided oneness without distinguishable parts; neither is it a group of smaller bodies with common history and tradition which find it advantageous to work together in close harmony for the accomplishment of purposes common to all of them. Our Church is an organism. Its unity is not a unity of articulation, part touching part, like the bones of a skeleton, but the unity of life, the parts united by vital bonds, thus constituting a living whole and that whole imparting impulse and strength and order to the several parts, as the body to its members. ...The different parts of the organization are bound into each other so that one cannot subsist without the others. (*Minutes*, PCUSA, 1927, Part I, p. 57ff.)

The recognition that our corporate actions may not be the desire of each individual was understood by Paul, who stated in 1 Cor. 12:27 (and similarly in Rom. 12:5), "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." We are individuals with individual gifts, individual understandings, brought up in many different places with many different experiences that form our understanding of the world, both religious and secular. In its wisdom, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has adopted formally and honored in practice the statement from the Westminster Confession that "God alone is Lord of the Conscience" (*Book of Order*, G-1.0301(1)(a) and *The Book of Confessions*, 6.109). We recognize the ambiguity present in being at once a body of believers and individuals with strong beliefs. From that tension may come conflict, but in facing that conflict together, we also strive to be faithful to our Lord and Savior.

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Our responsibility, our privilege, our goal, therefore, is to respond to God's gifts and God's presence in our lives through faithful living. Faithful living includes all of life, not just that which occupies us when we are attending church services or functioning in church settings. We recognize the difficulty of understanding exactly what faithful living means to and for each one of us, individually and corporately. We have long recognized, as did Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, that we are part of one body—that is, that we have a corporate identity, corporate activities in which to participate, and corporate responsibilities. Because we are corporate, we act together. Because we are also individuals, each of us does not always agree individually with corporate actions. In order to effect our corporate will, we have relied on meetings of groups of believers acting in an orderly fashion (1 Cor. 14:40), hearing the concerns of individuals, but acting as a body by a majority vote (G-4.0301e) even while recognizing that this decision may not reflect the conscientious understanding of each individual voter.

As a denomination, we have chosen to work together, to speak in concert, but also to affirm Paul's insight that corporate life involves accepting the tension between individual beliefs and the action of the entire church community. As the Reverend James Andrews wrote as a preface to numerous policy statements during his tenure as General Assembly Stated Clerk:

General Assembly statements and policies do not claim to express the opinions, nor to bind the consciences, of individual Presbyterians. Such policy statements, however, do require the careful consideration of the entire membership of the denomination, and represent the best judgment of the denomination's highest deliberative body.

In this study document we present to the church in 2010 our best understanding of compensation theories and practices found in both the church and in society. This paper attempts to provide a means for each of us to view every action of our lives in terms of faithfulness to our God, the church, our neighbors, and ourselves.

2. *Biblical Resources*²⁰

The Bible challenges us at many points, not the least of which is to recognize the difficulty for each of us to apply the truth of an ancient text to a modern world, a world that was not imaginable when the canon was determined. Yet the wisdom of the text is applicable when viewed as a whole. Biblical themes of love, justice, covenant living, sin, concern for everyone and particularly for the poor and least favored are striking in their constancy. From these overarching themes come application to specific problems or issues of daily living—dealing with addictions, the nature of Christian ethics, sin, coping with change, living in the past or solely for the future. These themes apply to individuals who struggle to understand their personal sense of vocation. These same themes, however, apply to corporate bodies, whether of church or secular society, as individuals seek to understand the talents and gifts they have been given and how to use those gifts for others as well as for themselves.

It is a theme of the Reformed tradition that God is Lord over all of life. As Ps. 24:1 states, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it." It is therefore both appropriate and necessary for the church to comment to the culture as well as to its own members when it perceives that issues in either church or society are amiss. We are in the midst of a time of economic uncertainty and confusion when members of the church can see anomalies in both church and society; a time when the church has a responsibility to its members, as well as others, to provide guidance for future action, both as individuals and to the church administrative leadership. To be true to its calling, the church must ground that guidance in its biblical understanding and its theological heritage.

The Bible provides direction for living. A familiar statement, Deut. 6:5, has been called the cornerstone of the Hebrew Scriptures; "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Leviticus 19:18 brings us the statement, "You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself." By the time of Jesus, the Hebrew understanding had expanded, been clarified, codified, and compressed in the "Great Commandment" as found in the gospel of Luke (10:25–28), where Jesus affirms a lawyer's recitation: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." God does not require us to forget ourselves, forgo all worldly desires or needs, and live only for others. Loving God wholly is an end in itself, occupying our entire being. But in loving God, we demonstrate that love by the way we treat the other children of God, those with whom we share God's creation, treating all as well as we treat ourselves.

a. *The Bible and Justice*

Our actions, when seen through a biblical lens, must include just behavior, personally and as a people. Justice is a value that permeates all others, clearly a major theological and ethical concept in the Bible. Jesus, of course, was well acquainted with the whole of what we call the Hebrew Bible, or the Old Testament, where we find many of the themes of his teaching. The centrality of justice in the life of God's people is clear throughout the entire Bible. Very often justice refers to economic justice with a special emphasis on the needs of the poorest and most marginalized in the community. Leviticus 25 and Exodus 23 describes the Jubilee when freedom is restored to people whose poverty pushed them to the extreme of selling themselves into slavery; when family lands that had been sold were restored to those who originally worked it; when the land itself was given rest. Even if there was never a full observance of the practice of Jubilee, it remains as a key part of the vision of justice that guided God's people from early times, and guides us still. But there are many other expressions of God's requirement of justice. We offer only a brief sample:

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- Micah 6:8 is familiar to many: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”
- Amos 5:11 announces that the rich who have taken property unjustly from the poor will not enjoy the fruit of their injustice: “Therefore, because you trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine.”
- Isaiah 3:14–15 announces God’s judgment on the wealthy that have abused and further impoverished the poor: “It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? Says the Lord God of hosts.”

It is important to remember, as well, that the concern for the well being of all people, including economic well being, was extended to strangers, aliens, and foreigners. See Exodus 23: 1–9, for example.

God is defined as just, and justice is identified with God (Isa. 30:18), God’s ways (Isa.5:16), and God’s reign (Isa. 9:7). The meaning of this justice is tied up with the well being of widows and orphans and aliens (Deut. 10:17–19). It is connected to the well being of the poor (Deut. 24:10–22, Lk. 4:18, Isaiah 58), and of the least powerful (Matthew 25, Lk. 6:20–26, Lk. 1:46–55). Justice is defined by action, not inaction; by doing something positive, not merely refraining from doing something negative: to “... do justice, ... love [mercy] ...”(Mic. 6:8); to “open one’s hands to” (Deut. 15:11); to live a life in response to those in need (Job 29:12–20).

The result of the action of justice is the elimination of need among the people in the community, as in Deut. 15:4, Acts 4, and Matthew 25. It is also described by Hannah, Mary, and Jesus as a total reversal of social hierarchy with the first last and the last first (1 Sam. 2:3–5, Lk. 1:46–55, Lk. 4:18–19). Therefore, the existence of poverty, of want in the midst of plenty, and the lack of adequate access to the resources necessary for human development are evidences of unjust practices in the social and economic arrangements of the powerful:

If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them; they shall live with you as though resident aliens. Do not take interest You shall not lend them your money at interest ... or provide them food at a profit. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt ... to be your God (Lev.25:35–38).

The private ownership of property is acknowledged, but only with restraints and caveats, for ultimately all possessions come from and belong to God, and exist to support the common good of society because “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it ...” (Ps. 24:1–2). Even when need was a result of circumstances beyond anyone’s control or the result of failures leading to bankruptcy, even when gain had been legitimate and legal, the type of community envisioned in early Hebrew tribal society called for redistribution in the Sabbath and Jubilee years—to restore equity to community by returning to the poor the resources they needed to be productive on their own behalf (Leviticus 25). In later monarchies, the prophets of Israel denounced the inequality between rich and poor as the result of the idolatry of the rich, which results in the death of the poor (Am. 5:21–24, Isa. 1:14–17, Isa. 3:14–15).

The economic arrangements of society, and therefore of the Church that lives in that society, are integral to loving and serving God and loving and serving neighbor.

Justice is not achieved through blind impartiality but through empathy for the least as modeled by genuine love of God and neighbor (and alien and enemy).

- Well-being is not a reward for merit but the intended condition of all in God’s realm.
- Inequality of economic well-being is unjust when it undermines the conditions necessary for the development of the human capabilities of each.
- Inequality of economic well-being is unjust when it undermines the conditions necessary for the effective participation of all in the ordering of society.
- Just actions, given life through social policies, are those that will raise and restore the least to self-sufficiency, provide equal opportunity for human development, and empower the voices of those most marginalized in the decision-making processes of society’s institutions.

There are no exclusions, no exceptions, and no excuses. Justice, including economic justice, is required by God of God’s people.

b. *The Bible: Need or Want—Coping with Inequality*

Another biblical model is found in Exodus. Even in the barren wilderness, God provided amply for the Hebrew people. There was a sufficiency of food available, both manna and quails, and “those who gathered much had nothing over, and those

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who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed” (Ex. 16:18). It is important to remember that neither the manna nor the quails could be stored up except as necessary to honor the Sabbath observances. Further, it was impossible to hoard manna, which “bred worms and became foul” if they tried to keep more than they needed (Ex. 16:20).

The question of need and surplus is also raised by the life of the early church recorded in Acts 4, a record of living in community that has been attempted many times in many eras: “Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common” (Acts 4:32). Participants in this community sold all they had, gave it to the apostles, who shared the proceeds, “distributed to each as any had need,” with the result that “there was not a needy person among them” (Acts 4:34–35). This is a demonstration of an ideal covenant community, yet the Bible witnesses to the fact that it failed because of the sinfulness of some members of that community. Throughout the centuries, many have tried to recreate this model of community and have failed. Yet Acts 4 still points to a vision of what community could and should be.

After that brief time described in Acts 4, inequalities have persisted among human beings. Given that reality, what is the reasonable and proper response to disparity in terms of assets? The issues of need and want, equality and equity, sufficiency and sustainability remain as key components in a discussion about compensation in both the church and in society.

Paul addressed these issues in his letters to churches as he traveled and attempted to raise funds for the church in Jerusalem. In 2 Cor. 8:12–15, Paul then speaks of different abilities to give in light of the need of others:

For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need As it is written, “The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.

The understanding that we live with different economic circumstances is echoed elsewhere in the Bible, as is the admonition to use our abundance for the sake of others. John’s epistles speak of love and of God’s love for us in the gift of Jesus the Christ. The proper response to that love and the result of that love will be shown in the way we treat each other. “How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?” (1 Jn. 3:17).

c. *The Bible: Money—Hoarding or Sharing*

Popular culture may say that “money is the root of all evil,” but 1Tim. 6:10 is far more subtle. In the midst of a discussion concerning teaching and truth, Timothy refutes a notion that godliness itself is a means of worldly gain. Gain, he says, can be found in combining godliness with contentment, “for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it” (1 Tim. 6:7). And addressing directly those who believe that material gain is a reasonable and sufficient goal for life, Timothy continues, “. . . those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction” (1 Tim. 6:9). Clearly, the pursuit of wealth is not to be desired, but Timothy does not say that money itself is evil. Instead, he says that its pursuit may bring pain and suffering to those who are eager to be rich, for it is “the love of money” that “is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10).

Money in our culture is used as a measure of value, of self-esteem, of comparative worth. Money or its lack can cause envy and contention between individuals, in families, among co-workers. Its possession is often seen as a goal in and of itself, a way to bring peace of mind and spirit in a frightening world. The love of money and all that it brings becomes a primary reason for being, blocking out all else. Rather, in dealing with wealth, Timothy admonishes his hearers to pursue “faith, love, endurance, gentleness.” The rich should not be “haughty,” but instead should be prepared to share what they have, being generous and finding their riches in doing good works.

Sharing and its rewards is also the theme of Paul in 2 Corinthians, especially Chapter 9, verses 6 through 15. To give is a blessing, not only to the recipient, but also to the one who receives. God provides for each one, and in turn, the receiver of God’s gifts shares with others. Sharing is from the abundance that God provides, in order that each person have enough. “And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work” (2 Cor. 9:8).

These passages deal implicitly with the problem of inequalities in wealth, perhaps from direct compensation, perhaps from inheritance. There is an acknowledgement of disparity, however it is obtained. Within the understanding that differences occur, however, is found one response to that difference, the sharing of assets, of abundance. Asked to participate in a family dispute, Luke quotes Jesus as saying, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions” (Lk. 12:15). Guidance with regard to wealth as well as all other aspects of living is found elsewhere in Luke. Familiar to almost everyone and understood by little children as well as wise adults, the Golden Rule is foundational for personal relationships and larger ethical concerns of all kinds, and certainly for consideration of issues related to compensation. This teaching of Jesus is frequently quoted by Calvin, “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Lk. 6:31).

3. *Theology*

Theology is a discipline that often is perceived to be the purview and privilege of the ordained ministers of the church. This perception is too limited, for theology belongs to us all. It is the way in which we, imperfectly, understand the world and our place in it. It is the way we articulate our faith and interpret biblical insights and mandates for our lives and our relationships to our neighbors.

The contrast between tangible and intangible wealth has long been a concern of the faithful. In the word and the Word of God, there is consideration of the spiritual and the venal, the mysterious and the everyday, the God-centered and the person-centered worlds. It is not in accord with the Reformed tradition to live solely in one world or the other, but rather we are always in the anomaly of the tension and ambiguity of living in both. John Calvin, often identified as the founding theologian of the Reformed tradition and the Presbyterian church, has been identified with economics, and the way in which a religious people view money, its uses (particularly usury), and the rise of capitalism. This perceived close relationship with Calvin makes close attention to his theology all the more relevant for Presbyterians.

a. *Calvin and Capitalism*

The most famous connection of Calvin and the economic systems was the argument of scholar Max Weber in the early 20th century that Calvinism led to capitalism, with the adoption of a “Protestant work ethic,” based upon the theology of election, and the resulting impetus to demonstrate one’s salvation by diligence and success in this world. To Weber the Protestant spirit provided religious legitimation to the emerging rationalization of the economy necessary for the success of modern capitalism. Scholars, of course, disagree as to the correctness of this view, but acknowledge that Calvin’s willingness to allow interest to be charged, and his reasonable understanding of commerce and its benefits for all, probably led to a spirit that encouraged the development of capitalism. Ideas leading to the development of capitalism were already present in 16th century thought, but were being hampered by certain religious notions and practices. However, “Calvinism did not (like other religions) obstruct the development of capitalism.”²¹

Capitalism and a rationale for its existence are not the focus of this paper. Calvin’s attitudes concerning money and its uses are relevant, however, as we seek to understand and place in a context the wisdom that has informed and shaped the background for our faith. Just as we do not live apart from God, Calvin stated that, “God has created man so that man may be a creature of fellowship,”²² recognizing that we do not live in isolation from each other. As we have accepted Christ, we become a part of Christ’s body, a body that contains others. Calvin emphasizes this in saying that those who are united in the body are also “united among themselves in brotherly love to the end that they communicate together for their mutual progress ... mutually exchanging among themselves the gifts conferred to them by God.”²³

b. *Calvin: Love and Mutuality*

Emphatic in Calvin’s thought is mutuality in both word and deed, in thought and action. Thus in both the Bible and the theology of Calvin is the clear understanding that we live in communion with God and with our fellow human beings. Calvin also stated that we creatures were sinful, and would take care of ourselves first, noting “he lives the best and holiest life who lives and strives for himself as little as he can, and that no one lives in a worse or more evil manner than he who lives and strives for himself alone, and thinks about and seeks only his own advantage.”²⁴ Positively, Calvin also says, “... we ought to embrace the whole human race without exception in a single feeling of love”²⁵

c. *Calvin: Neighborliness and Lending*

In a short and undated letter, written in French to “one of his friends,”²⁶ Calvin speaks particularly of usury.²⁷ His method of dealing with this topic is informative, exposing his attitude toward the topic of money. First, and unsurprisingly, Calvin looks to the Bible. Citing Luke 6:35 on lending and charging interest, he denies that these are the focus of the passage, but rather to how we treat others, particularly those who are on the margins of society and could not be expected to repay any money that was loaned to them. Our call is to be concerned for the least among us.

In his discussion of the question of usury, Calvin then references Deut. 23:19, another passage that, on the surface, is concerned with the specific topic of charging interest on loans. Calvin notes the generality found in this passage, which is “quite diplomatic, restraining us to act only within the bounds of equity and reason.” And regardless of activity in a specific instance, Calvin calls on us to use our actions “for the common good.” Other passages follow, in which Calvin speaks of Hebrew derivations for words, of greed, illicit license, cruelty, fraudulent activities. None of them prohibit the charging of interest, but require that in such practice the Christian must be mindful of his/her motivation and of the effect of the action upon both parties. Finally, he says, “I am unwilling to condemn it, so long as it is practiced with equity and charity.” As Calvin continues, he notes as exemplary several instances that are “in accordance with the principle of equity.” The discussion is completed by stating that all must be in accord with Mt. 7:12 (or Lk. 6:31), in which Jesus says, “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”

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Calvin, in good pedagogical fashion, reiterates in the form of a list what he has said before. Don't take advantage of someone in need; don't focus on personal gain to the neglect of your responsibility to others; follow "natural equity," considering others ourselves as found in Mt. 7:12, which is "applicable every time"; base your actions on God's word, not what is common or worldly practice; always keep in mind the common good; and act in accord to the laws of the country in which you live.²⁸ Calvin ends his letter saying, "Rather than valuing my own opinion over yours, I desire only that you act in such a humane way that nothing more need be said on the matter." This reasonable, diplomatic, restrained way of considering a topic fraught with difficulty for those of the 16th century is both typical of Calvin and instructive for Presbyterians in the 21st century. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in its most foundational statements, follows Calvin's guidance by stating that we must obey Christ's will for the church if that will is "set forth in Scripture." If Scripture is not specific, however, then "matters are to be ordered according to the Word by reason and sound judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" (G-1.0100c).²⁹

d. *Calvin Looks at Money*

Calvin and today's church both honor and rely on the capacity of the Christian to understand and apply biblical principles of justice and equity in dealing with matters in church and society. Andre Bieler, a French Calvin scholar, calls this understanding of Calvin's teaching "social personalism," an attitude that embraced theology with a belief in humanism.³⁰ That is, that Calvin combines a consideration of both the individual and personal of everyone's life together with a thorough involvement in the social, political life of the world as seen through the lens of Scripture. As for money, Bieler states that Calvin found money not to be evil, but that God has provided it to us as a gift, which is therefore a "sign of God's providence."³¹ It has a utilitarian and a spiritual purpose, in that it is used for God's mission.

Conversely, money can also be a sign of sin when it is misused, or not acknowledged as a gift from God. "I did it on my own. I earned it, and am entitled to use it as I wish and to feel proud of myself as its sole owner and earner." These statements, according to Calvin, would be problematic and lead to sin. Bieler notes that for Calvin, ownership of a good is not absolute.³² Calvin points to the Hebrew Scriptures in which there are jubilee years and other times when there is a redistribution of goods, a return of land and goods to another, even though "owned" for many years. If a tangible asset cannot be owned, how much less can something as ephemeral as money be possessed.

Nor can it become a measure of worth. Calvin saw money and wealth as a gift from God and as belonging to God. Any wealth we can amass is due to the providence of God, and is given in order that we can live in an organized and responsible way, neither outrageously wealthy nor in abject poverty. As Bieler states, "In the scale of values according to God, there is therefore no kind of correspondence between the spiritual and moral worth of a man, and his wealth or poverty."³³ Calvin commented on Luke 17:7 by saying, "It is by [God's] own undeserved favor, and not by the value of our work, that God is induced to reward it."

With regard to money, Calvin believed that what should guide our actions is a law of love. Commenting on 2 Cor. 8:8, in which Paul says he is "testing the genuineness of your love," Calvin said:

God everywhere charges us to help the necessities of our brethren, but he nowhere specifies the sum, that, after making a calculation, we might divide between ourselves and the poor. He nowhere binds us to circumstances of times, or persons, but calls us to take the rule of love as our guide.

And continuing in that vein in commenting on 2 Cor. 8:15, Calvin specifies how one should use wealth, whether gotten by circumstance or by hard work, "Let those, then that have riches, whether they have been left by inheritance, or procured by industry and efforts, consider that their abundance was not intended to be laid out in intemperance or excess, but in relieving the necessities of the brethren."

e. *Revolutionary Thoughts?*

Another scholar, W. Fred Graham, has written about Calvin as a "constructive revolutionary,"³⁴ revolutionary in the sense that he would change the societal understanding of work, relations between employer and employee, money and remuneration for labor, even clarifying that material possessions and wealth were not inherently evil, but permissible for the faithful Christian. Calvin posits a life neither of asceticism or amassing wealth, but a constant balance between accumulation and poverty.

f. *Calvin, the State, and the Economy*

Graham's assessment agrees with Bieler, however, in stating that Calvin believes "social order can be had only in a constant equilibrium between personal economic responsibility and state control."³⁵ Bieler quotes Calvin, "In order to feed men in friendship and peace, it is required that each man possess what is his, that there be sales and purchases, that heirs succeed to those whom they must, that donations take place, and that each man may become rich according to his industriousness, vigor, dexterity, or other means. In sum, government requires that each may enjoy what belongs to him."

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The purpose of government was to assure that economic transactions could be made and could be trusted. Graham summarizes his understanding of Calvin's attitudes toward money by saying: "[Calvin] was not a legalist in any Roman or biblical sense, but regarded the rule of love as the Christian norm and human laws as attempts to regulate with some measure of justice sinful men in their social existence."³⁶

g. *Employer-Employee Relations*

Having understood money to be God's gift to us, a spiritual presence in our lives, Calvin does not neglect discussing in various commentaries on scriptural passages what proper relationships should be between workers and employers, how workers should be paid, and what the responsibilities an employer has for the welfare of the employee. Calvin did not see salary as determined solely by objective criteria, but was to take needs into account. Calvin said in his commentary on 2 Cor. 8:13–14, "God wills that there be proportion and equality among us, that is, each man is to provide for the needy according to the extent of his means so that no man has too much and no man has too little." In commenting on Deut. 24:6, Calvin said:

God prohibits taking as security all that is necessary to the poor to gain their livelihood and to maintain themselves The one, then, who takes as security that which sustains the life of a poor man is cruel. It is as if he grabbed the bread from a starving man, and his life itself which is, as it were, cut off in denying the means of maintaining himself.³⁷

Clearly, there are issues of justice involved in decisions about pay, who pays it and how much is given. It is Christ who is the final master and is the ultimate authority over the life of another. The position of the employer is therefore in tension, becoming at once a peer of the worker, while also having authority over the conditions of employment and compensation for work performed. Calvin's commentary on Deut. 15:11–15 is:

A master will have a servant; but if he draws from him all the labor that he is able without having any concern for him, he shows himself to be cruel. If he says, "But I feed him and pay him his salary." Indeed, but it is necessary to have regard also for his capacity and the service which we are able to receive from that and especially that we regard that natural equity of not doing so to another what we would not wish to be done to us. When, thus, a man has someone in his service, he ought to ask himself; "If I were in his place, how would I want to be treated? I would want to be supported." When it is a question of *our* profit or loss, we are very able judges; but when it is a question of others', we are blind.

h. *Compensation: God's Gift!*

In Calvin's understanding, we are given by God all that we need for life, a salary that we have not and cannot earn. Our labor for the Lord is rewarded, as we humans also are responsible for rewarding those who work for us. The salary therefore becomes a sacred trust, one in which both parties are partners, as Bieler says, "... the human salary granted to our work is ... the tangible expression of the gratuitous and unmerited salary with which God honors our labor."³⁸

Calvin even considered the issue of paying wages even when it would be possible to pay less:

For behold what the rich often do, they spy for occasions and opportunities to cut down by half the wages of poor people who need employment. "This man is completely destitute," the rich murmurs at seeing a poor unemployed; "I will have him for a morsel of bread because, in spite of his opposition, he shall have to put himself at my mercy. I will give him half-wages, and he shall have to be contented with it." When we use such hardness, even though we do not retain his salary, we are truly cruel and we defraud a poor man.³⁹

The just wage, the fair wage, was not the lowest possible wage that the employer could persuade the worker to agree to. Calvin commented on Deut. 24:14 ("You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land in one of your towns," by reacting angrily that the rich act unjustly, and that with regard to wages the worker has a right to have enough. Calvin continues,

When the poor whom you have employed at work, and who put their work, their sweat, and their blood for you, have not been paid as is right, when you do not give them comfort and support; if they demand vengeance from God against you; who will be your lawyer, or your advocate, so that you will be able to escape?⁴⁰

i. *Safeguards: the Contract*

Even when considering Calvin as a revolutionary, Graham states that Calvin understood that people were not always going to be just, and so was in favor of contracts to protect both sides. In his commentary on Gen.29:14, Calvin says:

God has engraven in man's nature a law of equity ... so men seldom err in general principles, and therefore, with one mouth, confess that every man ought to receive what is his due; but as soon as they descend to their own affairs, perverse self-love blinds them, or at least envelops them in such clouds that they are carried in an opposite direction. ... For whence arises so many legal broils except that every one is more liberal toward himself and more niggardly toward others than he ought to be? Therefore, for the purpose of cherishing concord, firm compacts are necessary which may prevent injustice on one side or the other.⁴¹

Generally, Calvin condemned abuse. Now we need to determine for ourselves and with others what constitutes abuse, and many seem to think instinctively that outrageously high compensation fits that definition.

4. *The World*

Henry Mintzberg of McGill University calls the executive pay system a form of legalized corruption that cannot be reformed (*Toronto Star*).

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As we began this paper with headlines from the press, so this section on the secular marketplace begins with a headline, notably not neutral in tone. It states that excessive pay can be corrupt—the giving of compensation that is out-size, outrageous, beyond anyone’s possible needs. The sense of outrage combines with a sense that the largest organizations are setting the tone, are exemplary to smaller institutions, resulting in lives, communities, and even the very institutions being destroyed. The AFL-CIO, in a recent Internet report, stated that compensation of chief executive officers actually declined 2 percent in 2008 from 2007. However, that decline was from an average salary of \$11.16 million in 2007 to \$10.9 million in 2008. A similar charting of salaries from 1995 to 2005 by the consumerist.com website states that “while CEO pay rose 298.2 percent by 2005, and corporate profits by 106.7 percent, the average worker pay has only risen by 4.3 percent.”⁴² The complexity of the economic world, the ways in which it has developed in recent years, makes this a difficult topic to comprehend, much less to solve.

a. *Analysis by Insiders*

In seeking a fuller understanding of the secular market place, the study group consulted business leaders, CEO’s, and lawyers who are serving in business and government, human resource professionals and medical providers. Discussions were also initiated with some in the academic community whose fields include philosophy, business ethics, and even specialties in salaries of high-level business professionals, as well as more traditional economics. The material that follows reflects their views on the secular world in which they live and work as people living in consonance with values, and with a sense of personal integrity.

One major issue is that top management, especially the chief operating officers, are acquiring great wealth at the expense of the whole work force that has made that wealth possible. The call from the public is to pass a law that will limit the differential created between workers and top management. Yet, each time Congress puts a rule in place, the creativity of those impacted by the rule means that business will comply, but will work to find ways around the rule. If the rules place a cap on the salary of top management, and particularly on a single officer, but don’t cover a change in the underlying incentives, ways will be found to avoid that cap.

As an example, Congress passed a law in the early 1990s saying that any compensation beyond \$1,000,000 would not be a deductible business expense for taxes unless it was performance-based. As a result, companies started to award comparatively low base salaries, enhanced by awarding stock options. Stock options, however, could be (and were) leveraged, providing a number of options for one share of stock. If the stock rose in value, the options would deliver more value.

As a result, companies, particularly those in the new technology business, moved to CEO pay combining relatively low cash and high leveraged stock options, thus causing the CEO to attempt to drive the price of the stock higher, thus leading to a larger pay-out for the CEO at vesting time. This had the effect of encouraging riskier behavior on the part of the CEO, focusing on short-term rewards and aggressive growth tactics. It also led to shortening the tenure of CEO’s, thereby removing from the workplace the factors of experience, intimate knowledge of the product and the company, and replacing loyalty based on expectation of longevity with the expectation of personal gain. This moved the incentive to a hedonistic individualism rather than concern for the larger good of the entire firm. The desire of Congress in passing the rule capping chief executive compensation was to achieve a moral-ethical goal. Instead, the rule caused actions that created significant unintended consequences.

The CEO’s do not operate in a vacuum, however. They are responsible to and work with boards of directors. In earlier times, these boards tended to be filled by those who had been successful in business and who served without pay except for expenses. Because of the responsibilities being placed on boards, there is a strong movement to compensating the directors, and even to requiring directors to own stock in the company. Directors have the task to consider the entire company, to ensure that it is successful and growing. Especially in the case of the huge enterprises that have resulted from the combining of companies, directors feel the need to find very talented people to put in charge of those companies. There has been some research about the skills and qualities that are needed for successful CEO’s, leading directors to believe that those who qualify for the position are relatively few in number, and so they use money as the incentive to attract the best, and compare what they will offer to compensation offered by other companies.

b. *Business Provides Its Principles*

Some of this research has resulted in a set of “Guiding Principles” being recommended by the Conference Board’s Task Force on Executive Compensation.⁴³ These guiding principles are presented as an effort to “restore corporate credibility ... and trust in executive compensation pay processes and oversight.” In the Foreword to the document, the hope is also expressed that, if followed, the principles can lead to a healing of the breach in the public trust in the economic institutions of our nation, both profit and not-for-profit. Those principles are summarized by the Conference Board as follows:

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(1) *Principle One—Paying for the Right Things and Paying for Performance*

Compensation programs should be designed to drive a company's business strategy and objectives and create shareholder value, consistent with an acceptable risk profile and through legal and ethical means. To that end, a significant portion of pay should be incentive compensation, with payouts demonstrably tied to performance and paid only when performance can be reasonably assessed.

(2) *Principle Two—The “Right” Total Compensation*

Total compensation should be attractive to executives, affordable for the company, proportional to the executive's contribution, and fair to shareholders and employees, while providing payouts clearly aligned with actual performance.

(3) *Principle Three—Avoid Controversial Pay Practices*

Companies should avoid controversial pay practices, unless special justification is present.

(4) *Principle Four—Credible Board Oversight of Executive Compensation*

Compensation committees should demonstrate credible oversight of executive compensation. To effectively fulfill this role, compensation committees should be independent, experienced, and knowledgeable about the company's business.

(5) *Principle Five—Transparent Communications and Increased Dialogue with Shareholders*

Compensation should be transparent, understandable, and effectively communicated to shareholders. When questions arise, boards and shareholders should have meaningful dialogue about executive compensation.

Commendable as this effort is, major drawbacks are evident, primarily in the definition of terms, the tentativeness of the recommendations, and the evident availability of exceptions to the recommendations that could grow out of the principles.

For the public that may be affected by these principles, a focus on money occurs because, among other things, it is easy—easy to understand and quantifiable. Our discussions with those in top management positions spoke of the types of information, rationales, and values that informed their hiring processes. They said that intangibles, such as new challenges and the capacity to exercise new ideas, can enter into hiring decisions, but are hard to identify or to quantify. Directors, being risk-averse and composed of those who themselves are leaders in other companies, also want people who are passionate, excited by the company and possibilities for its future, but do not want to push their leaders into behaviors that are counterproductive. Psychologically, top jobs are presumed to be very stressful and the new leader needs to have a positive self-image. Because money is used to compare oneself to peers, to others who have similar responsibilities, the directors believe that a large salary will help the hiree to focus on success in the job, not on compensation. Further, these are extremely large companies, ones having budgets in the billions of dollars, and for these huge enterprises, the amount of money paid to the top executive is trivial compared to the volume of the company and the possible earnings at risk.

c. *New Business Models*

The business world, however, is not composed solely of profit-making companies. A fairly new phenomenon is the “low-profit limited liability corporation” or L3C, a corporation that expects to make a modest profit, while it also seeks to “offer significant social benefits.”⁴⁴ According to Daniel Pink, such a company is exemplified by TOMS shoes, based in Santa Monica, California, which gives a pair of shoes to a child in a developing country with each pair of shoes sold to a paying customer. This company is neither a charity, nor the traditional company that we have experienced, and is currently legal in only five states and two Native American Tribal bodies.⁴⁵ TOMS and other companies like it, exemplify new ventures, profit-making companies with a social conscience. The laws of various states and the nation have had to adjust in order to encourage their development without stultifying such entrepreneurship.

As a nation, we are more familiar with fully not-for-profit companies. Nonprofit enterprises carry both similarities and differences when compared to large companies of the economy. As in the for-profit world, most members of nonprofit boards of directors will come from the business community. Unlike most large companies, however, nonprofit directors are unlikely to be paid for their service. The purpose of the nonprofit is to answer some recognized community need as efficiently as possible in consonance with a mission statement. As a result, the compensation of the CEO's of nonprofits is frequently lower than similar businesses. There are exceptions, however, as has been noted in the media attention given to salaries of the presidents of large colleges, or salaries paid to the CEO's of large medical establishments.

Confusing the issue somewhat is the presence of both nonprofit and for-profit companies that serve the same needs, including schools, nursing homes, and hospitals among others. Laws, taxation, and oversight are different for the profit-making and the nonprofit enterprises. Societal expectations seem to be different for each, as well as employees' expectation

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of compensation. There is confusion and concern about how to evaluate success, about what sort of metrics are to be used to judge appropriate performance, and therefore to give fair compensation.

5. *Church Business*

Churches in general, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in particular, offer yet another model, a model different in several ways from those already mentioned. Denominations can be similar to large, nonprofit corporations, though some individual churches may be larger than other denominations. Churches are formed around a mission, which can be simply to worship, to provide support to members, to operate specific projects that assist those outside the church community, or all of the above. Each congregation will have an explicit or implicit vision of its mission. Unlike corporations that often have very short-term goals and expectations, however, a church is an organization with very long-term visions. Its expectation (though rarely its reality) is that it will last forever, that its mission is timeless. It has no competitors in the usual sense, though many churches may feel in competition for members with other congregations.

Professional management is not universally found in churches. Secular standards of success are not the desired measure of functioning. Standards may be subjective and changeable, and applied only to one congregation in its unique context. In providing ministers for churches of all sizes, presbyteries are required to state what a minimum level of compensation is to be for the entire geographic area, an area that may encompass cities, suburbs, towns, and rural communities with very different standards of living and congregations with very different capacities to compensate their pastors. Yet the financial sacrifices that are often required of ministers can occur in many congregations, sacrifice that involves the pastors' families as well.

Because presbyteries must approve all changes in terms of call for pastors, including their salaries, it is obvious to all members of the presbytery when differences in pay occur. Congregations and presbyteries struggle with concerns over minimum standards of compensation, which may be unfair or even impossible for some churches to attain. The situation is further complicated by large salary packages given to ministers in situations where the church and its members have the means to do so, and wish to compensate their pastor at the same level as that of the leadership and members of the congregation.

a. *Church Structure and Compensation Practice*

Complicating the issue of compensation in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is the reality of the several levels of structure and therefore of compensation. Local congregations, presbyteries and synods, and the General Assembly are parts of the same institution, but have quite different structures, vary in size and complexity, and have differing capacities to pay salaries. Except for trust funds and endowment income, local congregational giving ultimately supports the finances of all the church. Congregations vary widely in size and congregational health, reflected in their financial stability and capacity, though most seem to face the same challenges that have affected the rest of the United States. Presbyteries vary greatly in geographic size, but generally have been designed to be large enough to sustain permanent and professional staff to resource and support the churches of their region. Synods are composed of presbyteries in a region as well, but their function, size, and health varies widely, and currently is under question as to future viability. The General Assembly structure that functions between legislative General Assemblies is the largest institution of the church, and has much in common with a small or mid-size secular corporation. And beyond the General Assembly itself are several independent agencies, formed by the General Assembly, supported by it either financially or by the provision of members of the boards of directors, yet independent in structure and activity, and more importantly, also legally independent. This independent-dependent relationship leads to confusion and frustration in terms of authority and power, though it may be necessary and has worked well in practice.

It is not surprising that these differing parts of the church view compensation and their part in it very differently. Yet, all are part of the same church and its understanding of community, money, work, and vocation as found in biblical witness and theological understanding of God's sovereignty over everything in the world. Considering the various structures and varying context of each area of the church has brought differing practices to light, as well as a sense that there is a disconnect between what our compensation practices should be and what they are in reality.

b. *Compensation and Congregations*

In considering staff compensation in congregations, even in small congregations, there are at least two separate patterns of compensation. Decisions about ministers' salaries are the responsibility of the session, and of the congregation for installed pastors, although no agreement is final until reviewed by the presbytery's committee on ministry and approved by action of the presbytery. While the presbytery may have policies or guidelines and may approve the compensation of the various temporary supply pastoral arrangements, the session of the congregation is largely responsible in these instances. Lay people who are employed by the congregation for various functions in the church do not have the oversight of the presbytery, however, and compensation practices vary widely. Often lay staff members do not have benefits, are part-time, and do not participate in the minimum compensation packages that are set by the presbyteries and are constitutionally mandated for ministers.

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The research concerning compensation at the congregational level displayed a wide variety of responses, both anecdotal and through random sampling of ministers. A majority (60 percent) of the sampled responses said that economic factors had influenced their calls. In addition 65 percent said that they were aware that others had incomes that were “inadequate.” Individual responses reflected an understanding of biblical or theological grounds for compensation. However, the realities of living in today’s world, particularly with the responsibility of caring for the needs of a family, was very important to the respondents. An even larger proportion (85 percent) of respondents were in favor of the constitutionally mandated practice of a presbytery-mandated minimum terms of call, including cash salaries. Some ministers felt these minimums were fair; others felt their minimums were woefully low; and others that minimums put many on the edge of poverty. Secular market assumptions were felt to have influence on compensation; 76 percent saying that the influence was either extensive or a “fair amount.” More universal was the feeling that the entire church had a responsibility to do something to “respond to the compensation needs” of local parish pastors.

Suggestions about how the church should respond, however, varied widely. Some believed that there should be a single salary standard for all ministers, while others desired a return to the practices of Acts 4:32–35, holding all things in common and providing each person what that person needed. Others feared that such a practice would be required, and would resist it as socialistic or even communistic. Most responses reflected a sense of vocation, of calling to the ministry that was not influenced by money, despite the constant struggle to provide adequately for all those for whom the minister was responsible. For a group that is required to have at least seven years of higher education in order to function as a minister, the lack of ability to provide this type of education for their children rankles.

Equally clear, however, was the ministers’ understanding that this is a difficult time for churches, particularly small and marginal congregations. Heavily endowed congregations, or those with generous and wealthy members that are able to pay larger salaries cause jealous reactions in some instances, as the tasks to be performed and the work required is very similar, even with differences in scale taken into account. Expressed by several was the loss of community that may and does occur in presbyteries over extreme differences in terms of call for the pastors. Anger is often evident at the time when the presbytery approves the annual terms of call. Transparency does not lead to peace, though the practice may be commendable, lessening the power we give to money by practices of secrecy.

Ways in which congregations provide for pastoral assistance through the use of part-time and temporary calls to ministers, which are largely not covered by constitutional mandates, complicate and put even more pressure on salaries. The use of commissioned lay pastors is perceived by some to undermine the educational requirements and therefore the motivation for ministers to be fully seminary trained. This puts many at odds with their sense of call and understanding of vocation, as it becomes a seriously complicating factor, not only for the minister but also for the life and health of the congregation and even of the presbytery. Most married ministers are dependent upon their spouses’ provision of a second income or feel they themselves must take a second job in order to provide. Some described low salaries as “personnel abuse” and themselves as enablers of the abuse by accepting their part of this system. Many others were clear about having a strong sense of vocation, a calling to ministry that was not dependent upon finances alone, a sense that God desired their gifts to be exercised in ministry to and with God’s people coupled with a desire to work through the financial difficulties with God’s help.

c. *General Assembly Entities*

Leaders of the agencies of the General Assembly were gracious in giving of their time to speak to the members of the study group. The following material reflects the information that was shared by those staff members.

Discussing matters of staff compensation at the level of the General Assembly and its agencies was both interesting and surprising. We were able to consult with the bodies that are related to the General Assembly, provide vital services to the church, but that are independent corporations. These included the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP), the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPL), and the Board of Pensions (BOP), as well as several areas within the General Assembly Mission Council, including World Mission and Research Services. Several staff members from the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) also spoke with the group. There was great variety in the ways in which salaries were approached. Within any given entity, there was little difference between ordained ministers and lay people (both Presbyterian and non-Presbyterian) in compensation, though lay people sometimes received additional cash salary to compensate for the federal housing allowance tax relief granted by the federal government. The General Assembly is able to mandate certain practices and procedures for its own structure. For other entities, salaries and benefits are determined by specialized bodies within each corporation, though there are discussions and influences of the policies passed by the General Assembly, and practices mandated or suggested by internal personnel policies.

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) functions through a human resources department, headed by a lay human resources professional, who is aware of functioning within a church, but is guided by secular professional standards and best practices, rather than by theological or biblical understanding. The study group was told that gender, racial, or ethnic salary differentiation is not an issue.

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One part of the GAMC structure, however, the World Mission area, has a very different salary structure. All missionaries are paid the same base salary, though differences occur due to circumstances that include living expenses, and size of family among others. This body is unusual in its clear articulation of theology and biblical influence in its compensation decisions, and its willingness to be countercultural as its members exercise their vocation. Even its director insists on being compensated at the level of other missionaries, rather than at the level set by the GAMC personnel policies.

Salaries offered by other entities show an awareness of market realities, with most consciously placing themselves at or below median salaries for similar positions in the secular marketplace. Several expressed an understanding that people who choose to work for a church entity do not expect to be earning top dollar, but have motivations that include dedication, perhaps a faith commitment or a desire to use their competencies for the church. The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP), a financial operation, uses incentives to motivate employees and finds this a successful incentive to productive work.

The Presbyterian Foundation (FDN) is also an independent financial institution, operated professionally according to best practices in similar bodies in the industry. The exception is that bonuses are not paid, and their employees are compensated at no higher rate than the market median. While realizing that staff could make higher salaries in the secular marketplace, there is satisfaction in working for a specific mission of the church. The working atmosphere is family-oriented, flexible, and emphasis is placed on good relations in the workplace, although there is no discussion of or emphasis on theology in compensation decisions.

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) occasionally uses bonuses as incentives to good work, but gives the bonuses to all employees in this small firm. Salaries are based generally upon those in the Louisville area, and raises are given through use of a pooled amount. No particular theology is followed, although the practice is to abide by the policies of the General Assembly. The generosity of the benefits given to each employee mitigates the somewhat lower salaries, again as does the sense of working for the church.

The largest and most independent entity of the General Assembly is the Board of Pensions (BOP), founded by the General Assembly but not under its control due to its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. This has caused concerns, as its responsibilities impact so many in the denomination. As the study group was informed, compensation for employees and officers of this entity are much higher than those of any other body, due to the competition for the special skills needed by its employees. While its own employees do not fit into the same financial levels as other employees of the General Assembly and its entities, employees' maximum salaries are at the industry median, which is similar to the other quasi-independent agencies. Though the top leadership has exempted itself from the salary levels of the other employees, the ratios between their salaries remains lower than 10 to one. While the Board of Pensions cannot by law be forced to follow the dictates of the General Assembly, their practice is to listen, understand, and negotiate, and generally to "be good partners" of their sister body.

Though the Board of Pensions does not conform with its own employees to all GAMC standards, it is commendable in its understanding and exercising of community values in fulfilling its mission of providing pensions and benefits for the ministers of the PC(USA). Pensions are defined benefits, a rarity in the world today, while the medical plan for retired ministers, which is linked to Medicare, provides sufficient access so that its members do not have to have additional drug coverage. Ministers who have labored for small churches throughout their lives often find that their pensions are more generous than their salaries had been. Medical benefits for active members provide family coverage without additional cost to the employing agency and generally do not disqualify for "pre-existing conditions" at the same level as commercial insurance policies. Coverage for pension and medical expenses is paid by churches or other qualified church organizations at the rate of the declared median ministers' salaries, a practice that requires congregations to pay nearly a third more in addition to the declared cash salary, which many find extremely difficult. There is much expressed concern over the expense of these benefits, though the coverage expresses the theological value of caring for one's neighbor.

The Office of the General Assembly (OGA), the body that covers the Stated Clerk and his staff, has a separate salary structure designed to be as egalitarian as possible. The Director of the Office of the Stated Clerk stated that she works closely with the GAMC, and follows the personnel policies of the latter. Their practice is to keep staff salary ratios one to five, trying to keep the gap between lowest and highest salaries as close as possible. Knowing that they are dependent upon shrinking resources and are in a time of financial difficulties for everyone, this office attempts to stay flexible and aware always of the nature of their mission. They particularly emphasize a Christian understanding of employment, not only in compensation but also in opportunities and training offered to employees.

d. *General Assembly and Compensation*

The General Assembly has been concerned with issues of compensation over many years, and has developed policies that were relevant to their times. The amount to be paid to the leader, whether a pastor or the Executive Director of the

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General Assembly Mission Council, has differed and been expressed by the ideal of varying ratios to be paid, but it has often been the subject of controversy.

Blending two or more systems of compensation at the time of reunions in the church has been one of the most difficult tasks. Prior to the 1983 reunion, the practice of the PCUS at the General Assembly was somewhat more egalitarian than the UPCUSA, though there was not churchwide compliance with a single standard. The UPCUSA functioned on a denomination-wide financial system in which all the judicatories or governing bodies, regardless of wealth or assets, paid into a large fund, which was disbursed following consultation with all bodies.⁴⁶ The effect of this activity was that each body was both taken from and given to. While the current system may be simpler to understand, it also tends to diminish the sense of community that is so vital to the covenantal nature of the church. We do not expect to return to a system suitable to a former time. However, it is important to find a new way to move to a greater sense of community solidarity than we are currently experiencing.

The increasing professionalization of the structure and organization of the church has led to weakening the theological underpinnings of its finances and an increased secular business standard of business. One suggestion to alleviate perceived and real differences is for presbyteries to declare a maximum in addition to their minimum terms of call. The maximum would not be absolute, that is the congregation could pay whatever they felt called to pay, but for each dollar above the maximum, the congregation would give an equal sum to the presbytery to be placed in a fund to assist struggling churches. In a similar vein, presbytery minimum salaries may be leading involuntarily to church closings or to ministers having to reduce their calls to part-time. Rather than a single minimum for a large geographic area encompassed by a presbytery, the suggestion is that the presbytery have minimums that reflect the actual cost of living in the various parts of the presbytery.

e. *Compensation and Call*

It is possible to research and discuss what it is that is done in both the church and the secular economic world concerning compensation. Rarely, however, does either body step back to consider why a certain action is taken. Much of the rhetoric spoken in business decisions seems to be concerned with “best practices” that involve considering what other similar firms are doing; with comparing gifts or talents needed in leaders and evaluating the compensation to be offered in competition with other firms for a limited pool of leadership talent; and in providing incentives beyond a specific cash salary in accord with the best practices and the competitive arena. This leads to a spiraling of the “need” to accommodate to the perceived demands of the market in order to procure the best talent, the need to pay the leader ever increasing amounts in compensation.

This presents a contrast with the call of the parish pastor. Left with considerable freedom in which to exercise ministry, the pastor studies for competence/mastery, has much autonomy, and yet is in a constant relationship to the church leadership in the session and boards of deacons and trustees, as well as to all the members of the congregation. The ministry model sees workers (pastors and other employees) as partners, not as resources, and as players, rather than pawns. The story found in Luke 10, as Jesus recruits and sends seventy people out to begin the mission of the church, speaks of ministry as it began. Jesus, the pastoral leader, gives advice and counsel, but does not accompany the evangelists. Upon their return, he rejoices with them over the success of their mission. Yet each must have found different circumstances, different ways to accomplish the task given them—a task that was not quantified precisely, but told through parabolic language, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”

B. *Secular Assumptions*

In studying the issues of compensation in the church, it has become very apparent that secular market assumptions do influence the church. The influence is felt in the ways that pastors think of themselves as servants of God and yet as part of their civic communities, that church members consider their witness in the church and in society, that session members make decisions on terms of call for their pastors. The power of money is felt by many, either consciously or unconsciously, in self-worth or measuring themselves against others. But financial considerations have a power not only on individuals, but also on our corporate life.

Some of the secular attitudes about money that we heard echoed in the church are:

1. Accumulation of power and wealth are the real source of authority, and demonstrate God’s favor.
2. Real success is measured in accumulation of money, and with it comes power.
3. Money is considered to be the primary motivator and is used as an incentive for attracting talent.
4. Incentives and motivations of the secular world are based on self-interest and expressed by the accumulation of wealth, making a god of riches and leading to sin.
5. Deference is owed to wealth, both in expectation and in reality.

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6. Implications of the statement, “You are entitled to what you pay for ... and only what you pay for,” leads to personal and professional devaluing of other attributes.
7. Monetary rewards or equivalents are used as motivation to good work.
8. The employee is a resource to be used rather than a partner in ministry.
9. It is assumed that work in ministry is harder for the pastor of a large church than for the small church pastor and thus justifies great disparity in compensation, as the CEO of a large company is justified in an incredibly large salary compared to the company’s employees.
10. Market benchmarks and medians are used as the primary basis for establishing compensation schedules.
11. Needs of the employee are not allowed to be an appropriate consideration in compensation decisions.
12. Dependency is dishonorable and shameful.
13. Unemployment reflects moral failure.
14. Mental work is thought to have more value than manual work and deserves greater compensation.
15. That only certain people have the power to be creative, which is recognized in terms of compensation.

This list is not exhaustive, as the influence of money, wealth, riches by whatever name it is called is pervasive in our society, in our decision-making, and therefore in the way we form relationships in our communities—in the way we think of others and ourselves.

C. *Conclusions: A Common Bond*

In the appended surveys of pastoral opinion on compensation gathered by the Presbyterian Panel, there is evidence of lively debate within the church on compensation. Clearly many pastors and search committees have reflected deeply on the role of money in their lives, as motivation and as benchmark. The guidance of this study for us all as members and church workers is above all to affirm the common bond of membership within the church, while also affirming that the church should not be conformed to the secular expectations of individual success, wealth, and hierarchy. Compensation is only part of the internal culture and conversation of the church, ideally a form of God’s communicating care. The spiritual consequences of inequality impact the whole of human life. Sometimes it is even possible to accept overwhelming inequality with a fatalistic conclusion that whatever is, is right. That is not the message of God as we hear it through the biblical witness or Reformed theology.

Social location influences how any suggestions for regulations and rules are heard. Presbyterians may disagree on what our faith teaches about progressive taxation or windfall taxes on bonuses. We believe that any economy at its best exists to produce and distribute the necessities of life and balance excesses and shortfalls. But we trust that the biblical and Reformed message on the economy is clear: it is not to be demoralized, separated from moral judgment and efforts at reform, from within the system or without. Our understanding of the responsibility of stewardship for the world given to us all by God makes it necessary for us to speak to the Church and to the world when we see practices that prevent God’s plan and desire for all to be put into effect.

The economic crisis of 2008 and 2009 has reaffirmed the constructive and necessary role of government in advanced economies, yet the rhetoric of idolizing freedom above all continues to obscure government’s responsibility to promote and preserve the common welfare as well as defend the people against enemies within and without. It is beyond this paper’s purview to consider economic recommendations for government policies in any detail, beyond general positions on the fair accountability of those who most set the secular tone itself. In broad terms, this paper affirms the statement of the World Council of Churches’ study of ecological debt: that the era of unlimited consumption and unlimited compensation is over. It is and was unsustainable and had moral side-effects on the coherence of communities.

Fear and the Biblical Task: Repentance and Reformation

In this time of economic stress, worldwide concern over terrorism and war, and pervasive fears—fears that we will never be safe, that we will not have sufficient means to support our basic needs, that the world is moving into chaos beyond our control—at this time we look for signs that God is still with us, that we can manage our anxieties, that we can do something to bring peace to a fractured world. The message of the Bible is clear. It is a message of persistence in the face of danger, that success is not our goal, but faithfulness to God’s call is and will be. In addition, the message is that we are each important, for we are the Body of Christ and individually members of it.

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As we consider the issues of justice and equity that concern us about compensation in the church and in the secular world, we can be overwhelmed, for they seem so great and intransigent. Yet we also affirm that compensation is part of the exchange of gifts within the economy of God that should be most guided by God's call to each, our vocation. Secure in the knowledge of God's grace and loving concern for God-created mortals, however, we understand that discouragement and inaction are not given to us as options. Rather we believe that, with God's help and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can begin to make a difference, to repent of our movement away from God's plan for equity and justice for all. This is the beginning of true reformation, the reformation we espouse but often are severely challenged to accept and put into practice. We know that radical change will likely not be accomplished in our lifetime. Yet, we also know that nothing can be or will be accomplished without a first step, small as that might be. Our hope is that presenting this paper for your study and consideration may lead to change, change that will happen one step at a time under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

D. *The Committee's Work*

This study paper, resolution, and recommendations grew out of an action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) directing "That the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Theology, Worship and Education Ministry Area and the Office of Vocation, update the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s 1983 "Theology of Compensation" report (*Minutes*, 1983, Part I, pp. 82, 116, 689–704) to provide theological guidance to church and society with regard particularly to the impact of secular market assumptions on the compensation practices of the PC(USA)."

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy appointed a study group to prepare a draft statement, the members of which were: The Reverend Deborah Fortel, chair; the Reverend Dr. Gloria Albrecht; Dr. Ruy Costa; the Reverend John Fife; and the Reverend Dr. Peter Reynen. The Reverend Dr. Johnny Hill and Thomas Urbaniak contributed insights to the group. The Reverend Dr. Catherine Borchert served as consultant, together with staff resourcing by the Reverend Dr. Christian Iosso. The Reverend Kevin Park of the Theology and Worship Office also contributed to the group's work.

The study group met three times, gathering twice in Louisville and once in Philadelphia. At its first meeting in Louisville, the group consulted concerning compensation practices and policies with representatives of the General Assembly Mission Council, the Office of the General Assembly, and all the agencies of the PC(USA), except the Board of Pensions. Also at this first meeting, the group consulted with the Reverend Vernon Broyles concerning the history of compensation in both denominations prior to the reunion in 1983, and met with PC(USA) Research Services concerning past surveys of compensation practices. It was decided to have a short survey of a randomly selected group of pastors asked to consider the ways that compensation has affected their acceptance of calls, and their perceptions of the ways that compensation and its adequacy or inadequacy is visible in their lives or the lives of other ministers they know. The complete response is attached to this report as an appendix.

At the second meeting in Philadelphia, a portion of the group met with the Board of Pensions leadership, which provided information concerning its own structure, as well as valuable insight into the community nature of the pension plan. Also during this meeting, the group consulted with two professors of economics from Temple University: Dr. Lynne Andersson, who specializes in business, society, and ethics, and Dr. Michael Bognanno, whose specialties are labor economics and the compensation of chief executive officers (CEO's) and met at the presbytery office with a group of pastors to hear from them their concerns about compensation.

Between meetings, individual members of the study group met with groups of presbyters and church members, asking them to share their perceptions of the influences of compensation in the life of the church. Separately, as well as communally, the group engaged in Bible study, in the study of various documents, mutual instruction, and sharing of drafted portions via the Internet. As a consultant, Catherine Borchert wrote and guided the writing of the report, but the entire study group participated in writing sections of the report and editing the whole.

Appendix A

Themes in the Theology of Compensation of the Presbyterian Church

Introduction:

This summary looks briefly at the historical setting for ministerial compensation and then at the approaches of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. that were brought together in the Reunion of 1983. Professionalization of the ministry within denominational structures included providing retirement security and affordable medical care, but the development of explicit theologies of compensation only emerges in the 1970s with attempts to address continuing inequities and differences between mission board and congregation-based models.

The current theology of compensation is a partly aspirational compromise between merit-based and egalitarian approaches. It encompasses a rationale for regionally varied minimum salaries, non-binding ratios for minimum to maximum salaries in national agencies, a pension system that redistributes retirement income upward for pastors of lower pre-retirement income, and a market-based system of pastoral compensation that reflects differences in ability, experience, background, and congregational resources. Most clearly in the Board

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of Pensions and Presbyterian Foundation, the agencies of the General Assembly operate pay scales that are increasingly hierarchical and several multiples of average pastors salaries. Yet even lower pastor's salaries are increasingly unaffordable by many congregations that use commissioned lay pastors and bi-vocational or "tent-making" ministers, or go without specialized pastoral care.

Historical Background:

Compensation in the Christian Church has had many implicit theologies, most based on the concepts of vocation, stewardship, and the still-influential model of voluntary poverty derived from the Roman Catholic priesthood. This last model is also termed, the "forgoer," as those following this model of support take only what is necessary for a life of service to God and others.

The Reformation doctrine of calling, applied to all persons, influenced and was influenced by the shift away from feudalism and to the city-based market economies of early modernity. Ministers were expected to have families and their communities or congregations were expected to support them, usually above the subsistence level but infrequently at a level of wealth. Rationales for pastoral support have often drawn from Old Testament models of the Levitical priesthood supported by the tithe and the management of sacrificial offerings, as well as the relatively few New Testament stipulations, such as "a worker is worthy of his [her] hire" and Paul's justification for support (even as he was himself forgoing it; see 1 Corinthians 9 and 2 Corinthians 11). The clearest reference to compensation in the *The Book of Confessions* comes in the Second Helvetic (1561): "All faithful ministers, as good workmen, are also worthy of their reward, and do not sin when they receive a stipend, and all things that be necessary for themselves and their family. For the apostle shows in I Cor., ch. 9, and in I Tim., ch. 5, and elsewhere that these things may rightly be given by the Church and received by ministers. The Anabaptists, who condemn and defame ministers who live from their ministry are also refuted by the apostolic teaching" (5.168).

This survey focuses on the last forty or so of the almost five hundred years since the Reformation, but it also lifts up the way salaries or compensation in the church have often been influenced by prevailing economic patterns. Presbyterian social witness policy has also, for more than one hundred years, addressed the need of all workers for decent wages, safe working conditions, medical care, adequate support in old age, time for families and a Sabbath for worship (see the Social Creed of 1908 and subsequent support for unionization). Presbyterians led in the influential National Council of Churches study project on ethics and economic life in the 1950s and 1960s, while also originating our own statements on Christian vocation, minimum wages, full employment, and equal employment opportunity.

In its concern for the well-being of its ministers, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. developed a pension fund for all ministers in 1927 (of the unit benefit type) and added major medical coverage in 1959. The practice of supplementing "inadequate pensions" over an earlier minimum began in 1956.

The post World War II period of prosperity was accompanied by growth in the Presbyterian and most other churches. The Great Depression of the 1930s had hit the churches, like the population at large, quite hard: church historian Robert Handy refers to the "Great Depression in the churches." Churches with endowments and wealthy congregations had usually paid better than poorer congregations and mission efforts, whether overseas or in "home" or "national" missions. The Presbyterians and several other denominations had pension funds from relatively early in their development. The importance of a secure retirement led to funds for impoverished ministers, continuing into the 1983 Reunion with the "Joy offering" for the 10 percent of retired PCUS pastors living below the poverty line. Since 1987, the Board of Pensions (BOP) has provided ministers who had served at low salaries with pensions pegged at the median, a limited step toward equalization but a significant policy of solidarity for the ministry as a whole.

While World Mission, a part of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), continues to support mission co-workers on a common salary scale with differences for number of children and location, compensation policies for General Assembly boards and agencies and for synods and presbyteries came to contain salary ranges. In the offices of the General Assembly agencies these policies have set the upper and lower boundaries for salaries on an expanding ratio. In the UPCUSA in the 1970s and in the PCUS General Assembly Mission Board up to Reunion in 1983, no one could make more than three times the salary of the lowest paid exempt employee. At Reunion, the scale widened to allow a five to one ratio. It is now a nine to one ratio in the General Assembly Mission Council, with wider ranges in the Board of Pensions (BOP) and Presbyterian Foundation (FDN) and the most compact range in the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America Theology of Compensation:

Beginning in 1972, in response to presbytery overtures, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) General Assembly established a Committee on Compensation that worked from 1973–75, through a period of national board reorganization, to prepare a 1976 Compensation Plan for General Assembly agencies and for presbyteries and their congregations. This comprehensive approach reflected new thinking about the mission and ministry of the church (including The Confession of 1967 and the "Model for Ministry" study), churchwide survey efforts, consultation with advocacy bodies, and testing of "how-to" recommendations for "factoring" position descriptions. It reflected learning from corporate personnel practices and proposed objective, regularized approaches to evaluation and advancement. The committee also early in its work realized that it would have to address the tension between egalitarian and "meritarian" approaches on a theological basis.

The Committee on Compensation's 1975 report, mailed to all congregations "identified two main issues which required sustained theological examination: '(1) the grounds for and extent of the differences between the highest and lowest levels of compensation within the system; and (2) the general level of the system as a whole in comparison with other systems.' The first issues involve the basis for and degree of allowable inequities ...while the second involves the degree to which church salaries should be related to those paid in other sectors of society (Report to 187th General Assembly, p. 10). While the committee examined most relevant individual biblical texts, biblical themes were found to give better guidance to an overall policy framework. And within these themes, "the committee took special note of the biblical concern to preserve human community against the threat posed by economic inequalities and exploitation."

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The initial conclusion voiced by the committee in 1974 and 1975 and echoed in the final policy of 1976, was that “fidelity to the biblical witness does require us to adopt a certain measure of skepticism regarding the necessity for vast discrepancies in compensation, to develop a more active and effective system of sharing our total resources for the sake of the more poorly compensated employees of the church, and to insist that certain very definite limits should be set on the range of acceptable compensation within the church” (1975: p. 11; 1976: p. 10). Both the preliminary and final reports are tentative in claiming too much authority for their theologies: “there can be no final and absolute ‘theology of compensation’ anymore than there can be a final and absolute compensation plan” (1975); “it would be pretentious to say that a ‘theology of compensation’ has been formulated” (1976).

After a review of primary biblical passages, including the outlier 2 Thessalonians 3:10 (“Anyone unwilling to work should not eat”), and noting the many passages that call for the poor wage-earner to be protected, the 1976 report points to the structural as well as personal approaches to justice: the jubilee “laws of release” and Paul’s address to the whole church in 2 Cor. 8:13–14, “I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need ... that there may be a fair balance.”

The 1976 report lifts up three biblical themes:

1. Creation, understood to be God’s provision of enough for all, so that poverty is not the goal, and work can be understood not as “an evil to be accepted as part of humanity’s fallen state, but ... as ... a positive expression of the image of God in persons.”
2. Sin, in both individual “sloth, dishonesty, and lack of charity,” and “institutional patterns of discrimination and oppression.”
3. Church, as community of service and as institution within society, living in some tension between redemptive difference and social conformity, with compensation for ministers less a distinct pattern than “an instance of the larger issues of economic justice. ...”

By locating the issue of compensation within the church in the sphere of justice, and invoking the constitutional promise from the *Book of Order* that congregations make to their ministers to pay them “fairly,” the report then looks at the philosophic choice between egalitarian forms of justice that focus on need and shared humanity and “meritarian” forms that give each individual what is “due” them based on achievement or contribution. The report chooses to balance the two approaches. Needs will be addressed by minimums based on the objective data of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, “rather than create a paternalistic compensation bureaucracy.” An egalitarian approach might also remove “certain incentives which serve to attract talented persons ... and ... might create strain between pastor and congregation by placing the former under a pay system utterly unlike the latter’s.” On the meritarian hand, the “difficulty of honestly rewarding merit in actual practice ... seems to be the basic problem with this tradition.” The church must take care that “any system of supposed merit might in fact turn out to be biased in favor of already affluent, prestigious and powerful, and applied with discrimination against minority persons and women.”

The report then reiterated six “basic principles” of compensation initially approved by the General Assembly in 1974. These six, summarized, are:

1. Compensation should be related to “job weight:” the training required, inherent difficulty, and “impact of the position on the work of the church,” based on careful factoring.
2. Compensation should be performance linked, based on regular review, while discounting “competitive zeal” or equating unpopular actions with improper or unsatisfactory ones.
3. “To guarantee that a merit oriented system based on the first two principles not serve to create excessive difference between the highest and lowest paid ministers, there must be a fixed formula which keeps the maximum permissible salary within the church in a proportionate relationship with the minimum permissible salary.”
4. “Our system ... should ... neither impose ... an involuntary poverty nor ... the level of pay characteristic of the more highly paid professions, but should rather serve to ensure to all the clergy a moderate standard of living.”
5. Since there is a “legacy of discrimination against minority persons and women,” there shall be “a vigorous program of affirmative action.”
6. In order to achieve such a “truly adequate compensation policy,” congregations and judicatories need to support the “church’s whole ministry.” “This will require ... wealthier segments of the church take a new degree of responsibility for supporting the ministry of the poorer and discriminated against sections of the church.” Presbyteries should also “be alert to other forms of ministerial compensation.”

With these principles reaffirmed, the 1976 policy presented a plan that included methods for “factoring” pastoral responsibilities and suggests mechanisms for distributing “salary supplement funds across synod lines,” an overall responsibility of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). The “job weighting” of position descriptions for solo, senior, associate, and assistant pastors was to be done within “salary ranges” that provide a “moderate level of living,” acknowledging “the communal nature of the church requires that differences in compensation be limited.” Perhaps the clearest statement of the results that were anticipated was that: “The maximum salary payable to the clergy person serving full-time in the pastoral position having the highest possible job weight will not be more than three times the minimum salary ... having the lowest possible job weight.”

Salaries for laypersons in professional positions were to have some equalization for the effects of ministers’ housing allowances (approximately 20 percent of salary, estimated to be the rental value of a manse). Other laypersons in clerical, service, support, and craft positions were to be paid more on an hourly basis appropriate to region and responsibilities. Congregations wishing to pay their pastors

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above the maximum (3:1) ratio were urged to contribute a compensatory dollar per extra salary dollar into a salary supplement fund. The average church, however, was estimated to need to pay 2 percent of its budget into such a fund. A study guide was included to help relate the concrete guidelines to the theological balance between merit and equality.

It should be noted that a program of “circulating funds” did exist for approximately ten years and that subsequent distribution of funds among synods continued after Reunion. In 1982 the Vocation Agency of the UPCUSA established a “Task Force on the United Presbyterian Compensation Plan” that reviewed the plan going into Reunion, reporting to the 1983 General Assembly (*Minutes*, 1983, Part I, pp. 499–501). Their brief report basically affirmed the UPC plan, though it clarified the six principles into twelve more operational principles.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) Compensation Policy

In response to a 1980 resolution calling for “equalization of the retirement plan,” the General Assembly Mission Board was instructed to “... develop a Theology of Compensation for pastors, with particular attention to current disparities in salaries and retirement benefits, and the financial problems this poses for free movement of pastors from large to small churches” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1980, Part I, p. 116). The board made its report in 1983 in two sections, a review of compensation disparities and recommendations, and a study paper, *A Theology of Compensation*, prepared by Walter Brueggemann, an Old Testament theologian and member of the United Church of Christ. By way of comparison with the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the smaller, Atlanta-based General Assembly Mission Board had a lower and more egalitarian salary structure while the range of salaries in the pastorate was wider, partly due to voluntary pension enrollment and lack of minimums in one third of presbyteries.

In surveying the employment situation of the PCUS, the 1983 report concluded that most church compensation practice was based on “the values of the American work place and view the ministry as a professional function.” By those measures, the report cited a study confirming that the “clergy is losing ground.” The prescription of the study paper was partly to compensate for the lack of theological rationale for the substantial salary disparities. The report also noted that many lay employees were paid near (and in some cases) below minimum wage and were without retirement benefits, so it made recommendations for better practices in this area. The report reviewed the UPCUSA compensation and pension plan and made some recommendations for parallel practices by the Board of Annuities and Relief. Later, that board was basically merged with the Board of Pensions in Philadelphia (as the much smaller national investment fund of the former PCUS was combined with the United Presbyterian Foundation).

In preparation for the recommendations of the compensation report, the PCUS commissioned the Reverend Dr. Walter Brueggemann of Columbia Seminary to prepare an extensive paper on the theology of compensation. The paper was approved for study and circulated in the PCUS. The effects of Brueggemann’s paper on the reuniting church are perhaps hard to discern. Certainly salaries in the South improved relative to the North, partly due to population shifts and partly due to the relatively successful combination of pension plans and institutions.

In practical terms, the set of principles coming from the United Presbyterian plan became elaborated into fourteen guidelines in the united denomination. The initial 3:1 ratio, held more firmly in the former PCUS, became a 4:1 ratio by 1988, and was confirmed again in 1991. In 1998, despite Advice and Counsel opposition from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), joined in by the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC), and from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, a compensation review eliminated the numerical ratio for General Assembly agencies.

The Language Changes Are as Follows (Emphasis Added):

- The 1988/1991 language: “Since the church recognizes the value of all varieties of service and since it seeks to temper the values and rewards of the secular world, the salary range for the highest level position within each governing body should be no more than approximately four times the salary range of the lowest position (*Minutes*, 1988, Part I, p. 796).
- The 1999 language: “the Church recognizes the value of all varieties of service and seeks to temper the values and rewards of the marketplace. A reasonable relationship between the highest and the lowest salaries paid all church employees honors the principle of shared community” (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 183).

In response to the advisory committee, and perhaps implicitly responding to the Presbytery of Albany, which had overtured for a maximum salary framework (*Minutes*, 1998, Part I, pp. 35, 689), the Task Force on Compensation stated: “The task force discussed the objectives of wage equity principles and formula guidelines. The task force concluded that formula guidelines would be too restrictive and therefore inappropriate” (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 185). In a secondary action, the task force recommended the formation of an Advisory Committee on Churchwide Compensation, composed mainly of persons with practical involvement designated by the six agencies of the assembly. This group reported in 2001, confirming the lack of specific ratios in the guidelines while tacitly accepting that the various agencies would determine their own compensation policies with relatively little influence from consultation with the advisory committee itself.

In the years of the new century, the de facto ratio of highest salaries to lowest has grown to be approximately 8:1 in the General Assembly Mission Council, lower in the Office of the General Assembly, and higher in the four quasi-independent agencies. The implications of this de facto theology suggest that the values of business compensation predominate over a sense of distinctive vocation for the church. The current study underway by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy thus seems timely, even though the inequalities in church agency and pastoral compensation pale in contrast to the Goldman Sachs firm, widely criticized for its \$16.7 billion bonus pool for 2009.

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Appendix B

Walter Brueggemann, *A Theology of Compensation: A Study Paper*
(*Minutes*, 195th General Assembly (1983), Part I; pp. 694-703
<http://www.pcusa.org/ministers/pdf/theocompensation.pdf>

Appendix C

Research Services

Compensation and Its Theological and Ethical Meaning in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

2009 Survey of Pastors

See <http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/whatweredoing.htm>

Appendix D

Suggestions for Further Study

The following list includes material that has been suggested for those who wish to deepen their understanding of this topic. The following is in addition to those items already found in the endnotes.

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. *Connecting to the Creed: A Guide for Understanding and Applying the Centennial Social Creed...* 2009. (available as PDS #02-052-09-004).

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Frank, Robert H. *Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Harms the Middle Class*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

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Galbraith, James. *Created Unequal*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Gonzalez, Justo L. *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.

Harkness, Georgia. *John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics*. New York & Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1931, 1958.

Kinsler, Ross and Gloria Kinsler. *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life: An Invitation to Personal, Ecclesial and Social Transformation*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999.

Meeks, M. Douglas. *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.

Mishel, Bernstein, Shierholz. *The State of Working America, 2008–2009*. Ithaca: ILR Press for Economic Policy Institute, 2009.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

Owensby, Walter. *Economics for Prophets: A Primer on Concepts, Realities and Values in our Economic System*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988.

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Tawney, R.H. *Equality*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1931 (revised in 1952)

Endnotes

1. "Hard to Call" report, PC(USA) 2005. The full report can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/ministers/pdf/hardtocalreport.pdf>.
2. Mintzberg, Henry. *Wall Street Journal*, November 30, 2009. Dr. Mintzberg is a professor at the Desautels Faculty of Management at McGill University in Montreal.
3. All quotations are taken from the random survey of pastors by Research Services, completed in December 2009. The full report can be found as Appendix C.

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4. John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.7.5 (p. 695).
5. *Ibid.* p. 695.
6. *Ibid.* p. 698.
7. This citation from 1 Tim. 6:10 has been the subject of discussion among biblical scholars, as to whether the love of money is “a” root or “the” root of all kinds of evil. It is also possible that this phrase can (and should) be translated as “for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.” The grammatical and exegetical groundings for this translation (with the definitive article “the” before “root” instead of the indefinite article “a” as in the NRSV) stem from the following: The Greek phrase is a nominal phrase. That means that both the subject and the object of the verb are in the nominative case, given that the verb “to be” takes both the grammatical subject and object in the nominative case. One simple principle of Greek grammar states that predicate nominatives generally do not take determinative articles (they are anarthrous) that is, the subject of a verb “to be” (in this case, “the love of money”) usually has an article, but the predicate nominative (in this case, “root”) does not, especially when it precedes the verb. A similar grammatical construction is in 1 Cor 12:27 and it is translated with the article “the body of Christ” in the NRSV.
8. Mishel, Bernstein, Shierholz, *The State of Working America 2008–2009* (Ithaca: ILR Press for Economic Policy Institute, 2009), 63–64.
9. *Ibid.* p. 61.
10. *Ibid.* p. 273.
11. *Ibid.* pp. 380–82.
12. *Ibid.* p. 50.
13. *Ibid.* pp. 118–19, 113–16, 344–45.
14. *Ibid.*, 68–70, argues that consumption is unequal. Wilkinson, “Thinking Clearly about Economic Inequality,” argues that “Consumption inequality, however, has remained substantially stable” (p. 5) at http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=10351.
15. The full paper can be found as Appendix B.
16. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 200th General Assembly (1988), *Minutes*, 1988, Part 1, p. 796.
17. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 211th General Assembly (1999), *Minutes*, 1999, Part 1, p. 183; principle 11—*Salary Relationships/Stewardship*.
18. “God’s Work in Our Hands,” policy statement of the General Assembly found in *Minutes*, 1995, Part I, p. 426.
19. *Ibid.* p. 438.
20. All biblical citations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV).
21. Kilcullen, John. Cited at <http://www.humanities.mq.edu.au/Ockham/y64110.html>. p. 3. Professor Kilcullen teaches at Macquarie University.
22. Bieler, Andre. *The Social Humanism of Calvin*. Translated by Paul T. Fuhrmann. Richmond, Va., John Knox Press, 1964. p. 17.
23. *Ibid.* pp. 19, 22.
24. Calvin, *Institutes*. Book II, Ch. VIII, 54.
25. *Ibid.* II, VIII, 55.
26. The letter itself has no salutation, but scholars assume that it is a response to Sachinus in a request to Calvin, found in *Opera*, xii, 210. Cited in Georgia Harkness. *John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics*. New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1931, 204.
27. The argumentation for this section is taken from Calvin, John. *Calvin’s Ecclesiastical Advice*. Beaty and Benjamin W. Farley. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991. pp. 139–43.
28. The list from Calvin’s commentary on Deut. 23:10, 20 is as follows:
 - “One must take no interest when lending to the poor.
 - “One must not neglect charity in order to have money to lend.
 - “Nothing should take place which is not in accord with the Golden Rule.
 - “The borrower should make at least as much on the money as the lender.
 - “We must not measure our practices by what is *licit par l’iniquite du monde*, but by the Word of God.

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“What is good for the public takes precedence over our private benefit.

“What is legal may be unchristian and prohibited to the Christian.”

29. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). *Constitution, Part II. Book of Order*, G-1.0100c.
30. The discussion of Bieler’s work is found in his book, *The Social Humanism of Calvin*, translated by Paul T. Fuhrmann, John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1964 and based on his work in French, *The Economic and Social Thought of Calvin (La pensee economique et social de Calvin)* 1961.
31. Ibid. p. 30.
32. Ibid. p. 40.
33. Ibid. p. 31.
34. Graham, W. Fred. *The Constructive Revolutionary: John Calvin and His Socio-Economic Impact*. Richmond, Va. John Knox Press, 1972.
35. Bieler, p. 41.
36. Graham, p. 94.
37. This and subsequent quotations from commentaries by Calvin are translated by Graham and found in *The Constructive Revolutionary*, pp. 68–94.
38. Bieler, p. 47.
39. Ibid. p. 48.
40. Commentary on Deut. 22:1–4.
41. Commentary on Genesis, Vol. 2, Part 8, John Calvin, <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/m.sion/cvgn2-08.htm>.
42. <http://consumerist.com/2007/04/ceo-pay-up-298-average-worker>, as accessed 1/13/10.
43. The Conference Board is a not-for-profit organization and holds 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in the United States. It says about itself: “The Conference Board creates and disseminates knowledge about management and the marketplace to help businesses strengthen their performance and better serve society. Working as a global, independent membership organization in the public interest, we conduct research, convene conferences, make forecasts, assess trends, publish information and analysis, and bring executives together to learn from one another” (from the Mission Statement of the Conference Board).
44. As discussed, quoted, and cited in *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* by Daniel H. Pink. New York: Riverhead Books, 2009. p. 24.
45. As found on Wikipedia, those states are Vermont, Michigan, Utah, Wyoming, and Illinois, as well as the Crow Indian Nation and Ogallala Sioux Tribe, effective January 1, 2010.
46. For more information on the history of church finances, please consult Appendix A.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

Item 10-10 recommends—in order to strengthen Presbyterian unity, mission, and solidarity in ministry—that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the churchwide study and action on the theology of compensation.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 10-10 be approved.

Rationale

Establish timelines for the review of compensation practices in other denominations and nonprofits.

In consultation with presbyteries, form a task group to develop a comprehensive compensation plan that would provide a more adequate and equal compensation in mission and small churches.

In consultation with Board of Pensions and presbyteries develop a more adequate compensation plan for ministers in retirement and in relation to medical benefits.

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Racial ethnic churches are affected because of size, social economic status, and the cultural differences of its members.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises approval of Item 10-10 with the following amendment to Recommendation 2.i.(5): [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“(5) Report the [disaggregated] results of all of the above to the Office of the General Assembly through the annual statistical report questionnaire sent to the stated clerks of presbyteries. [Categories to be reported are: gender, age ranges, race/ethnicity, clergy/lay.]”

Rationale

In order to analyze data regarding information collected, it is important to increase the categories of information so that determinations can be made regarding ways to overcome the deficiencies discovered. The ACWC has been calling for disaggregated information to be gathered in many areas of its work, including the Women of Color Consultation Task Force (2008), and the proposed design for research on the status of women.

Since women receive less than 80 percent of the pay men receive for the same work in society, it is not unlikely that the same applies to the church. For this reason, then, it is important to collect data using a disaggregated model.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 10-10

Comment on Item 10-10—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) requests that the 219th General Assembly (2010) not approve recommendations 2.c.(1) and 2.c.(2).

The GAMC is in compliance with all current General Assembly policy regarding compensation. The current Churchwide Compensation Policy Guidelines were reviewed and revised by the General Assembly in 1999, and were affirmed in 2002. The Guidelines are applicable to agencies of the General Assembly and advisory to other governing bodies and Presbyterian related institutions.

Recommendation 2.c.(1) from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy calls on the GAMC to implement an older directive from the 1995 and 1988 General Assemblies, rather than the most recent policy.

The 211th General Assembly (1999) thoroughly addressed the matter of compensation in adopting the recommendations of the Task Force to Review the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Compensation Policy Guidelines. Those recommendations include fourteen principles of compensation, including but not limited to the following:

Principle Two—Mission

The fulfillment of the church’s mission calls for effective and competent staff throughout the church and appropriate compensation to attract and retain them.

Principle Three—Equity and Accountability

The compensation plans should be equitable, consistent with the Presbyterian form of government ...

Principle Five—Basis

Factors to be considered when setting compensation should include the nature, purpose, scope, and responsibility of the position, the experience, knowledge, and skills required ...

Principle Seven—Compensation Plan Reviews

Each employer should review its compensation plan on an annual basis ...

Principle Ten—Recruiting

... Employees recruited regionally or nationally should be paid within salary ranges related to average salaries regionally or nationally paid by employers for comparable portions in comparable organizations requiring similar skills and experience, modified to reflect the cost of living in the locale where the work is done.

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Principle Eleven—Salary Relationships/Stewardship

The Church is one Body with various gifts, and each person's contribution to its mission is important. The Church recognizes the value of all varieties of service and seeks to temper the values and rewards of the marketplace. A reasonable relationship between the highest and lowest salaries paid to all church employees honors the principle of shared community and call. (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, pp. 182–183)

The task force was charged explicitly to review formula guidelines regarding salary ranges (such as the 5:1 ratio proposed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy). "... The task force discussed the objectives of wage equity principles and formula guidelines. The task force concluded that formula guidelines would be too restrictive and therefore inappropriate..." (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 185).

The 211th General Assembly (1999) also established an Advisory Committee on Churchwide Compensation to provide oversight and coordination of compensation management related to the Churchwide Compensation Policy Guidelines. In 2002, the General Assembly reaffirmed the Churchwide Compensation Policy Guidelines, and dissolved the Advisory Committee on Churchwide Compensation recognizing that the oversight for compensation is the responsibility of the boards of each agency and that the General Assembly agency review process includes review for the agencies' fidelity to the policies of the General Assembly, including the policy of compensation guidelines (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 460).

The Churchwide Compensation Policy Guidelines have served the General Assembly agencies well. Crucial to the General Assembly Mission Council, as to each General Assembly agency, is its ability to attract, retain, and fairly compensate qualified, skilled, and committed persons to enable the agency to fulfill its responsibilities, and to abide by the principles of compensation in the church as articulated in the Guidelines.

The GAMC therefore requests that the 219th General Assembly (2010) not approve recommendations 2.c.(1) and 2.c.(2) of Item 10-10.

Item 10-11

[The assembly approved Item 10-11 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 34, 36.]

Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K–12)—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in partnership with the Office of Child Advocacy, recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) do the following:

1. Approve the report, *Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K–12)*.
2. Receive the background rationale and appendixes (to be included in the Minutes).
3. Affirm the long-standing commitment of the PC(USA) to public education as an essential institution contributing to the common good in a democratic society by its commitment to equip all children to be effective citizens, capable of living full and meaningful lives and contributing to their society.
4. Approve the following measures to provide greater fairness and quality in public education:

For greater fairness in public education:

a. Recommits the PC(USA) to the principle of equal educational opportunity for all children in the United States, [~~regardless of race, abilities and disabilities, gender, language or socioeconomic status~~] [different as each child may be], and affirms them all as our children, neighbors in our care.

b. Calls upon our elected state and local officials to reform the way that public education is currently financed from an approach based largely on property taxes, which perpetuates and exacerbates class and/or racial disparities in poor, urban and rural school districts, to an approach that provides an equitable allocation of moneys to school systems according to the financial needs that schools require in order to attain agreed minimum standards in the provision of instructional inputs, qualified teachers, and physical facilities.

c. Encourages Presbyterians and other citizens to assess how the trend toward re-segregation and socioeconomic class separation may impact their communities and to support measures that would reverse this trend, which disadvantages more than one-third of U.S. public school students, as documented in the achievement gaps that are associated with economic and racial segregation patterns.

d. Opposes educational reforms that address achievement gaps by high-stakes testing and school restructuring without addressing underlying economic disparities in funding.

e. Expresses our deep concern about the wide disparity between the percentage of racial ethnic students in public schools and the percentage of racial ethnic educational leaders and teachers, which deprives these students of positive role models and cultural intermediaries.

f. Recognizes that while some families can choose alternatives such as home schooling, charter, and private schools, the vast majority (82 percent) of our children will, for the foreseeable future, continue to be educated in public schools. The privilege to choose an alternative for one's own child (and the privilege of exercising this right based on one's own resources) does not absolve anyone from the obligation to support financially the public schools that educate the majority of our society's members.

g. Encourages Presbyterians to evaluate existing and proposed charter schools in their communities to ensure that they do not violate workplace rights of staff and educators, and that they serve the same population as regular public schools, including English language learners and students of all abilities and disabilities; be subject to the same audits, teacher-certifications, and disclosure requirements as regular public schools, and not be run on a for-profit basis.

h. Urges school boards, legislatures, and charter schools to ensure that charter schools fulfill their original purpose of developing innovative and effective teaching for all students and to share such knowledge with public school systems in order to assure equity in education and advance the quality of education for all.

i. Affirms that justice requires all social institutions in our society, whether private or public, to honor the right of all persons, including public school educators, to organize to participate actively in decision-making that affects them.

j. Encourages school systems (and related libraries, recreational, and other developmental programs) to provide age-appropriate opportunities for student involvement in institutional governance as part of teaching-by-example of democratic values, so that students can participate constructively in decision-making that affects them.

For greater quality in public education:

k. Supports reforms consistent with the social fairness and holistic vision of human development that public education is to serve, understanding "quality" in part to mean exposure to art, music, sport, and humanities for all students (not simply those bound for college), to encourage critical thinking and moral development and not only test-determined proficiency in a restricted set of subjects.

l. Calls for and supports the enactment of legislation that addresses the documented opportunity gaps in education by ensuring that all children have a similar chance for good quality early childhood education, fully qualified teachers, equitable allocation of instructional resources, and a curriculum that will prepare them for further study, employment, and community service (including Head Start and pre-Head Start in light of their demonstrated benefits for student enrollment and attendance).

m. Maintains that in an increasingly pluralistic and multicultural environment a basic understanding of religion's cultural richness and historic importance should not be omitted from or slighted in the curriculum even as the difference between learning "about" religion and teaching faith is respected, and even when religious and cultural elements have been traditionally intertwined;

[n. That books and resources in school and classroom libraries reflect said multiculturalism in content to ensure fair representation and encourage cross-cultural understanding.]

~~[n.]~~ [o.] Supports the development and retention of qualified and skilled teachers through competitive salary levels, continuing education opportunities, cultural orientation, disciplinary back-up, encouragement for creativity, and participation in administrative decision-making (including through union representation) that may affect their interests.

5. Call upon Presbyterians to support public education through the following measures:

a. To take an active role in supporting public education institutions and organizations partnering with these schools in order to make sure that all children have an equal educational opportunity;

b. To honor the service of countless Presbyterian members, elders, and ministers on school boards and as school teachers and administrators;

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c. To urge congregations to set aside a Sunday at the beginning of the school year to celebrate public education, especially teachers, and to recognize students entering and/or returning to school; and

d. To continue cooperation in research and witness with ecumenical partners whose positions are consistent with our church's position that all children have the right to an opportunity to access to a quality and affordable public education.

[e. To affirm the importance of the active participation of families in the education and development of children in their care.]

6. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the appropriate ministry areas of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to do the following:

a. Post this resolution on the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) website, and provide copies of this resolution electronically and in limited publication for distribution to public and school officials as well as to church study classes;

b. Develop and/or provide appropriate study materials for individual and congregational use to stimulate dialogue and action on the concerns identified in *Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K-12)*;

c. Urge the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to include an emphasis on public education in the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar*;

7. Direct the Presbyterian Washington Office (PWO) and other appropriate entities of the General Assembly to communicate to the president of the United States and members of the U.S. Congress that:

a. the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) considers education to be a basic human right (*Minutes, 1996, Part I, p. 532*);

b. the 219th General Assembly (2010) declares its support for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that affirms access to a quality public education (K–12) as a basic human right essential to human development because it enhances capacities, improves opportunities, and widens the range of choices; and

c. the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supports the speedy ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

8. Direct the Presbyterian United Nations Office and other appropriate General Assembly entities to communicate to the United Nations and other international bodies the concurrence of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the UN Declaration on Human Rights that declares education to be a basic human right essential to human development because it enhances capacities, improves opportunities, and widens the range of choices.

[Comment: The Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues (A) advises that the assembly address issues of systemic factors that undermine children's education. These include:

- The destructive impact of generations of poverty that diminish expectations of success.
- The debilitating impact of socioeconomic conditions such as lead-paint poisoning, fetal alcohol syndrome, drug dependency, and nutritional deficiency.
- The lack of support for families trying to be involved in their children's education.
- The inapplicability of curriculum to the life-settings of those children.]

Rationale

I. Introduction

This report and its recommendations are in response to the following referral: *Item 09-06. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) Recommends That the 218th General Assembly (2008) Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in Partnership with the Office of Child Advocacy and in Consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, to Create a Resolution Team to Study the Church's Policies on Public Education in Relationship to the Issues of Desegregation, Affirmative Action, Faith-Based Initiatives, Home Schooling, Charter Schools, and the No Child Left Behind Law, with Attention to Class as well as Race; Making Appropriate Recommendations That Would Be Presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010), and, if Appropriate, Subsequently Preparing a Study Guide for Individual and Congregational Use (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 53, 55, 865).*

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The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), in partnership with the Office of Child Advocacy and in consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), appointed a Public Education Work Group to draft a report responding to this referral. This group was asked to present its report at the committee's meeting in January 2010. The work group was composed of the following: a retired public elementary teacher; college and university professors; persons with expertise in the areas of affirmative action, immigration, cultural competence, No Child Left Behind law; ordained and lay; and persons from diverse racial and ethnic and gender backgrounds. The members appointed to the group included: Alan A. Aja, David R. Brown, Christine M. Darden, Esperanza Guajardo, E. Magalene McClarrin, Jeffrey D. Swain, Ivy Yee-Sakamoto, Jenny Thagard, and Josefina Tinajero. Thagard and Tinajero withdrew from the committee because of other commitments.

Belinda M. Curry, associate for Policy Development and Interpretation for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), and Martha Bettis Gee, associate for Child Advocacy of the Compassion Peace, and Justice ministry area, provided staff support to the group.

II. Biblical and Theological Context in Support of Public Education

Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K-12)

“Which commandment of the law is greatest?” The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the account of this question being posed to Jesus (Mt. 22:34–40; Mk. 12:28–34; Lk. 10:25–28, NRSV). While the context of the question is slightly different in each gospel, Jesus does not back away from the challenge. In two cases, he responds with what we now know as the two great commandments: “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ... ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Mt. 22:37, NRSV). In Luke, the lawyer who is testing him offers the two great commandments and Jesus affirms the lawyer's wise response.

The two great commandments are the standard against which everything is measured. The biblical text is unequivocal about their importance. In Matthew, Jesus says that “on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mt. 22:40, NRSV). In Mark, Jesus says, “There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mk. 12:31b). Luke's account moves from the authority of these commandments to how they impact those who hear them and do what they say: “[If you] do this ... you will live” (Lk. 10:28). Jesus connects these two commandments inextricably. Why? We cannot love God and mistreat those we see every day. Loving one's neighbor—with all its ramifications—is a reflection of our love for the Lord. In the context of daily life, we must exercise our faith in our actions toward our neighbors. To put it bluntly, the mandate to love trumps everything.

Love must be acted out without bias and with the sole thought that such behavior pleases the Lord. When one analyzes, for example, the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30–37, it is clear that loving our neighbors as ourselves must take us out of our comfort zone and even into the realm of risking ourselves to help others. This parable above all others demonstrates that we are to called commit ourselves and our resources to helping our neighbors, for we are to consider their needs as important as we consider our own.

A. *Remembering the Least of These*

Who is our neighbor? Jesus clearly calls us to see everyone as neighbor, and to act as neighbor to all. The gospel also directs our attention in a particular way to those on the margins of society. Jesus challenges his followers to have a special concern for those he calls “the least of these” (Mt. 25:40, 45). We are called to recognize the image of God in marginalized persons and groups, those who are often invisible or left behind—to recognize the image of God in the faces of the homeless, the recent immigrant, the undocumented worker, and in those who are wounded and beaten back by systemic patterns of racism, classism, and sexism. The call to love our neighbor as ourselves challenges us to confront the evidence of racism and inequality in our public schools. We are called to be a voice for those with no voice, those left behind by certain education reforms and by the privatization of public schools.

B. *All the Heart and Mind*

The first of the two great commandments is a call to love God with heart, soul, strength, and mind. Mind in this text has a particular meaning. It does not mean the seat of the personality or the whole person as it often does in biblical texts. The word translated as mind means thinking or reflecting, a more specifically intellectual activity than we find elsewhere. Learning and intellectual activity are ways we love God. Some people of faith are concerned that public education in our increasingly secular context may undermine faith. Some seek to alter curriculum to reflect their religious worldview. But any attempt to use public education to teach one particular religious worldview is a failure to love and respect the neighbor who has a different religious viewpoint or who has rejected any religious viewpoint. Teaching a religious world view as normative is the work of faith communities, not public institutions.

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C. *It Is Good*

In the opening words of the Hebrew Bible, God looked out at all that was created and called it good. The words of the psalmist echo the affirmation that “the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Ps. 24:1). The continued growth of human knowledge does not diminish a sense of wonder at the goodness of creation. Indeed, education helps the human creature to appreciate the wonder and intricacy of the created world. Too often the goals of educational reform are focused on economic realities, on teaching toward employment, and as training for the work force. Quality public schools are essential to our society’s efforts to overcome poverty and address social inequality, but education is about more than vocational training. Quality public schools offer a holistic education, one that equips our children to live both meaningful and productive lives. A quality public school that allows students to develop their potential is a place where they learn to think critically and become effective citizens, where they gain an appreciation for the sweep of human history and for the arts. Public schools are one place where children and young people can learn about their own bodies, how to be healthy and stay fit.

In inviting students to consider the world they inherit and their place in it, a quality public education is a form of stewardship. Such educational experiences invite the participant to a sense of wonder and accomplishment, empowering the student to make a difference in the world, to shape a life of meaning and purpose and to look at the heavens and earth and echo the words spoken at the end of creation, “it [is] good” (Gen. 1:25).

D. *Our Reformed Heritage*

Beginning with John Calvin’s support of free schools, people of the Reformed tradition have always affirmed the value of education and its potential to transform lives and systems. The Reformers considered public education essential—first of all, so that the populace might be literate and thus able to read the Bible (leading to support for primary education); and, secondly, that persons might read Scripture with understanding (and thus the Reformers’ support for higher education). Our Reformed tradition further asserts that “... privatism, which seeks exemption from the conditions prevailing in a society and refuses to participate in a creative way in the social milieu, is incompatible with God’s intention for our lives. [Our tradition] affirms that growth toward self-determining, responsible, committed persons, concerned for the freedom and stability of their society, is best fostered in the pluralistic and ideologically open setting of public education. This role of the public schools must be consistently maintained and openly defended when necessary by citizens and by school personnel” (*A Call to Church Involvement in the Renewal of Public Education, Minutes, 1987, Part I, p. 481*).

III. Recent History of General Assembly Actions

Jesus’ vision of an abundant life (Jn. 10:10) is for all God’s children. Quality public schools give us the best chance to empower the most students to embrace an abundant life in community. Historically, Presbyterians have affirmed access to a free public education as one key component in the inclusion of all in the abundant life.

A. *The Church and Children*

With the approval of a *Commissioners’ Resolution: On Children’s Rights* in (1990), the PC(USA) adopted a rights-based approach to looking at the needs of the most vulnerable of the vulnerable, children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, one of the most widely accepted of the human rights conventions, posits a free public education as not just desirable for the few, but a basic human right of all children. Later the General Assembly reaffirmed the church’s commitment to the ratification of the convention in its *Resolution on Children* (*Minutes, 1997, Part I, pp. 44, 534–48*); and in its *Resolution on the United Nations Assembly on the Child: The Future of the Child in the 21st Century* (*Minutes, 2001, Part I, pp. 56, 288–92*).

A landmark action of the 205th General Assembly (1993) was the approval of *A Vision for Children and the Church*. As the statement affirms, “all children have the right to be children; and all children are not just tomorrow, they are today” (*Minutes, 1993, Part I, p. 644*). By extension, the church affirms that children have the right to be educated today in order to reach their full potential tomorrow. Other key actions on behalf of children were the designation of 2000–2001 as The Year of the Child and 2001–2011 as the Decade of the Child.

An overture *On Supporting Efforts to Ensure the Health, Education, and Well-Being of Every Child in This Nation* called upon Presbyterians “to support ... efforts to ensure that every child in this rich nation of ours has ... access to an adequate public education that will allow the full expression of each child’s gifts” (*Minutes, 2000, Part I, p. 467*).

B. *The Church and Public Education*

In 1987, the reunited church adopted *A Call to Church Involvement in the Renewal of Public Education* calling Presbyterians “to join others in their communities—to provide public schools that will secure for all children an education that develops their capacities to serve as creative and responsible persons in the common life and—to mobilize the resources

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available in each community—home, church, community organizations (both public and private)—that will support public schools and share in achieving the necessary education of children and youth (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, pp. 479–80).

The 204th General Assembly (1992) reaffirmed the church’s commitment to public education for all, not just for an elite few and its “vigorous support of and commitment to the American system of public education available to all children” (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 886).

By General Assembly action, 1998 was designated as The Year of Emphasis on Education (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, pp. 45, 296), calling for a broad range of initiatives and actions related to several forms of education, including public education. The 207th General Assembly (1995) underscored our historic commitment as articulated in *A Call to Church Involvement in the Renewal of Public Education*, reaffirming “the church’s position to support a public education of high quality for all children; encourage[ing] Presbyterians to learn more about their public schools ... to pray for our schools and encourage learning and dialogue about public education ...” (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, p. 60).

Through its approval of the policy on *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, the 208th General Assembly (1996) affirmed once again a rights-based approach to education for all. That assembly declared “Education is a basic human right and is essential to human development because it enhances human capacities, improves opportunities, and widens the range of choices” (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 532). The 210th General Assembly (1998) underscored our commitment “... to an educational ministry to those children placed most at risk in our society, specifically, urban inner-city [children]” (*Minutes*, 1998, Part I, p. 652).

General Assemblies through the years have also spoken to the impact of alternatives to public education. Assemblies in both former streams opposed tuition tax credits. The General Assembly has voiced concern for evaluating the effect on witness to society of government faith-based initiatives. The 217th General Assembly (2006) directed staff to “assess the effects on Christian witness to society of government faith-based initiatives and other vehicles by which Presbyterian churches ... closely affiliated with congregations accept moneys from government bodies, with particular attention to contracts affecting public education ...” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 878).

C. *Disparities in the Culture and in Public Education*

Dating from the time of the *Brown v Board of Education* U.S. Supreme Court Decision in 1954, many General Assemblies of the predecessor bodies have sought to be a faithful witness in the face of the intractable realities that arise out of racism and classism, speaking out in support of desegregation and busing to achieve racially integrated education and in opposition to racial discrimination and tokenism in the public schools. In 1971, the General Assembly declared itself disturbed by the “number of private academies established primarily to circumvent compliance with federal laws regarding a unified public school system ... [and called on Presbyterians] to support and strengthen in every way possible the unified, racially inclusive public school systems ...” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1971, Part I, p. 95).

The 207th General Assembly (1995) called for the church to “reaffirm its commitment to affirmative action as a means of ... undoing historical and institutional effects of discrimination based on age, disability, marital status, race, or gender” (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, p. 55).

The 211th General Assembly (1999) of the reunited church approved a resolution recommending “that all governing bodies of the PC(USA) support ... the work of ... entities fighting for quality, desegregated education for Black children and everyone else, throughout these United States ...” (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 77). The 211th General Assembly (1999) also approved the policy on *Building Community Among Strangers* calling on the church “to cross barriers that divide people and build bridges to connect people within the church and insociety” (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 414).

In its action *On Improved Education for African American and Other Students Placed At-Risk for an Excellent Education*, the 216th General Assembly (2004) affirmed “That Presbyterians be called upon to confront the stubborn continuance of racial prejudice, particularly the persistence of societal attitudes that discourage academic achievement among economically disadvantaged and children of color students and others at risk” (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 43).

In *A Social Creed for the Twenty-First Century and the Recognition of the Centennial of the “Social Creed of the Churches 1908*, the 218th General Assembly (2008) challenged Presbyterians to live by a universal list of social, economic, and environmental tenets, including calling them to work for “High quality public education for all ...” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 925).

IV. The History of Public Education

In the 1830s, the push for public education gained momentum when reformers like Horace Mann promoted the notion of the common school, publicly funded, locally governed, and offering a common curriculum to all students. From the early days of the nation, public education has played a vital role in American democratic society. In addition to preparing young

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people for productive work and fulfilling lives, public education has also been expected to accomplish certain collective missions aimed at promoting the common good. These include, among others, preparing youth to become responsible citizens, forging a common culture from a nation of immigrants, and reducing inequalities in American society.

Although access to public schools had become universal by the early twentieth century, the education provided by these schools was far from equal. Schools for African American children were segregated and generally substandard. Schools serving the urban and rural poor often operated in dilapidated facilities with underqualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and limited resources. Faced with these realities, reformers turned their attention from access to equity. The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* U.S. Supreme Court ruling declared that separate schools were inherently unequal, initiating thirty years of efforts to integrate schools so that all children would receive a quality education.

Proactive initiatives to implement court-ordered school integration in order to improve the performance of racial ethnic students have diminished considerably since the late 1980s, when Supreme Court decisions began to release communities from these requirements, ruling that cross-district plans were unlawful. Some school systems across the nation have begun using socioeconomic status to balance school enrollments. The rise of school choice, charter schools, and urban school districts with 100 percent racial ethnic school populations have resulted in few options for affirmative action to integrate many of these schools.

As this brief history suggests, American public schools have been expected to fulfill certain public missions that go beyond the purely academic purposes. These public missions can be characterized by six main themes¹:

- to provide universal access to free education;
- to guarantee equal opportunities for all children;
- to unify a diverse population;
- to prepare people for citizenship in a democratic society;
- to prepare people to become economically self-sufficient; and
- to improve social conditions.

In recent years, however, some of these public-spirited missions of education have been neglected and are in danger of being abandoned. Most current efforts to reform public education have focused on increasing students' academic achievement—without a doubt, a central purpose of schooling. But the reasons given for improving achievement often stress individual or private economic benefits (such as preparing youth for good jobs in a global economy), rather than public benefits (such as preparing youth for active citizenship in a healthy democratic society).

V. The Current Context of Public Education

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, many challenges in the current context impact public education.

A. Demographic Trends

1. Trends in the Nation

The United States is experiencing the second largest flow of immigration since the European waves of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Beginning with the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 that eliminated immigration quotas favoring those of European origin and replaced them with family and skill-based preferences, the law unintentionally led to an influx of mostly Latin American and Asian immigrants, as well as those from lesser-developed regions of the world.² While Latino and Asian groups have a history that goes back to the inception of the country, their populations in the U.S. are now increasing as a result of rising birth and immigration rates. Although discussions of demographics in the U.S. have long overemphasized the relationships between Whites and Blacks, despite significant demographic diversity from the nation's earliest days, this is no longer possible in a context of substantial and growing cultural and linguistic diversity.

As highlighted in Table 1, demographic shifts reveal an exponential increase in U.S. racial ethnic populations over time, with African Americans/Black (non-Latinos), Hispanic Latinos (of any race), and Asian-Pacific Islander groups growing, while the population of Whites continues to decline gradually. Demographic predictions are that not only will Whites no longer be the majority population in the United States by 2042, but in several states the Latino population will surpass the White population much sooner. In a growing number of states, Latinos are the largest racial ethnic group, recently surpassing the number of African Americans in states such as Iowa in the midwest and Maine in the northeast and in far western Washington and Oregon.³ This statistical trend must be viewed with caution given that Latinos can be of any "race" depending on the group's African, European, Indigenous, or even occasionally Asian roots. For instance, it is unclear how many Black Latinos (Latin Americans with either visible or known African ancestry) are in the United States, nor are demographers clear about the racial identity of those who self-report as "Other."⁴

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The Asian population is also growing exponentially. The latest figures illustrate that Asians comprise 11 percent of the U.S. population and 66.2 percent are immigrants (foreign-born).⁵ However, it must be noted that much like Hispanic or Latino, the term Asian refers to individuals whose origin could be one of a long list of countries representing many cultures and languages divided by thousands of miles of geography. While all Asian countries are represented in the colorful U.S. mosaic, immigration policy often favors immigrants from select countries. Contrary to popular belief and much like Latin American immigrants, Asian groups have differing needs, concerns, and educational levels, depending on their histories, context of arrival, skills, and other factors. New demographic trends also show an increase in minority populations in regions like the south and central United States, where Latinos are among the fastest growing minority groups. A 2004 study showed increases anywhere from 200–500 percent in the Latino population in states like North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia since 1990.

Table 1-Statistical Summary of U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1990–2008

U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity	White (Non-Latino)	African American/Black (Non-Latino)	Hispanic-Latinos (of any “race”)	Asian- Pacific Islanders	Other (includes Native Americans)
1990	75.6	11.7	9.0	2.8	0.8
2000	69.1	12.3	12.5	3.6	2.8
2008	66.0	14.0	15.0	5.0	1.5
% Change 1990–2008	-9.4%	+2.3	+6.0	+2.2	+0.7

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, American Factfinder, Summary Files. Pew Hispanic Center, Reports, 2009.

Trends Among School-aged Children

Public education is the primary means by which we educate the majority of children.⁶ No other institution is presently capable of providing an educational experience for the majority of our children. According to the 2007 figures, elementary and secondary school enrollment in the United States is estimated at approximately 51 million, with approximately 1.5 million (2.9 percent) involved in home schooling; 5.9 million (11 percent) enrolled in private schools; and about 1.5 million (2.9 percent) enrolled in charter schools.⁷ Forty-two percent of the students in public education are from racial ethnic backgrounds, many from economically challenged homes.⁸ As Table 2 illustrates, the demographic trends in the nation are also reflected in public school enrollment figures.

Table 2-Statistical Summary of Public School Enrollment Figures by Race and Ethnicity, 1996–2006.

Public School Enrollment (Latest Figures)	Whites (Non-Latinos)	African Americans/Black (Non-Latino)	Latino-Hispanic	Asian-Pacific Islanders (Non-Latino)	Native American-Indian
1996	64.2	16.9	14.0	3.8	1.1
2006	56.6	17.1	20.5	4.7	1.2
% Change (1996–2006)	-7.6%	+0.2	+6.5	+0.9	+0.1

Source: Table 41. Percentage of Enrollment in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Race/Ethnicity and State or Jurisdiction: Fall 1996 and Fall 2006. Digest of Education Statistics, 2008 Tables and Figures).

2. *The Impact of Diversity*

Today, at least one in five students has one foreign-born parent.⁹ Conventional wisdom with respect to European immigrants was that students, including the second generation, struggled socially in school in comparison with the third generation, but over time were expected to catch up. There is debate about the extent of social adaptation among immigrant students, with the growing consensus being that there is no monolithic path to full integration. Successful adaptation as measured via educational outcomes may depend largely on the context of the reception of one’s parents on their arrival, whether they belong to a historically oppressed group and what kinds of structural barriers exist, as well as what kinds of programs are in place.

3. *Linguistic Diversity*

The linguistic diversity of the United States is also reflected in our schools. From 1979 to 2007 the number of children and youth between the ages of five and seventeen who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 3.8 to 10.8 million, from 9 percent to 20.4 percent of the population in this age range. Of the population of English learners, 75 percent spoke Spanish, 12 percent spoke an Asian or Pacific Islander language, 10 percent spoke another Indo-European

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language, and 3 percent spoke a language categorized as “other.”¹⁰ The total number of English language learners represents more than 350 languages.

Many interrelated out-of-school factors will shape the academic performance of English learners, including parental education levels, family income, parents’ English-language proficiency, mother’s marital status at the time of birth, and whether there are one or two parents in the home. In addition to the risk factors for academic underachievement, there are strengths and assets the English learner can bring to achieve academic success. For instance, children of immigrants may have greater support from two parents, siblings, and a grandparent or other relative than native English-speaking peers.¹¹

Effective strategies for teaching English learners have been well researched and documented. However, there is an implementation gap between what works and what is commonly done in classrooms across the United States.¹² The growing population of English learners often suffers in school districts that either ignore their needs or provide inadequate support; meanwhile, they engage in double the work of native English speakers.¹³ Simply put, the technology exists for teachers to teach English learners effectively, but the fact that most teachers do not perceive a need to adapt their teaching practices to meet the needs of their English learners decreases the likelihood that the academic achievement of these students will improve.

4. *Socioeconomic Diversity*

The majority of racial ethnic students who attend public schools in urban centers, as well as students in rural areas, are affected by the socioeconomic status into which they were born. After WWII, the U.S. industrial base that had been located in cities of the northeast and Midwest began to disperse into suburban and rural areas with the help of federal highway construction. Since the 1970s the U.S. has seen many of its manufacturing jobs move to foreign shores leaving closed factories throughout the U.S. landscape. Less educated workers in all areas who once were able to support families on manufacturing wages can no longer find such employment. Once flourishing cities have been left bereft of a sufficient tax base, from either income or property, by which to support necessary social services as city populations experience high unemployment and grow ever more poor and in need of such services.¹⁴ Of the one hundred largest cities in the U.S. in 2007, fourteen had a poverty rate over 30 percent and another forty-eight had a poverty rate between 20 percent and 30 percent—depression level figures.¹⁵

Scholars agree that poverty is one of the most intractable problems facing public education: the higher the rate of poverty, the lower the level of student achievement.¹⁶ The correlation between the socioeconomic level of students’ families and their academic achievement has been documented since the 1960s. In fact, according to Gary Orfield, a U.C.L.A. education professor, and Susan Eaton, a research director at Harvard Law, the powerful effect of the socioeconomic makeup of a student body on academic achievement has become “one of the most consistent findings in research on education.”¹⁷ All low-income students fare worse in academic achievement when they attend schools populated primarily by other low-income students. The evidence has led some school districts to try income-based integration. Since the publication of his seminal work *Savage Inequalities* (1991), Jonathan Kozol, and many others, have challenged the nation to acknowledge that poverty must be addressed if education is to become equal

5. *Religious Diversity*

In a survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, more than 75 percent of respondents identified themselves as Christian. However, a large percentage of respondents (28 percent) no longer belong to the religion in which they were raised, illustrating the high level of fluidity in affiliations. Newly arriving immigrants bring with them the diversity of the world’s religions, especially Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism.¹⁸ Many cultures do not separate their cultural and religious experiences but see them as one and the same. The public education system is challenged to be more sensitive to the notion that just as we have many languages, we also have many religious points of view. Respect for the richness of these traditions requires a review and reordering of teaching practices, historical points of view, and curricula to broaden the worldview of students to match the growing complexity of U.S. and global populations.

B. *Desegregation and Re-Segregation*

In *Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation* (2001), one of the most comprehensive studies of re-segregation, Gary Orfield of The Civil Rights Project asserts that de-segregation was never fully achieved. Orfield observes that in the 1980s urban schools became largely minority, non-White, poor, and highly segregated; he attributes this to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974), which rejected busing from cities to suburbs. School integration reached its peak in areas of the south that were under court order to desegregate. Maximum integration occurred in small towns, rural areas, and where city and suburban schools were combined into a single district. Since several U.S. Supreme Court rulings were followed by the rapid exit of Whites into suburban areas, public schools in cities all over the country have a student population that is overwhelmingly racial ethnic and low-income. By 2007, 44 percent of public school students were considered to be part of a racial or ethnic minority group.¹⁹ Many areas have aggressively pursued dismissal of their integration orders and today only three hundred school districts operate under mandatory desegregation orders.²⁰

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A limited number of the nation's school districts, roughly one thousand, employ voluntary integration efforts to curb re-segregation, considering race when assigning students to schools. A major road block to this approach was erected by the U.S. Supreme Court in their 2007 decision of *Parents Involved in Community Schools vs. Seattle School District No. 1*.²¹ Voluntary school integration plans in Seattle and Jefferson County, Kentucky, were struck down because they were partly race based and judged to violate the Equal Protection clause of the United States Constitution. Several districts are now establishing school assignment plans based on socioeconomic status in the expectation that racial integration will also occur.²² Some (i.e. Wake County, North Carolina; and Jefferson County, Kentucky) have implemented volunteer school assignment programs that limit the percentage of free or reduced lunch students (a metric relating to family income). This approach brings about both socioeconomic integration as well as racial ethnic integration. At the same time, it avoids violating the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that school assignments cannot be made on the basis of race. If integration should be revived as a goal to bring about educational equity, legal scholars believe that the barrier of law could be overcome, but that the real issue would be the attitude of parents and families toward integration.²³

The reversal of the trend of increased integration coincides closely with the reversal of the trend of increasing scores for Black students in math and reading (as reported by the National Association for Educational Progress (NAEP)). Many studies have shown that Black students perform better in integrated environments,²⁴ possibly because of better teachers and more parental involvement.

C. *Accountability and High-Stakes Testing*

There is nearly unanimous agreement that the public school system is in need of reform, yet the debate about reform generally centers on accountability as measured by test scores, the single aspect on which current reform efforts are most clearly focused.

The most notable contribution to high stakes testing is the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, usually referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This federal legislation is built on the assumption that the culture of the educational system needs to be changed to address educational inadequacies. The act calls for each state to set minimum standards of academic achievement, to measure student progress against those standards, and to hold students accountable for meeting them.

Every state has developed or adopted its own testing program in reading and mathematics and must show continual progress on its test scores until 2014 when every student is expected to show proficiency at his or her grade level. Schools that do not show progress each year (average yearly progress, or AYP) are labeled as failing, eventually being sanctioned, with a variety of remedies put in place. Sanctions progress as the school continues to fail to achieve AYP, ending with schools subject to a restructuring (which could include replacing staff, instituting new curriculum, regulating the facility directly through the state, and even closing the school and reopening it as a charter school).²⁵ Schools not only must report the progress of each of their subgroups, but each group must show continual progress.

The law's supporters point to what they call the "soft bigotry of low expectations."²⁶ They assert that by disaggregating test scores for the subgroups in a school, for example, those of racial ethnic groups, various income levels, English language learners, or those with disabilities, for perhaps the first time, attention is focused on those children in underserved populations who can get lost when a school's average score is the only number reported.

The law's goals are laudatory, designed to address the inequities experienced by the most vulnerable children. The underlying assumptions on which NCLB rests are also exemplary: that all children can learn, that as citizens we have a moral responsibility to attend to a quality education for all, and that standards need to be put in place and systems held accountable. But the assumption that accountability to high standards can be adequately measured using one mechanism, primarily a standardized test, bears more examination. Most educators agree that standardized tests do indeed provide one reliable measure of achievement—but only one. When the stakes are as high as they are in NCLB, the use of one measure, however good, becomes problematic. A second difficulty with NCLB is that the law does not address the profound educational funding inequalities that plague our nation.²⁷

Test scores alone are a limited criterion for measuring the success of education. In his book *Why Schools?*, Mike Rose argues that we have strayed from the original purpose of schools—that from the beginning we have expected our schools to teach more than skills and subject matter, notably a sense of civic duty and moral behavior. Rose argues that during this century, society has turned to public schools to address many needs that in the past were met by families, churches, employers, and volunteer groups. "Schools are even called on to address broad social and economic problems that the country has not addressed ... deindustrialization, immigration, chronic poverty—and now increased globalized economy."²⁸ Rose asserts that the economic drive for performance has led to policies that are "thin on the ethical, social and imaginative dimensions of human experience." We have forgotten that we are not just economic beings, but civic and moral beings as well.

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According to *New York Times* columnist David Brooks,²⁹ economists think of human capital as the skills and knowledge that people need to get jobs to drive the economy. Brooks argues that educational reform has failed because it has failed to address the other underlying components of human capital. Other forms of capital—cultural, social, moral, cognitive, and aspirational—have been ignored. These dimensions of human capacity may not be measured with standardized tests.

Other voices stress that our democracy depends on civic participation. In *Democracy at Risk: The Need for a New Federal Policy in Education*,³⁰ the authors stress that our country's "civic participation gap" mirrors the "education gap"—therefore putting our very form of government at risk. They assert that federal engagement in educational policy on a large scale was premised on the democratic agenda that our public schools were to fulfill—that every child would be given the tools necessary to make equal participation in our society more than just a promise.

D. *Achievement Gap or Opportunity Gap?*

Since April 2009, the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has released several reports assessing the state of educational achievement in the United States. The federal legislation included a requirement that all fourth and eighth graders be assessed by the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) test in mathematics, reading, and science to measure progress in improving achievement levels and in closing achievement gaps between races. There are additional reports that the nation's prekindergarten students are not ready for school and discouraging indications that the United States is falling further and further behind other nations, both developed and developing, in student achievement, even as we spend more resources than virtually any other nation.³¹

Yet there is a growing movement to refocus the debate on educational reform. Beneath the achievement gap as measured by tests that has captured the nation's attention is a pervasive opportunity gap caused by the inequitable distribution of resources. To address this gap, the Schott Foundation calls for Congress to ensure that all children have an opportunity to learn that includes a quality early childhood education, highly qualified teachers, a curriculum that will prepare them for college, work and community, and equitable instructional resources.³²

E. *Quality Early Childhood Education*

There is wide consensus that school readiness leads to school success. Research suggests that children's outcomes in school are remarkably stable after the first few years of school and that interventions are most successful when they are early in a child's school career. Many studies point to the success of the transition to school as a critical factor in success. A quality preschool or child-care experience predicts the ease of adjustment to kindergarten, enhances competencies, strengthens social and self-regulatory skills, and reduces the likelihood of negative outcomes like grade retention.³³ Yet according to the Children's Defense Fund, only about 3 percent of eligible children are enrolled in Early Head Start, and only one-half to one-third of children eligible for Head Start are enrolled.³⁴ All children need access to high quality early childhood education.

F. *Highly Qualified Teachers*

Teacher quality is critical to the success of students in public education.³⁵ A teacher's knowledge, teaching skills, and dedication dramatically affect students' achievement and very often their future. Under often difficult circumstances, teachers are doing extraordinary work to open the doors to lifelong learning. But the complex and difficult context of today's public schools exacts a heavy toll on many teachers.

While there are many dedicated, hardworking teachers working to instill skills and a love for learning in their students, there is an alarming rate of teacher attrition with growing shortages in the content areas of mathematics, science, counseling, reading, and special education. During the 2003–04 school year, 8 percent of teachers changed professions and 8 percent changed schools. Teachers named a variety of factors contributing to attrition or job changes, including testing and accountability mandates in NCLB, too little support, student discipline, under-funded programs, lack of influence and respect, and insufficient pay.

Today, far too many young teachers are leaving the field within their first five years. Teachers in content-specific areas like mathematics and science are lured to higher-paying positions in corporate America and government. Teacher attrition costs the education system approximately \$7 billion every year to recruit, employ, and prepare replacement teachers. Each year, large percentages of out-of-field teachers are hired to teach classes in mathematics, science, language arts, reading, special education, and English for speakers of other languages. In many cases, students taught by out-of-field teachers do not progress as they should in the required subject area.

Experienced teachers and teachers with higher degrees often are attracted to newer schools in the suburbs where they are offered higher salaries and have more support from parents and more resources. Inexperienced and out-of-field teachers are frequently placed in urban schools with racial ethnic or low-income students where conditions are challenging and resources limited. Such schools often employ scripted learning systems where teachers are told what to say and when to say it with every lesson. Often based on military training systems, these rote lessons are directed to those areas that will be tested in the

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end-of-year standardized tests.³⁶ Such scripted learning systems stifle the creativity of the highly qualified teachers urban schools need and are an additional factor that pushes them into transfers.

Teach for America is a program where young graduates from top universities teach for two to three years in urban situations where finding quality teachers has been difficult. Teach for America teachers work in thirty cities across the United States. School systems like New Orleans, where more than half of the schools are charter schools, rely heavily on Teach for America to supply teachers every year. Though these teachers are generally very bright, they undergo only a short program for learning to teach and work with students. By their third or fourth year, many leave teaching for other careers or go into administration.

With the increasingly diverse student population, the ratio of racial ethnic educators and educational leaders is also an issue. In 2004, a national summit on diversity in our nation's teaching force voiced concern about the demographic disparity between educators and their students and the negative impact on the quality of education for all children.³⁷ African American teachers account for the lowest percentage of the U.S. teacher workforce since 1971. In addition, only 25 percent of that workforce is male.³⁸

G. *A Curriculum That Prepares Students for College, Work, and Community*

All students need a rigorous, wide-ranging curriculum that covers more than just the basic skills in order to prepare them for college. Yet despite the emphasis on math and reading, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) data released in the summer of 2009 showed overall average scores in mathematics and reading dropping, with the worst reading score since 1994, and an increasing gap between scores of lower performing racial ethnic students and white or Asian students. Scores of Asian students in mathematics continue to rise, a finding that does not appear to correlate with family income levels.³⁹ Overall, as with other standardized national tests, SAT scores increased as family income increased and as family education level increased. But fewer than half of the 2009 high school graduates take the SAT. A second study released by the Iowa-based ACT test, reported that only one quarter of the students who took the ACT had the skills to succeed in college. Though some of these results perhaps point to a growing diversity of students taking these college admission tests, many feel that preparation in school is certainly a factor in the test scores that result.

Test results are not the only indicator of the level of preparation of high school graduates. But if these results point to deficiencies in higher-achieving college bound students, they also call into question how prepared all high school students are for the work and community involvement that contribute to a meaningful life. Access to a high quality curriculum is the right of all children. Students in low-income areas need access to higher-level coursework, such as AP courses as well as courses in the arts and humanities, and school counselors who encourage them to aspire to further education beyond high school.

H. *Equitable Resources*

Currently, all fifty states have constitutional provisions for free public education. The primary source of school funding is local property taxes, with some funds provided by the states and a small amount of designated federal funds. This funding mechanism has resulted in high property taxes and low funding-per-student in areas that have low property values and lower tax rates and high funding-per-student in areas with high property values. This has led to vast disparities in per-pupil-funding between states and between districts within states. The inequity in per-pupil funding within states led to a 1971 California Supreme Court ruling that use of local property taxes to finance primary education was a violation of the equal protection clause of the state constitution. Since 1971, advocates in almost all of the fifty states have filed suit claiming that unequal financing of public schools violates various state constitutions. Equity in funding suits continued in 2009 around the United States.⁴⁰ In 1973 in its decision on *Rodriguez v. San Antonio Schools*, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the concept that education was a right guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Because many cases filed on the basis of equity have failed, suits are now based on educational adequacy.

States generally focus on two aspects of equity: vertical equity and adequacy equity. Vertical equity recognizes that legitimate differences occur among children and that some need additional educational services. Districts base funding decisions on assigning a greater weight to those students. Adequacy equity is funding adequate to allow each student to achieve some minimum level of achievement. States have also sought to compensate for the differences in districts' abilities to raise the revenue for schools. A foundation program sets an expenditure per pupil that allows a minimum quality education for each pupil. This formula, used by many states, results in targeting more state education funds on a per pupil basis while taking into account the taxable wealth of each locality.⁴¹ Some states such as Virginia, however, do not penalize those districts choosing to make an extra local effort to go beyond the basics. A 2004 analysis of the support of public education for all states by the Education Trust showed state education support percentages ranging from 83.9 percent for New Mexico to 38.2 percent for Nebraska. Analysis showed that states providing the lowest percentage toward education funding had the largest per-pupil funding gaps between their high-poverty and low-poverty districts.⁴² The 2009 Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia shows that Arlington County, a suburb of Washington, D.C., spent \$18,449 per student, while Amelia County in the rural part of Virginia spent \$8,583 per student.

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The annual output for public education is approximately \$543 billion.⁴³ If we are to address the problems of public education, we cannot ignore that many of the decisions affecting it are driven by money. Low-income and racial ethnic children receive fewer dollars than do their white and/or lower income counterparts. The Education Trust reported that in most states, districts with high numbers of low-income and racial ethnic students receive substantially fewer state and local dollars per pupil than districts with fewer such students.⁴⁴ While the funding gap between high and low poverty districts has narrowed somewhat over the past several years in the nation as a whole, it has increased in nine states. In most cases, districts with high numbers of racial ethnic students also receive substantially fewer state and local dollars per pupil than do their counterparts with fewer racial ethnic students.

What this generally means is that racial ethnic students, particularly those who have high rates of poverty, receive insufficient funding to address their academic and social needs. Because they recognize that some children simply need more resources to be successful, critics of the state funding formulas fight for equity rather than equality.

I. *Alternative Approaches*

For a variety of reasons, families throughout the United States have sought alternative schooling choices. The two most prominent alternative options are charter schools and home schooling. Private schools are also an option available to some.

J. *Charter Schools*

A charter school is an independent, publicly funded school that typically operates separately from the district board of education. In effect, a charter school is a one-school public school district. A group of people—educators, parents, community leaders, educational entrepreneurs, or others—write the charter plan describing the school’s guiding principles, governance structure, and applicable accountability measures. If the state (or approving agency) approves the charter, the charter is funded on a per pupil basis. In most cases charter schools operate under an agreement between the approving body and the school.⁴⁵

The charter school movement has roots in a number of other education reform ideas, from alternative schools, to site-based management, magnet schools, public school choice, privatization, and community-parental empowerment. The term “charter” may have originated in the 1970s in New England. Albert Shanker, former president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), publicized the idea by suggesting that local boards could “charter” an entire school with union and teacher approval. In the late 1980s Philadelphia started a number of schools-within-schools and called them “charters.” Some of them were schools of choice. The idea was further refined in Minnesota where charter schools were developed according to three basic values: opportunity, choice, and responsibility for results.⁴⁶ Forty states plus the District of Columbia currently have charter laws. New Orleans schools include the largest percentage of charter schools with 54 percent.

The movement owes its impetus to dissatisfaction with traditional public schools. Families with children of various special interests and needs, low income and minority families, those with limited English proficiency, and those in certain cultural enclaves sought out such schools in response to what they believed was indifference to the needs of their children or an inability of public schools to make tough decisions that would improve the educational opportunities for their children. In the case of some parents who are dissatisfied with the educational quality of their schools, improved educational opportunities such as smaller classes, higher standards and safety for their children take precedence over diversity.”⁴⁷

Many of the concerns surrounding charter schools center on the fear that traditional public schools will suffer as children, teachers, and dollars flow out of traditional public schools and into charters. There are also concerns about which students are leaving and what that means for those left behind, the education received by the students enrolled in the 12.5 percent of charter schools that have failed⁴⁸ and the 37 percent of charter schools that are performing significantly worse than their comparable public schools.⁴⁹

The charter school debate generally centers on one of three themes:

- Equity: Will charters alter access of all students to equal education opportunity?
- Quality: Will charters improve public education?
- Policy: Will differences between charters and public schools impact how we govern education?⁵⁰

Public purpose/public ownership and the formation of an educated citizenry are additional themes articulated by many respected educators.⁵¹

In the first widespread, systematic study of charter school performance results, findings are that 17 percent of charter schools are providing a superior education, 50 percent produce results no different than public schools, and 37 percent are providing an education significantly worse than public schools. There are significant state-by-state differences in the findings.⁵²

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There are also concerns about whether some charters are in fact accessible to all students. Some schools require an application and an interview or a written parental agreement, enabling a student to be rejected either initially or later in the year. Some schools even require an admissions examination as opposed to an open lottery. Some charter schools have an open admission policy through the September-enrollment-count-date, after which students can be sent back to traditional public schools for various reasons. This enables the school to receive funds for the student, show a high enrollment for racial ethnic and free or reduced lunch students for the year, yet include only the remaining students in the performance test scores. Even the highly lauded SEED boarding charter school in Washington, D.C., which initially reported 100 percent college acceptance for its graduates, had failed to report that until recently the school had a 20 percent attrition rate each year—mostly black boys. A seventh grade class enrollment of seventy at SEED had dwindled to a senior class of twenty by graduation.⁵³

Clearly, state charter laws and state monitoring of charter schools are very unequal. There is a need to ensure that charter schools are required to serve the same populations as regular public schools, including English language learners and students with disabilities. As some charter schools employ teachers who do not have access to union protection, many are paid substandard wages. Charters should be required to address equity in their treatment of teachers and to be subject to the same audits and disclosure requirements as public schools.

In her “Witness for Justice Message” on October 26, 2009, Jan Resseger, minister for education for the United Church of Christ, observed:

Clearly there are many children, particularly urban and rural children, who have not been well served by their public schools. In a democracy like ours, whether the public schools can better serve all children is up to citizens. Can we, many of us living in the suburbs, find the political will adequately to fund public schools in poor communities?

And when alternatives like charters are proposed to help us Race to the Top, we need to ask ourselves as citizens whether we have a better chance of reaching the most vulnerable children through privatized management, or whether we are responsible for improving traditional public schools. The political philosopher Benjamin Barber makes the public choice: “Inequality is built into the market system ... Inequality is not incidental to privatization, it is its very premise.”⁵⁴

K. *Private Schools*

Private schools are those that receive tuition. Sixty-eight percent of private schools are religiously affiliated. These enroll almost 80 percent of private school students. Almost half are Roman Catholic and another 20 percent are of other religious traditions. More than three-fourths of private school students are white.⁵⁵ In 2003–2004, the average tuition for parochial K–12 schools was \$5,700. The average tuition for non-sectarian K–12 schools was \$13,000.⁵⁶ Many families choose parochial schools because they desire their children to be educated in an explicitly religious context. Others are attracted to private schooling because they perceive that their children can receive a superior education there. While private and parochial schools can be a viable choice for some who have the financial resources to pay tuition, for many families, especially for families who are poor, this choice remains out of reach. Private choices do not, however, absolve anyone in the church from responsibility to support and protect the right of all children to education, and for most, that will mean public education. Our call is to love our neighbor as ourselves—to act in such a way that all our neighbors’ children have the same access to a quality education as that we desire for our own.

L. *Faith-Based Initiatives*

Faith-based initiatives refer to social service or mission programs for which churches accept government funding. Although the designation “faith-based initiatives” (FBI) is relatively new, in reality the practice has been in place for many years for such projects as homeless shelters and feeding programs. In the past these partnerships between government and faith communities have often served the common good. But such funding took on new significance with the launching by the Bush administration of a new emphasis called Faith-based and Community Initiatives. The Obama administration is continuing the initiative with Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnership programs in a number of government agencies, including the Department of Education.⁵⁷

There are significant issues around the relationship between church and state that need careful exploration. In the 1988 policy on *God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience*, the General Assembly observed that religious programs and agencies should not be excluded from receiving such funds provided that conditions related to access, safety and licensure be met; that the service is administered without religious emphasis or content or religious preference or other discrimination in employment or purchase of services; and no public funds are used by religiously controlled organizations to acquire permanent title to real property. For a Presbyterian school to apply for “FBI” funding, for example, it would need to assess the impact of accepting these potential constraints on its core missions.

Churches can provide a multitude of services to support and extend the education of children, particularly those who are made most vulnerable by poverty, such as tutoring programs or one-on-one mentoring. Congregations should consider carefully both the positive and negative aspects of such partnerships. The overarching principles must be what contribute

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most to the health and wholeness of the children and families such programs are intended to serve and what is a faithful response to the God who calls us.

VI. Conclusion

The call to love our neighbor as ourselves is central to Christian faith and discipleship. Providing for a high quality public education for all children is a concrete expression of this love. When we allow public schools to fail, we turn away from the mandate to love our neighbor.

Acting as neighbor means ensuring that all children have the opportunity to go to school in the kind of positive and healthy environment that promotes learning and growth. It means making sure that all children have access to up-to date textbooks and well-equipped computer labs, to high-quality teachers who know and address their needs, to curricula that educate in the arts as well as language arts, in social sciences as well as science, in health and physical education as well as math. Acting as neighbor means attending school board and PTSA meetings, volunteering to tutor and mentor, and paying attention to the stories in the news about public education. When we act as neighbor, we not only speak up for adequate funding, but we demonstrate a willingness to back up our words with action. Loving our neighbor as ourselves means that we view all children as a gift of God, one for which we are called to be good stewards.

In the twenty-first century, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can partner with others to transform the public education (K–12) system. As a church that has been committed to public education for decades, we only need to vigorously rededicate ourselves to what we have confessed and believed.

Appendix A
Suggested Resources

Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) Resources—<http://www.pcusa.org/>:

The Office of Child Advocacy—<http://www.pcusa.org/publiceducation/>. This website includes a section on the PC(USA) and Public Education.

Presbyterian United Nations Office (PUNO)—<http://www.pcusa.org/un/>. The PUNO staff monitors pending legislation before the United Nations General Assembly that may impact the lives of children and youths such as the Convention on the Right of the Child and trafficking issues.

Presbyterian Washington Office (PWO) webpage—<http://www.pcusa.org/washington>. The PWO staff responsible for domestic poverty concerns can provide individuals and congregations with information on current public education legislation before the U.S. Congress.

Other Denominational and Ecumenical Resources:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—<http://www.elca.org/>. In 2007, the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adopted a social statement on “Our Calling in Education.” That assembly stated that the ELCA “affirms and advocates for the equitable, sufficient, and effective funding of public schools.” To obtain a copy of “Our Calling in Education,” go to <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Education.aspx>.

United Church of Christ (UCC)—<http://www.ucc.org>. The UCC’s public education webpage includes many helpful educational resources such as *The Church Speaks to Public Education Justice*. To learn more about these resources, go to <http://www.ucc.org/justice/public-education/>.

The United Methodist Church (UMC)—<http://www.umc.org>.

Gee, Martha Bettis. *I Dream of a School: Mission Study on Public Education: Youth Book with Leader’s Guide*. New York: General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 2004.

Lymon, Mary Grace. *Public Education: Issues and Challenges*. New York: General Board of Global Ministries Missions, The United Methodist Church, 2004.

To learn about other educational resources published by the UMC, go to <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/missionstudies/publiceducation/bibliography/>.

National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC-USA) <http://www.ncccusa.org/about/educationhome.html>. This site contains helpful resources developed by the Education and Leadership Ministries (ELM) program area of the NCCC(USA). One of the priorities of the NCCC(USA)’s ELM program is the promotion and support of high quality, comprehensive public education.

Books:

Delpit, Lisa and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy. *Skin That We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom*, New Edition.(Paperback). New York: The New Press, 2008.

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Delpit, Lisa. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: New Press, Update Edition 2006. This book is a seminal text in how modern education lacks diversity in its teaching force. Delpit explains that non-minority teachers must make a conscious effort to understand the culture of their students that are sometimes vastly different from their own. Every culture has its own language; therefore, communication rather than a lack of intelligence in students is often responsible for the achievement gap. She explains that this cultural gap severely affects teaching and learning.

Dingerson, Leigh and Barbara Miner, Bob Peterson and Stephanie Walters, eds. *Keeping the Promise?: The Debate Over Charter Schools*. Milwaukee: Rethinking Schools in collaboration with The Center for Community Change, 2008.

Kohn, Alfie. *What Does it Mean to be Well Educated? And Other Essays on Standards, Grading, and Other Follies*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004. In this collection of essays Kohn takes on some of the most important topics in education in recent years. His central focus is on the real goals of schooling—a topic, he argues, that we systematically ignore while lavishing attention on misguided models of learning and motivation. From the title essay's challenge to conventional definitions of a good education to essays on testing and grading that tally the severe educational costs of overemphasizing a narrow conception of achievement, Kohn boldly builds on his earlier work and writes for a wide audience. He explores topics ranging from the destructiveness of praise to the inadequacy of American high schools, shows how traditional educational practices can spoil the value of newer and better approaches, and offers a provocative reflection on what 9/11 and its aftermath can mean for schools.

Kozol, Jonathan. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York Three Rivers Press, 2005. Kozol argues that the American public education system is still segregated. It will take a new civil rights movement to eradicate this problem, he argues.

Noguera, Pedro A. *City Schools and the American Dream*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2003. Noguera studies several urban school district and points to poverty, powerlessness, and cultural disparity as reasons why minority-majority school districts perform poorly. Above all, he shows that communities without money lack access to people of power who can affect change; therefore, those schools tend not to improve.

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ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The ACREC advises that Item 10-11 be approved and encourages the commissioners and appropriate bodies of the General Assembly to continue to give careful attention to issues affecting public schools, racial ethnic students, families, and communities in relation to the rising numbers of charter schools, private schools, and home-schooling families, in order to help the church assess the impacts of these changes.

Item 10-12

[The assembly approved Item 10-12 with amendment. See pp. 34, 38.]

Commissioners' Resolution. On Ending Violence with Impunity Against Women and Girls.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) does the following:

1. Renews its commitment to the goals of *Turn Mourning into Dancing! A Policy Statement on Healing Domestic Violence* developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy of the General Assembly Mission Council, approved by the 213th General Assembly (2001): “We will hear the voices of victims and survivors and respond to their calls with the following goals: first, to protect the victims from further abuse; second, stop the abuser’s violence and hold the abusers accountable; and third, restore the family relationship if possible or mourn the loss of relationship” (page 8).

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations, presbyteries, and synods are encouraged to do likewise.

2. Commits to ~~[no longer responding with impunity when violence against women and girls occurs, whether clergy or laity perpetrates violence, and to first hold the perpetrator accountable rather than rush to forgiveness]~~ [holding perpetrators, whether clergy or laity, responsible for violence against women and girls, rather than rushing to forgiveness,] and encourages Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations, presbyteries, synods, and governing bodies to do likewise.

~~[3. Declares the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) a ‘Violence Free Zone for Women and Girls,’ and direct PC(USA) congregations, presbyteries, synods, and governing bodies to refer to domestic physical acts of violence against women and girls as ‘aggravated assault’ rather than “domestic violence.”]~~

~~[4.]~~ [3.] Directs the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Washington Office (PWO), the Presbyterian United Nations Office, and other appropriate General Assembly entities to urge the president of the United States and the U.S. Congress to proceed without further delay in the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

~~[5.]~~ [4.] Directs the General Assembly Mission Council’s (GAMC’s) Compassion, Peace and Justice ministry area, through the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network (PADVN), the Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, and other entities working on gender justice issues to join with the World Mission ministry area in engaging and collaborating with ecumenical and global partner churches ~~[to establish guidelines for relationships that encourage equal participation of both men and women in ministry and leadership, making it clear]~~ at the same time [making it clear] that impunity from violence and abuse is not acceptable within related Reformed communities.”

~~[6.]~~ [5.] Directs all PC(USA) congregations, presbyteries, synods, governing bodies, and agencies to take action to end all practices based on the dominance of male authority (patriarchy).

Rationale

This resolution evolves from the historical work of the Presbyterian church and builds on the current work of PC(USA) entities, including the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network (PADVN), <www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn>, and the PC(USA)’s policies regarding domestic violence, and focuses attention on the following ongoing critical issues:

1. *Violence Against Women and Girls*

All forms of violence against women and girls are morally and legally wrong and are a violation of their rights as human beings. Such violence ranges from verbal to physical. In the United States, “a woman is raped every six minutes; a woman is battered every fifteen seconds” (Violence Against Women: A Fact Sheet, 2010, Amnesty International, www.amnestyusa.org). Globally, waging violence against the bodies of women and girls as a primary war tactic is increasing. Rape has become a common weapon of war and of genocide. Girls are forced to serve as soldiers and as sex slaves to combatants. Statistics are provided on the PC(USA) web site at www.pcusa.org/womensadvocacy/issues/violenceagainstwomen/stats.htm.

In addition, violence against women and girls still occurs within the church in spite of sexual misconduct policies across the church. “Overall, 3.1% of women who attend religious services at least monthly reported that at some time during their adult life, they had been the object of a sexual advance by a clergyperson or religious leader in their own congregation ... one in thirty-three women has been the object of a sexual advance” (Diana R. Garland and Christen Argueta, 2009, “How Clergy

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Sexual Misconduct Happens: A Qualitative Study of First-Hand Accounts,” *Social Work and Christianity*, forthcoming issue. Also see Diana R. Garland, *The Prevalence of Clergy and Sexual Misconduct with Adults: A Research Study Executive Study*, Baylor University, 2009, www.baylor.edu/clergysexualmisconduct/).

According to the Los Angeles Police Department fact sheet, aggravated assault is “an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault usually is accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm” (www.lapdcrimemaps.org/information/factsheet).

This resolution supports Item 10-06: “A Resolution to Study Violence Against Women and Children on the Mexico-U.S. Border.”

2. *CEDAW*

Since adoption in 1979 by the UN General Assembly of the United Nations, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has been described as an international bill of rights for women and has been formally recognized by nearly all members of the United Nations.

The convention elevates women’s rights to the status of a global human rights issue and draws international attention to the issue of equal rights of women. Substantively, it sets up machinery for reviewing progress reports from governments. It provides the legal basis for promoting progress in one more area of human rights and thus complements the earlier conventions drafted at the United Nations.

The United States is one of a small group of nations (Iran, Qatar, Brunei Darussalam, Nauru, Palau, Tonga, Somalia, Sudan) that has not ratified CEDAW (information from the Working Group for Ratification of CEDAW; President Carter signed the treaty on behalf of the United States in 1980, but Congress has yet to ratify it). More than fourteen years ago, through its approval of *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, the 208th General Assembly (1996), “urge[d] the United States Senate to proceed without further delay to the review and ratification of ... (b) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women ...” (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, pp. 107, 109, 529). Continued pressure for ratification is critical.

This resolution supports ACWC recommendation, Item 10-08: “A Resolution Supporting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

3. *Patriarchy*

For centuries, patriarchal practices, including language of churches, have been used to support, justify, and excuse violence against women and girls. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is time to act to improve the quality of life for men and women not only in the PC(USA) but worldwide. In church relations around the world, mission co-workers witness ongoing patriarchal behavior in global partner churches. By leaving behind the patriarchy of the church historically rather than supporting the ongoing practice now and into the future, the church everywhere can model principles of inclusion, equality, and justice.

As believers in our triune God, it is imperative that we witness to the promise, and work toward the realization of God’s realm here on earth. The fact that patriarchy continues to be embedded in the Reformed family of churches fosters and maintains attitudes that obstruct the understanding, recognition, and acceptance of the essential need and value of having proportional numbers of women and men serving and working at leadership positions throughout this denomination and others with whom the PC(USA) relates.

This resolution is submitted on behalf of the 2010 Presbyterian Women (PW) Delegation to the 54th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW).

Catrelia Steele Hunter, Presbytery of Salem
Carmen Rosario, Presbytery of New York City

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 10-12 be approved with the following clarifications and Rationale.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) agrees that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) needs to make a renewed commitment to working toward eliminating violence against women and girls. As Item 10-12 states, too often

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within the church, more attention and energy is put toward the healing of the perpetrator of the violence and his reconciliation with the church than to the healing and reconciliation of the victim. An explicit commitment to holding the perpetrator accountable for his actions needs to be a clear piece of the PC(USA)'s sexual misconduct policy.

In addition to number 5 of Item 10-12, the ACWC would draw attention to Item 08-10, being brought to the 219th General Assembly (2010), which asks for full participation with Christian Churches Together (CCT), in spite of their failure to support and promote gender and racial equality. Were the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to establish guidelines for ecumenical relationships that encouraged equal participation of women and men in ministry and leadership and overtly condemned violence and abuse, such a partnership would not even be considered.

Finally, ACWC would recommend a reworking of number 6 of Item 10-12, and call for the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to revitalize the effort put forth by *Turn Mourning into Dancing*, <www.pcusa.org/resource/turn-mourning-dancing/>, approved by the 213th General Assembly (2001), which has served as an educational tool highlighting the reality of the implications of overt and covert male violence toward women. As this tool is currently available for no cost online, the ACWC would ask that the 219th GA (2010) direct the GAMC to send out an electronic communication to synods and presbyteries including the link to *Turn Mourning into Dancing*, and a strong encouragement to presbyteries and synods to provide and require harassment training for all clergy.

Item 10-13

[The assembly approved Item 10-13 with amendment. See pp. 34, 38.]

Commissioners' Resolution. On Renewing the Commitment to the Use of Inclusive and Expansive Language for God and the People of God.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the [Office of Theology Worship and Education, the] Compassion, Peace and Justice ministry area[,] and the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women ministry area to renew efforts throughout the denomination to promote the use of inclusive and expansive language for God and the people of God and to ensure distribution, electronically or otherwise, of the brochure, "Well Chosen Words: Inclusive Language with Reference to the People of God—Expansive Language with Reference to God" (PDS #72-700-99-003).

Rationale

Continued practices within the PC(USA) include the persistent failure in both word and song to use inclusive and expansive language when referring to God. This practice defines only one aspect of God. Such practices can often appear to mean women are excluded, or can in fact actually result in the exclusion of women. A Brief Statement of Faith, written in response to a mandate of the General Assembly of the reunited Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (1983) and approved for inclusion in *The Book of Confessions* by the presbyteries in 1991, states: "In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community" (10.3, lines 29–32).

As believers in our triune God, it is imperative that we witness to the promise, and work toward the realization of God's realm here on earth. The fact that patriarchy continues to be embedded in the Reformed family of churches fosters and maintains attitudes that obstruct the understanding, recognition, and acceptance of the essential need and value of having proportional numbers of women and men serving and working at leadership positions throughout this denomination and others with whom the PC(USA) relates.

This resolution is submitted on behalf of the 2010 Presbyterian Women (PW) delegation to the 54th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW).

Catrelia Steele Hunter, Presbytery of Salem
Carmen Rosario, Presbytery of New York City

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-13

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 10-13 be approved with the following changes and Rationale.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) advises that the office of Theology Worship and Education be included in the directive.

Rationale

The use of inclusive language for the people of God and expansive language for God was affirmed by the 196th General Assembly (1984). Again, the 197th General Assembly (1985) adopted *Definitions and Guidelines on Inclusive Language* (PDS 70420-01-003). The use of inclusive and expansive language has been trivialized in recent years. Renewing commitment to the use of inclusive and expansive language is important at this time in the life of the church. Language for God and people needs to be inclusive of not only women, but people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds and cultures. To be stuck on any one image of God is to not only grossly oversimplify the nature of the Creator in whose image we all are made, but also to ultimately create idols in our own image or in the image of our creation.

Further, ACWC would note that what is necessary is not only ensuring that proportional numbers of women and men serve and work in leadership positions throughout the denomination, but challenging the pervasive and systemic understanding and speaking of God as male, which serves to exclude at least half of those created in God's image. Simply ensuring a certain number of women in leadership does not necessarily promote an expansive understanding of who God is.

Item 10-14

[The assembly approved Item 10-14 with amendment. See pp. 34, 37–38.]

Commissioners' Resolution. On Usury.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) calls upon the PC(USA) and its corporate financial entities (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Board of Pensions, Funds of the General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Stated Clerk's Office), [synods, presbyteries,] its local congregations, and members to be a counter voice to usurious practices, and to prayerfully consider moving money out of the [large] financial institutions who exploit consumers and into [community banks] [financial institutions] that practice responsible consumer lending practices. We call upon MRTI to report on their evaluation of this strategy to the 220th General Assembly (2012). We believe that the standards for moving money include

- clearly defined [interest] [consumer credit] rate ceilings or caps (pegged to inflation, unemployment, and other factors, already agreed to, in principle, by one major financial institution);
- reasonable and fully transparent limits on [credit card fees and charges] [financial products and services];
- no involvement, direct or indirect, in the pay-day-lending industry;
- no involvement, direct or indirect, in the predatory lending industry; and
- no involvement, direct or indirect, in the rapid tax refund industry.

Rationale

Millions of Americans are now paying interest rates as high as 30 percent on credit cards and even higher rates on other consumer-lending products. In a one-year period between 2007–2008, credit card issuers raised interest rates on nearly one quarter of cardholder accounts, costing consumers a minimum of \$10 billion in extra interest payments that year alone. The new so-called “credit card reform” law doesn't impose a limit on interest—it merely requires the financial institution to provide notification forty-five days prior to raising interest rates.

In 2009, the profits earned by the biggest banks were astounding: JP Morgan Chase swelled to \$11.7 billion; Wells Fargo broke records, earning m \$20 billion; and Bank of America earned \$6.3 billion. While these banks accepted billions in assistance and earned billions in profits, they have left our families struggling to simply make ends meet.

Many American families, who live paycheck to paycheck, find the need for a small, short-term loan to cover necessary expenses that arise between paychecks. Payday loans, generally, are offered on a two-week basis and are in the range of \$100–\$500. Typical fees for a payday loan are \$15 per \$100 two-week loan. The annual percentage rate (APR) on these loans is at least 390 percent, though many consumers have been charged rates of 1,300 percent to 7,300 percent. The large national financial institutions including Wells Fargo, US Bank, and Bank of America, provide more than \$1 billion in financing to payday lenders, enabling their exploitive lending practices.

A 10 percent interest rate tied to inflation is enough to allow credit to flow to all appropriate borrowers. It is enough to allow bankers their fair share of profit. It is enough to protect families from permanent indebtedness.

The Bible, our Reformed heritage, and General Assembly policy has clearly and forcefully prohibited usury as an economic practice:

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- Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:35–36, and Luke 6:35 all forbid charging interest on a loan.
- The Heidelberg Catechism of *The Book of Confessions* interprets the eighth commandment to mean that it is unlawful to gain our neighbor’s goods through “trickery,” “deceptive advertising or merchandising,” or charging “exorbitant interest” (4.110). The commandment also requires us to deal justly in our financial transactions with one another.
- The 217th General Assembly (2006) of the PC(USA) adopted policy (“A Reformed Understanding of Usury for the Twenty-First Century, Item 09-08, *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 804ff”) to support more just lending practices. The aim of this policy was to educate debtors and those seeking credit as well as to reform current lending practices and make available low-interest loans for those with greatest need. The policy statement calls on the church to “support efforts to provide more effective and less costly financial services to people who are now forced to utilize high-cost alternative financial resources (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 804).”

The treasurer of the State of Massachusetts and The Missouri Synod Lutherans are moving their money out of banks that charge usurious interest and fees on consumer loans.

Burns Stanfield, Presbytery of Boston
Nanette Sawyer, Presbytery of Chicago

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-14

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-14—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 10-14, as it is consistent with the General Assembly’s established policies on usury. However, ACSWP notes that the commissioners may wish do so in conjunction with their response to Item 10-03, which also addresses usury in credit card practices. Specifically, ACSWP suggests that this resolution’s proposal to ask church agencies and members to consider moving their funds into banks that demonstrate responsible lending practices might be incorporated into an amended Item 10-03 to create a unified PC(USA) response to the issue of credit and usury.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-14

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-14—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The ACREC advises that Item 10-14 be approved.

Rationale

The 217th General Assembly (2006) received and approved a report entitled “A Reformed Understanding of Usury for the Twenty-First Century.” That report called upon Presbyterians and PC(USA) entities to educate themselves, in order to understand more fully the impact of the growing pay-day loan institution industry on communities and families, particularly in low-income areas. Additionally, a bill as been introduced before the U.S. Congress, entitled “Payday Lending Limitation Act of 2010.” This is in response to the continued growth of this industry, indicating a continued need and increased urgency for Presbyterians to act at this time.

Because this issue particularly impacts and preys upon families in low-income areas, many of whom are in communities served by racial ethnic congregations and ministries, ACREC thanks commissioners for bringing this important issue again before the General Assembly, and encourages its approval.

Item 10-Info

A. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Agency Summary

The committee is composed of twelve regular members representing African Americans, Native Americans, Latina/o Americans, Asian Americans, Middle Eastern Americans, and European Americans.

The 2008–10 membership of the committee is as follows: Carroll Jenkins , chairperson, National Black Presbyterian Caucus; Patricia Morse, vice chairperson, African American, at-large; Jean Kim, secretary, Korean American, at-large; Cynthia Holder Rich, chair, Resource and Referral Subcommittee, European American, at-large; Noushin Framke, chair, Study and Comment Subcommittee, Middle Eastern American, at-large; Cecilia Casal, Hispanic/Latino/a, at-large, liaison to Advisory Committee for Women’s Concerns; Mauricio Chacón, National Hispanic/Latino/a Caucus; Ruth-Aimee Belonni-Rosario, liaison from Racial Ethnic Young Women Together (REYWT), Hispanic/Latino/a; Aida Faris, National Middle Eastern Caucus; Esperanza Guajardo, liaison from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP),

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Hispanic/Latina; Aleida Jernigan, liaison from the General Assembly Mission Council, Hispanic/Latina; Stephen Hsieh, National Asian Caucus, liaison to Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP); Buddy Monahan, Native American Consulting Committee; Belinda Rice, liaison from the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, African American.

The committee was staffed on an interim basis by Curtis A. Kearns, Executive Administrator, General Assembly Mission Council, and is staffed on a regular basis by Sherri Pettway, Administrative Assistant, General Assembly Mission Council.

As of December 2009, the committee had one vacancy.

1. *Assigned Functions*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) works to fulfill its General Assembly mandate to provide advocacy and monitoring on issues of concern to people of color in both church and society. The committee evaluates social trends in church and society, and provides advice and counsel to the General Assembly (GA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). The committee addresses issues, including civil rights, racial justice, environmental justice, economic justice, public education, law enforcement, health care, employment, and housing, as they impact communities of color. The committee also monitors the implementation of programs and policies approved by the church that impact the participation and quality of life for people of color within the church. The committee works in close cooperation with other agencies and entities within the church, including the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to fulfill its responsibilities. The ACREC's assigned functions, as stated in the *GAMC Manual of Operations* include:

- a. Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on racial ethnic concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Mission Council, or on its own initiative.
- b. Advise the General Assembly Mission Council on matters of racial ethnic concerns including statements concerning pressing issues that the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.
- c. Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of racial ethnic concern.
- d. Assist the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on racial ethnic concerns and provide information to the church as requested.
- e. Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on racial ethnic concerns.
- f. Monitor the implementation of racial justice policies and programs relative to racial ethnic concerns.
- g. Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of racial ethnic concern (*GAMC Manual*, p. 23).

The work of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) is coordinated through the Office of the General Assembly Mission Council by the Executive Administrator of the General Assembly Mission Council. The committee has direct access to the General Assembly and its chair has corresponding member status with the General Assembly Mission Council and with the General Assembly.

2. *Accomplishments*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns used its regularly scheduled meetings to explore a wide range of topics of special interest to the committee and its work. In 2008, following the 218th General Assembly (2008), the committee met as follows:

a. August 28–30, 2008 in Tacoma, Washington. The committee welcomed an unusually large number of new members at this meeting and dedicated a sizeable portion of its agenda to orientation activities exploring the committee's history, roles, responsibilities, liaisons, relationships, structure, and work plan for the coming cycle of work and activities. The committee also explored issues affecting the Native American community both locally, with the work of the Tahoma Indian Center and the Church of the Indian Fellowship, and nationally. The committee had an opportunity to say goodbye and thanks to Teresa Chavez Saucedo who served with distinction as its staff person for a number of years.

b. November 20–22, 2008 in Louisville, Kentucky. At this meeting, the committee began to organize its work for the 2008–10 work cycle. It surveyed the state of the Presbyterian racial ethnic enterprise, interviewing representatives from

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the Racial Ethnic Caucuses, staff from the GAMC offices of Congregational Enhancement, Multicultural Ministries, New Immigrant Group Ministries, Cultural Proficiency, Peacemaking, and the Presbyterian Washington Office, as well as staff from the Office of the General Assembly's Committee on Representation.

To help understand the changing the racial climate in the United States the committee discussed the book *Racial Paranoia* by John L. Jackson, Jr. reflecting on the evolving role of race in America. According to Jackson the racial context has moved from *de jure* racism (according to the law); to *de facto* racism (in reality or fact), i.e., from a racism steeped in the law to a racism that perpetuated itself without the same degree of explicit recourse to the legal justice system: and finally, to *de cardio* racism, a kind of hidden or cloaked racism of euphemism and innuendo, not heels-dug-in pronouncements of innate racial inferiority. In Jackson's opinion, the United States is currently characterized by *de facto* racism and this in turn causes those affected to exhibit racial paranoia. It is within this new racial context that the committee is asked to serve.

In 2009, the committee continued its work with the following schedule of meetings and content summaries:

c. March 15–18, 2009 Newark, New Jersey. The committee reviewed the issues raised by the globalization of the U.S. economy—with special regard to its implication on immigrant workers. The Presbytery of Elizabeth, aided by the Seaman's Church Institute, led a tour of the Port of New York (Newark, NJ) and a visit to an immigrant detention center. This was an important opportunity to observe the effects on the environment, the unjust treatment of women and racial ethnic people in the work force, and the impact on families and family life near and around the Port of New York. Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) members also met with ACREC as it began to consider a joint study with possible recommendations.

In its concern about the church's steady decline in mission funding, the committee voted to recommend to the General Assembly that a study of mission funding in the changing church be done, and furthermore asked all of its representatives to request that their congregations give extra dollars to mission funding in 2009 and to increase mission support for 2010. After studying the document "Rebuilding the Presbyterian Establishment" the committee recommended that the church do an Ecclesiology Study—a vision of what the church should look like in 2025 in order to help set straight some of the controversies claims raised in that paper. The rationale would include a study of the confessional documents of the church.

d. July 23–25, 2009 Louisville, Kentucky. The committee received a presentation from the Presbyterian Foundation on the history and status of the Church's Creative Investment Fund. The committee continues to be interested in how the amounts available can be increased and a closer working relationship established with Racial Ethnic Ministry allowing for greater use for rebuilding in the Racial Ethnic community.

The committee had a special presentation and discussion with J. Kameron Carter, author of *Race: A Theological Account*, about theology and its use as a tool of mastery and dominance with the intent of producing docile and compliant slaves. "God disrupts this logic of mastery and constructs a theological account that produces Community and [persons who are] equals."

The committee was interviewed by the representatives of the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee, a special committee created by action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) to review the work of the advisory and advocacy committees. The information supplied by ACREC helped the review committee formulate its report. Staffing, restructuring, and job responsibilities were a part of the discussion as the committee worked towards securing staffing appropriate to accomplish its work.

e. October 22–24, 2009 New Orleans, Louisiana. The committee chose to meet in New Orleans so that it could look at the remaining impact of Hurricane Katrina. ACREC sent a report with recommendations to the 218th General Assembly (2008) and wanted to update its knowledge and awareness of the situation some four years after the hurricane and subsequent events.

The Reverend Jean Marie Peacock, associate, South Louisiana Presbytery, briefed the committee and spoke of the many volunteers, AmeriCorps and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, who had served in the aftermath of the hurricane. The committee also met with volunteers at the Covenant Presbyterian Urban Institute which, in partnership with the Berea Presbyterian Church, is very active in center city of New Orleans. Many excellent social programs are available through the Urban Institute. As the paper, *Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future*, sent to the 218th GA (2008) by ACREC, demonstrated, racism complicates issues in areas like education, health care, and housing where services are markedly different for the African-American Community. Areas in these largely black communities around the levees that were breeched, are still substantially underdeveloped. When and if this situation will be resolved is still unclear. ACREC was offered these suggestions for how the church can continue to help in this situation: continue to send volunteers, encourage investment through programs like Creative Investment, and encourage members to be more sensitive to the issues involved.

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In addition, at this meeting the committee met with the Committee on Representation and heard their concerns for diversity in many areas of the life of the church—including staff and committees. Greater and more consistent interaction will be sought with COR in the future. Also, the committee listened to concerns about the dearth of Hispanic/Latino staff at our seminaries and forwarded a letter expressing this concern to the Committee on Theological Education.

3. *Items of Business for the 219th General Assembly (2010)*

The ACREC's January 2010 meeting was dedicated to finalizing its report and recommendations to the 219th General Assembly (2010). The committee has accomplished a significant amount of work and sends the General Assembly several substantive issues for its consideration and action. It accomplished this work while going through an organizational transitional in which the committee operated under a new staffing rationale. In this new configuration, the advocacy committees are asked to share a single full-time person who will support each of the committees on a half-time basis. The committees are not yet certain this new approach will suffice given the distinctive skills and experiences required for each committee, but they will continue to examine and discuss the issue with the General Assembly Mission Council.

The following items were sent to the 219th General Assembly (2010):

a. 2010 Creating a Climate for Change, report and recommendations. Every two years ACREC interviews and receives reports from the chief executives of the six General Assembly agencies in order to ascertain the status of the "Creating a Climate for Change" recommendations approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004).

b. Racial Ethnic, New Immigrant Group Church Growth, a recommendation. Based on Racial Ethnic Church Growth goals set by the 208th General Assembly (1996) the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Racial Ethnic membership was to be 20 percent of the total for the denomination by the year 2010. The current percentage is around 9 percent. ACREC is proposing action to help determine what caused the church to fall short of its goal and to consider what its new goal should be.

c. Updated Nomenclature, a recommendation. The 208th General Assembly (1996) was asked to substitute the term "Emerging Majorities" for "Racial Ethnic." The assembly referred this recommendation back to ACREC for reconsideration. Upon further examination, the committee found it to be exceedingly complex with lots of potential ramifications. The committee is recommending a method for concluding the issue.

d. Nature of the Church for the Twenty-first Century, a recommendation. No serious study has been undertaken on the nature of the church since 1993. With the new century; the Form of Government undergoing serious consideration for revision; and a tremendous need to integrate an increasingly diverse group of Presbyterians into the church and its leadership; the ACREC is proposing that the church undertake a study on the nature of the church to remedy this situation.

e. Mission Funding, a recommendation. The church's mission council and its ministries, and indeed all church agencies, are under increasing pressure to do more with less as giving patterns change. A new funding plan and strategy with varied methods, philosophies, and material would be helpful in order to increase giving in this increasingly diverse church community.

4. *Officers for 2010–11*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns re-elected Carroll Jenkins as chair and Patricia Morse as vice chair. Stephen Hsieh was chosen to serve as secretary. Cynthia Holder Rich was elected chair of the Resource and Referral Subcommittee, and Aida Faris was elected chair of the Study and Comment Subcommittee.

B. *Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) Agency Summary*

"The [Holy One] is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble" (Ps. 9:9)

"The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us." (Acts 11:12)

"...[Be] doers of the word, and not merely hearers ..." (Jas. 1:22)

1. *Introduction*

The context of women's advocacy is a human situation where women experience injustice because they are women. Grounded in communal faith in "God [who] liberated the people of Israel from oppression ... [and] covenanted with Israel ... that they might do justice ..." (*Book of Order*, G-3.0101b) and motivated by painful recognition of sexism within and without, the Presbyterian church explicitly articulated in the "Articles of Agreement" its commitment to work against gender-based discrimination. The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) is a contemporary fulfillment of this promise.

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Created by the mandate of the 205th General Assembly (1993) at the recommendation of the Report of the Task Force on Shape and Form, ACWC is charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to

... give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order, G-4.0403* ... monitor[ing] and evaluat[ing] policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church ... and advocate[ing] for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society [as a whole]. (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 262)

2. *Assigned Responsibilities*

The ACWC's assigned functions are delineated in the *GAMC Manual of Operations* (Appendix 1, Section VII.C.4.), and they include:

- a. Prepar[ing] policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and Advice and counsel memoranda on women's concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Mission Council, or on its own initiative.
- b. Advis[ing] the General Assembly Mission Council on matters of women's concerns including statements concerning pressing issues the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.
- c. Provid[ing] advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women's concerns.
- d. Assist[ing] the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women's concerns and provide information to the church as requested.
- e. Provid[ing] the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women's concerns.
- f. Monitor[ing] the implementation of women's policies and programs relative to women's concerns.
- g. Through advocacy maintain[ing] a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women's concerns.

The ACWC is housed in the Office of the Executive Director, General Assembly Mission Council. The committee has direct access to the General Assembly. ACWC has organized itself with a leadership team of three co-chairs: two serve as corresponding members to the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council respectively. A member of ACWC is a voting member of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). There are twelve members of the committee; ten members are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly. They are chosen based on their individual qualifications and do not represent any constituencies. Members who left the committee in June 2008 were Karen Breckenridge, Nancy Neal, Manley Olsen (GAMC), Louise Davidson (PW). Members who joined the committee in June 2008 were Darcy Lynn Metcalfe, N'Yisrela Watts Afriyie, Chris Wolfe (PW), and Jan Martin (GAMC). Sarah Colwill resigned at the close of General Assembly 2008 due to family obligations. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty was elected to complete her two year term.

3. *Accomplishments*

a. *2009–10: ACWC Met Four Times*

(1) *March 13–16, 2009, in New York, New York*

- The committee met at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) United Nations Office just following the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women meeting. Joel Hanisek, U.N. Representative for the PC(USA) hosted the group.
- Dr. Serene Jones, President of Union Theological Seminary, spoke to ACWC about women as political agents within religious contexts.
- Catherine Bordeau, intern with Ecumenical Women at the United Nations, spoke to the group about faith at the U.N. and gender in the church.
- Sister Marie Bernard Alima Mbalula, Secretary, Democratic Republic of the Congo, addressed the committee on the use of rape as a weapon of war in the DRC.
- Committee member, Dr. Gay L. Byron, Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, spoke with ACWC about Womanist Theology and her latest academic work.
- Linda Valentine, GAMC Executive Director and Michael Kruse, GAMC Vice-chair, had a conversation with the group in response to the most recent GAMC restructuring.

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- The committee had the opportunity to travel to Newark for a port tour and visitation of the Elizabeth, New Jersey Immigrant Detention Center.

(2) *July 16–18, 2009, in Louisville, Kentucky*

- The committee discussed the GAMC Employee Handbook changes at length.
- The committee spent extensive amounts of time responding to inquiries from the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee.
- The Health, Sexuality, and Faith work group of ACWC met with Martha Bettis Gee, GAMC Associate for Child Advocacy, to discuss pornography and its connections with human trafficking.
- The Thea-ologies work group of ACWC met with Dr. Johanna van Wijk-Bos and Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty to discuss women's theologies being taught in Presbyterian seminaries.
- Marissa Castellanos, Project Manager, Kentucky Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking, spoke to the entire committee about human trafficking.
- Pat Hendrix, GAMC Sexual Misconduct Ombudsperson, informed ACWC about the sexual misconduct policy in the PC(USA).
- Valerie Small, Office of the General Assembly Manager of General Assembly Nominations and Moderatorial Staff Services, explained the nomination process for members of ACWC.
- Curtis Kearns, GAMC Executive Administrator, addressed the new ACWC staff position description with the committee.
- The committee had a conversation with two representatives from the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee, Doug Megill and Sylvia Washer.

(3) *October 29–31, 2009, in Pasadena, California*

- The committee had the opportunity to hear from Dr. Kate Ott of the Religious Institute, who spoke to them about the study she directed, entitled, *Sex and the Seminary*, looking at what seminaries are doing to cultivate sexually healthy religious professionals.
- The group continued discussion with Curtis Kearns, GAMC Executive Administrator, about their new staff person.
- Marsha Fowler and Ann Hayman educated ACWC about the PC(USA) report on HIV/AIDS.
- Ron Kernaghan, Chair, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), informed ACWC of what ACSWP is taking to General Assembly this year.
- Rev. Carol Tomkins led the group in a discussion on the new Form of Government.

(4) *January 21–23, 2010, in Louisville, Kentucky*

- The ACWC member, Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, spoke to the group about the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee's final report.
- The work groups finalized what they will take to the General Assembly.
- The ACWC met jointly with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and ACSWP.
- Julia Thorne, Attorney in the Office of Immigration Issues, OGA, spoke to the group about immigration and detention and her work with the PC(USA).
- The ACWC elected a new leadership team that will take over after the 219th General Assembly (2010) in Minneapolis.
- The ACWC, along with ACREC, had the opportunity to meet with Michael Kruse, GAMC Vice-chair, and Sue Ezell, GAMC Justice Mission Committee Chair, over dinner and discussed the relationship between the advocacy committees and the GAMC.

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- Laurie Griffith, Manager of Judicial Process, OGA, addressed the group on sexual misconduct, particularly in the context of clergy and internet pornography.
- Cynthia Holder Rich from ACREC had a discussion with the group about the Belhar Confession.
- Curtis Kearns, GAMC Executive Administrator, gave the group some GAMC updates.

4. *Highlights*

a. *Women of Color Joint Working Group*

The 217th General Assembly (2006) recommended the creation of a Task Force on the Women of Color Consultation. Made up of seven persons, this task force was launched in October 2006, completing its work and reporting to the 218th General Assembly (2008) in a separate report. Constituted jointly by ACWC and ACREC, in consultation with Presbyterian Women and the National Cross Caucus, the task force studied the recommendations, which came from the Women of Color Consultation in 2004. In addition to analyzing and determining what progress had been made, the task force designed and recommended a mechanism for monitoring future progress by the denomination. The Women of Color Joint Working Group was created by the 218th General Assembly (2008) as a permanent monitoring committee. The Women of Color Joint Working Group, a combined committee of ACREC and ACWC, continues to work to monitor all General Assembly referrals assigned to them pertaining to concerns of women of color in the PC(USA). ACWC will bring some of their recommendations to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

b. *Status of Women Task Force*

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved ACWC's recommendation to study the status of women at all levels of the church, calling for the creation of the Status of Women Task Force. While restructuring slowed the initiation of this group and its work, the Status of Women Task Force has been created and met once in January 2010. The task force will continue its assigned function and report back to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

c. *Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus*

The Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus contacted ACWC in September 2009 asking for assistance in advocating on behalf of the women of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. In conjunction with the caucus, ACWC wrote a letter to the Stated Clerk and Moderator of the General Assembly requesting they send a letter to the president of Mexico and the governor of Chihuahua asking them to tend to the violence being done against women and their families. Beyond this, ACWC will bring a recommendation to the 219th General Assembly (2010) to form a study group on the situation in Juarez and provide bilingual study materials to churches on the border.

d. *Youth, Technology, and Pornography*

The Health, Sexuality, and Faith work group of ACWC spent much of its time working in conjunction with Martha Bettis Gee, Associate for Child Advocacy, GAMC, on issues of pornography and youth. They are currently examining the need for updates to the 1983 report on pornography which contains no relevant discussion of the impact of technology on the pornography industry. Included in the group's discussion have been the issues of clergy abuse of pornography and pornography as a vehicle for the trafficking of children. The work group intends to keep this issue at the fore of its work.

e. *Sex and the Seminary*

During the October 2009 meeting of ACWC in Pasadena, California, the group had the opportunity to hear from Dr. Kate Ott of the Religious Institute and director of the study, *Sex and the Seminary*. Dr. Ott presented the group with some of her work regarding the importance of religious professionals having been educated in sex and sexuality. The Thea-ologies work group of ACWC is continuing to work with Dr. Ott and consider ways in which the PC(USA) might improve the sex/sexuality education of those preparing to lead the denomination.

f. *Rachel Sabbath Initiative*

During their October 2009 meeting, ACWC also learned from Dr. Kate Ott about the Rachel Sabbath Initiative. Through this initiative, the Religious Institute is calling denominations and congregations to raise awareness and support the U.N.'s goals of reducing maternal mortality rates and improving access to reproductive health care around the globe. As more than half a million women in the world die each year and more than one million children are left motherless because of the lack of proper health care for pregnant women, ACWC hopes to connect the PC(USA) with this project in the near future, see <<http://www.religioustheology.org/initiative/rachel-sabbath-initiative-saving-womens-lives-0>> for more information.

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g. *A Time of Transition*

The great majority of time the past two years has been focused on internal matters for ACWC—restructure and review. In November, 2008, three positions in the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/PW Area were eliminated as a result of restructuring in that ministry area. The positions eliminated were: Office of Women’s Advocacy, Office of the National Network of Presbyterian College Women, and the Office of Racial Ethnic and Young Women Together. The women were terminated from their positions and escorted out the same day. This greatly impacted the work of ACWC, particularly since the October 2008 meeting had been cancelled due to budget restrictions. There was no opportunity for consultation regarding the status of projects, nor, after working with staff for three years, any closure allowed.

The ACWC requested time on the agenda of the General Assembly Council at its March meeting to discuss the manner in which staff was dismissed, and the restructuring. Earlier in March, however, Executive Director Linda Valentine and Michael Kruse, Vice-chair of the General Assembly Mission Council, came to the ACWC meeting for that purpose. One conclusion resulted in ACWC participating in a discussion about the rewrite of the GAMC Personnel Policies. This is being done with ACREC and ACSWP, and is continuing. Although GAMC approved the personnel policies at their September 2009 meeting, assurance has been given to the three committees that changes can be made following further consultation. The primary issue for ACWC is that of same-day separations.

After the restructuring, ACWC was no longer connected in any way with Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/PW. There is no longer an Office of Women’s Advocacy (OWA) within REWM/PW. The senior administrative assistant for OWA and ACWC was promoted to another position within REWM/PW, eliminating any staff support for ACWC. A temporary, part-time staff was hired February 15, 2009. Her one-year contract has been extended through General Assembly of this year.

h. *Actions of the Committee for Consideration by the 219th General Assembly (2010)*

Resolution to Study Violence Against Women and Children on the Mexico-U.S. Border

Resolution to Reaffirm Support for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Resolution to Ensure Staffing for Women’s Advocacy in the PC(USA)

Resolution to Explore the Intersection of Gender and Race

Resolution to Adapt the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR)

Response to Referral Item 09 -12 with Recommendation to Extend the Work of the Status of Women Task Force

Final Response to 2004 Referral: Item 05-03. Recommendation 4. That the General Assembly Request the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, Following Review of Resource Currently Available to Meet the Needs of Clergywomen in the Call Process and in Pastorates, to Make Recommendations That Contribute to a Pro-active, Health-giving, Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2004, Part I, pp. 77, 389–90).

2008 Referral: Item 09-13. Report, “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies.” Recommendation 3. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) to Create a Permanent Joint Working Group on Women of Color in the Church, to Be Made Up of Two Members of ACREC and Two Members of ACWC, Appointed by the Leadership of Each Committee—From the Women of Color Consultation Task Force (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 964–77).

C. General Assembly Committee on Representation Agency Summary

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone” (1Cor. 12:4–6).

1. *Assigned Responsibilities*

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), in its constitutional mandate, shall advise, advocate, resource, review, recommend, and consult with the General Assembly and its committees, councils, and entities to ensure that the principles of inclusiveness are implemented. The GACOR advocates for full participation in decision making and representation. Its main function shall be to advise the governing bodies with respect to their membership and to that of their committees, boards, agencies, and other units in implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness to ensure fair

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and effective representation in the decision making of the church. The committee advises the General Assembly and its entities on the employment of personnel, reviews and consults the implementation plans in conformity with the Churchwide Plan for Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity, and when necessary, suggests corrective actions in order to fulfill the PC(USA) commitments to inclusiveness and participation articulated in G-4.0403 and G-9.0105. The GACOR regularly consults with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), and one member attends General Assembly Mission Council meetings to monitor actions and advise that body.

2. *Accomplishments*

The GACOR has the responsibility to assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to realize that it needs its diverse membership to participate fully in leadership and that their contribution is important and must be sought out and acknowledged. The GACOR acts in some ways as a conscience for the system, intentionally paying attention to who is involved and how decisions are made. God gives abundantly to the church and we seek to live into that diversity of gifts to realize our ministries together more fully—to do that most faithfully, we need to have the widest inclusiveness.

The GACOR quickly and thoroughly orients new members to the committee. This is accomplished by setting aside time in the first meeting after a General Assembly for extended orientation for new members and discussion, directed by the Executive Committee and staff. The GACOR is committed to providing regular training for Synod COR leaders. Biennially, a training event is held.

Ongoing professional development for GACOR members was accomplished during 2008–09 meetings by inviting speakers and facilitators to full committee meetings, consulting with partners, and putting members in learning opportunities in conferences and meetings of constituency groups. The 2009 Synod Training Event, titled “Connecting the Dots: Discovering a Community of One,” was centered on the story of Pentecost and the gift of abundant difference. The workshops focused on particular aspects of involving members in decision making and addressing institutional and generational barriers.

Analysis of synod reports and representation data is a regular feature of GACOR work. Synods receive annual feedback from the committee on their reports. From time to time this work is included in advice and counsel memoranda to entities, councils, and committees. Data analysis during the last two years contributed to a recommendation being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

As part of its efforts to promote equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, GACOR continues to raise awareness of job postings, and circulates them to under-represented constituencies to reach out to a more inclusive pool. Stimulating discussion of these topics and examining the challenges to living more fully into the Kingdom vision of who the church is to be is part of the common work GACOR has. The GACOR continues to assign its members to serve as liaisons to, and attend meetings and conferences of, the recognized protected constituencies including the racial ethnic caucuses and councils and Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC).

The GACOR, in order to do its work, organizes itself in three subcommittees: Program, Planning and Strategy, and Training.

The Program Subcommittee interprets data on representation and participation, presents issues needing action, and recommends specific communication and action for the GACOR to take with synods and committees, commissions and entities of the national church. In 2008, the GACOR Program Subcommittee evaluated COR reports from eleven synods, down from the previous year, which may be an indication of the interest and concern at the synod level for the principles of inclusiveness and participation. At the same time several presbyteries have indicated a renewed interest in reviving the work of the committee on representation in their body, requesting resources and training. There are instances where synods still need to pay closer attention to their makeup and methods for ensuring participation and representation, but on a whole there is gradual improvement in areas across the church. The Synods of Rocky Mountains, Pacific, Puerto Rico, Northeast and South Atlantic did not submit a report to GACOR in 2008. This is not the first time for Rocky Mountains in particular. The committee is looking into what has affected this change in the trend toward increasing compliance. Filling out the report is one thing, connecting those numbers to actions is the challenge. Feedback to synods included suggested corrective actions to improve their reported representation.

Technology and Reporting: The GACOR continues to work with OGA staff to make the synod annual report form more user friendly on the PC(USA) website, adding capability for interactive report submission and downloading. The major website redesign currently in motion has delayed our efforts to roll out this new capacity for respondents to enter data directly on the Web. The form is still available in Word format that can be sent electronically to synods upon request. The committee is also expanding the technologies it uses to meet and discuss materials between meetings and will continue to seek ways to do so.

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A: THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

Best practices for synod CORs include increasing the interface with their respective presbyteries by sponsoring training opportunities and demonstrating heightened representation. In the last two years, there have been modest increases of synod COR representation on synod nominating committees. We have seen increased requests for instructional materials that support presbyteries in enhancing the revitalization of the work of their own committees on representation.

The Planning and Strategy Subcommittee is looking at ways that it can strengthen communication with presbytery and synod staff and discerning how best the GACOR can assist them as they look at issues of diversity, inclusiveness, and representation. The subcommittee looks at the big picture of GACOR work and charts strategy for improving inclusiveness at the national level. This group is reviewing Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity procedures for the various entities. In consultation with the Climate for Change Task Force, it may bring recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012). Their work also includes a review, already underway, of the GACOR Manual.

The Training Subcommittee guides both training and continuing development opportunities for GACOR members and, biennially, synod COR members and staff. In October 2009, GACOR sponsored the biennial training event for synod COR staff and chairpersons in Louisville, Kentucky. Thirty synod leaders attended and thirteen synods were represented. The theme of the training was “Connecting the Dots: Discovering a Community of One.” The purpose of plenary meetings and workshops was to equip and challenge synod CORs to more effectively work for diversity and inclusiveness in their synods and share those methods with their presbyteries. Leadership included:

- The Reverend Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and former Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was the keynote speaker.
- The Reverend Tony Aja, Mid-Kentucky Presbytery, was the worship leader.
- Elder Valerie Small, Manager of General Assembly Committee on Nominations, who highlighted the nominating process and the need for CORs and nominating committees to work together.

Workshops at the event included those on improving youth and young adult involvement, the new Form of Government and how CORs are affected, the languages of diversity, deepened participant understanding of specific COR issues, and tasks at governing body levels.

Analysis of the evaluation forms from the training event revealed that a significant majority of those attending valued their participation and the content of the training. With a 90 percent response rate, consistently elements of the training were rated as very helpful or helpful, generally varying between 84 to 96 percent, the lowest score was 71 percent. When you add in the category of slightly helpful this number increases even more. On the overall evaluation question, 93 percent rated the training excellent or good. One participant added “energy level of participants grew over the training, discussions went deep.” Many commented that the training provided new ways to work with colleagues on synod and presbytery CORs.

Currently the GACOR is reviewing data on GA Commissioners to past assemblies since 2003 and compiling a report. We will share this preliminary evaluation of representation at those assemblies at the 219th General Assembly (2010). COR will be evaluating this data and bringing possible advice to the next assembly. The 218th General Assembly (2008) directed entities reporting data to strive to report it in disaggregated ways. Disaggregated data more accurately expresses how diversity is experienced in life—persons are not identified merely by one variable at a time, but rather data is reported in a way that you can find out how many racial-ethnic women clergy are present who are under thirty-five (for example). The previous way often described these descriptors separately—how many women clergy, how many racial-ethnic clergy, how many clergy under thirty-five. Reporting data in this way, we will better understand who we are as a gathered community. COR has made suggestions in how demographic data on GA commissioners is collected and reported to reflect this more complex approach.

The GACOR staff and synod liaisons provide training opportunities in presbyteries and synods throughout the year. Among those in 2009 were events in the Synods of Mid-Atlantic and Trinity.

Staffing changes: The GACOR had a transition in their staff support triggered in May 2009 with the retirement of Elder Joan E. Richardson, who served as the Manager of the General Assembly Committee on Representation and Inclusiveness Services for seventeen years. We give thanks to God for her faithful service in the work of representation and full participation. In July 2009, the Rev. Molly Casteel became the Interim Manager.

Business before this assembly: A special task group of GACOR reviewed the final report of the Form of Government Task Force and their recommendations to amend the *Book of Order* in 2010. The task group determined that the language regarding diversity and inclusiveness was not strong enough in the proposed document and that the sections describing the entities responsible for representation and participation and nominations needed reinforcement, that synods, in particular, were reduced in their abilities to adjust to reach representational goals; therefore the committee is sending comments advising the assembly to take action to amend the document. While the proposed Foundational Principles allow for more flexibility in

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presbyteries, the GACOR feels that church's commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, representation, equal employment opportunity, and affirmative action is diminished in the documents as proposed and that adjustments in F-10403 in particular need to be made. Please refer to the comment the committee made on these items of business for more details.

Through training, worship, study, consultation, developing strategies, and sharing, the GACOR equips and challenges the General Assembly, its entities, commissions, committees, and synod CORs to achieve, accomplish, realize, endorse, and preserve the commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to inclusiveness and diversity.

3. *Membership*

The GACOR's commitment to inclusiveness is reflected in the diversity of its membership from the sixteen synods. In late 2009 there were several resignations due to changes in life and work circumstances. The following persons were serving on GACOR at the time this report was written in January 2010:

Alaska-Northwest, Elder Alma-jean Marion, African American (SA) *see legend at end of report
Covenant, Elder Deborah Fair, African American (SA)
Lakes and Prairies, Layperson Cindy Ray, White (A) (D)
Living Waters, Rev. John A.T. Gulden, White (YA)
Mid-America, Elder William W. Gardner, White (SA)
Mid-Atlantic, Elder Angela Battle, African American (A)
Northeast, Elder Yung Suk Park, Korean (A)
Pacific, Layperson Megan D. Acedo, White (Y)
Puerto Rico, Elder Eliud Serrano Arroyo, Hispanic (YA)
Southwest, Elder Glenn Bezuyen, White (A)
Trinity, Rev. Stanley Bhasker, Asian ((A)

These persons have served on the committee since the last General Assembly and we thank them for their service:

Lincoln Trails, Rev. M. Coleman Gilchrist, African American (A)
Rocky Mountains, Elder Alda Bighorn, Native American (A)
South Atlantic, Rev. Alice Ridgill, African American (YA)
Southern California and Hawaii, Elder J. Stafford Fredericks, White (SA)
Sun, Elder Randel Bohanon, Native American (SA)

The moderator of GACOR is Glenn Bezuyen; vice-moderator, Cindy Ray; members of the executive committee and chairpersons of GACOR subcommittees are Angela Battle, Stanley Bhasker, and Cindy Ray.

*Legend for age groups:

(Y) Youth (25 and under)
(YA) Young Adults (26–35)
(A) Adults (36–55)
(SA) Senior Adult (56+)
(D) Disability

See Item 05-06 of the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding the representational formula.

Item 11-01

[The assembly approved Item 11-01 with amendment. See pp. 39, 41]

On Lifting up the “Call to Restore the Creation”—From the Presbytery of Charlotte.

The Presbytery of Charlotte overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Lift up the “Call to Restore the Creation,” originally adopted as part of *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice* by the 202nd General Assembly (1990) in recognition of its continuing importance, and the crucial work remaining on its 20th anniversary.

“Call to Restore the Creation

“Creation cries out in this time of ecological crisis.

“—Abuse of nature and injustice to people place the future in grave jeopardy.

“—Population triples in this century.

“—Biological systems suffer diminished capacity to renew themselves.

“—Finite minerals are mined and pumped as if inexhaustible.

“—Peasants are forced onto marginal lands, and soil erodes.

“—The rich-poor gap grows wider.

“—Wastes and poisons exceed nature’s capacity to absorb them.

“—Greenhouse gases pose threat of global warming.

“Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

“—respond to the cry of creation, human and non-human;

“—engage in the effort to make the 1990s the “turnaround decade,” not only for reasons of prudence or survival, but because the endangered planet is God’s creation; and

“—draw upon all the resources of biblical faith and the Reformed tradition for empowerment and guidance in this adventure.

“The church has powerful reason for engagement in restoring God’s creation:

“—God’s works in creation are too wonderful, too ancient, too beautiful, too good to be desecrated.

“—Restoring creation is God’s own work in our time, in which God comes both to judge and to restore.

“—The Creator-Redeemer calls faithful people to become engaged with God in keeping and healing the creation, human and nonhuman.

“—Human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained.

“—The love of neighbor, particularly “the least” of Christ’s brothers and sisters, requires action to stop the poisoning, the erosion, the wastefulness that are causing suffering and death.

“—The future of our children and their children and all who come after is at stake.

“—In this critical time of transition to a new era, God’s new doing may be discerned as a call to earth-keeping, to justice, and to community.

“Therefore, the 202nd General Assembly [(1990)] affirms that:

“—Response to God’s call requires a new faithfulness, for which guidance may be found in norms that illuminate the contemporary meaning of God’s steadfast love for the world.

“—Earth-keeping today means insisting on sustainability—the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together—which requires human beings to practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship, after the model of servanthood that we have in Jesus.

“—Justice today requires participation, the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator’s gifts for sustenance.

“—Justice also means sufficiency, a standard upholding the claim of all to have enough—to be met through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end.

“—Community in our time requires the nurture of solidarity, leading to steadfastness in standing with companions, victims, and allies, and to the realization of the church’s potential as a community of support for adventurous faithfulness.

“On the basis of these findings and affirmations the 202nd General Assembly (1990)

“—recognizes and accepts restoring creation as a central concern of the church, to be incorporated into its life and mission at every level;

“—understands this to be a new focus for initiative in mission program and a concern with major implications for infusion into theological work, evangelism, education, justice and peacemaking, worship and liturgy, public witness, global mission, and congregational service and action at the local community level;

“—recognizes that restoring creation is not a short-term concern to be handled in a few years, but a continuing task to which the nation and the world must give attention and commitment, and which has profound implications for the life, work, and witness of Christian people and church agencies;

“—approaches the task with covenant seriousness—‘If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God ... then you shall live’ (Deut. 30:16)—and with practical awareness that cherishing God’s creation enhances the ability of the church to achieve its other goals.” (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, pp. 646–47)

2. Commend the faithful congregations, Presbyterian church-related institutions, and church members who have responded to God’s call to cherish and protect God’s creation, and urge perseverance in the tasks of restoring God’s creation.

3. Urge congregations, Presbyterian church-related institutions, and church members to adopt institutional and individual lifestyles reflecting greater stewardship of resources, particularly in energy consumption.

4. Affirm that concern for God's creation is, for every Christian, an essential way of living faithfully in Christ's world that will necessitate personal study of, attention to, and engagement with emerging and new environmental concerns that are persistent, acute, and pressing.

5. Affirm that the best available science should inform our care for God's creation, shaping the direction of responsible programming and policy, especially with respect to public witness concerning emergent environmental issues such as global climate change, desertification, and access to potable water, and wetlands/coastal erosion.

6. Affirm that all living creatures require potable water to live; that water, being essential to life, is a human right that must be accessible to all people.]

Rationale

Twenty years ago, the 202nd General Assembly (1990) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) overwhelmingly adopted the comprehensive policy *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*. This policy built upon the historic General Assembly policy base reflecting the determination that the protection of the environment is an essential part of the Christian faith. Subsequent General Assemblies provided additional guidance in environmental education and advocacy efforts for all councils and offices of the church.

The *Book of Order* (W-7.5001) states that “God calls the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to participate in God’s work of creation and preservation...” In W.-7.5003, it reminds us that we are “... stewards of God’s creation who hold the earth in trust ...”

Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice called the 1990s the “turn-around decade,” and indeed generated new and renewed efforts by the church at all levels to respond to the ecological crisis and its impact upon the poor and vulnerable with focused strategies, deeper theological and ethical reflection, and institutional and individual commitment. Yet, more work needs to be done. On the 20th anniversary of the General Assembly’s adoption of this comprehensive policy, it is fitting to reaffirm its findings, celebrate what it has spawned in the life of the church, and recommit ourselves to the calling that remains as valid and necessary today as it was in 1990.

Concurrence with Item 11-01 by the Presbyteries of the Foothills and Greater Atlanta.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-01, from the Presbytery of Charlotte, overtures the 219th General Assembly on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice,” to lift up the “Call to Restore Creation,” seriously affirming that this commitment constitutes a new and enduring framework for all of the church’s thought and action; to commend those church entities that have responded to this call; and to urge all church entities and members to adopt practices that result in greater stewardship of earth resources.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 11-01 be approved with the following additional recommendations:

“[4. Affirm that concern for God’s creation is, for every Christian, an essential way of living faithfully in Christ’s world that will necessitate personal study of, attention to and engagement with emerging and new environmental concerns that are persistent, acute, and pressing.]”

“[5. Affirm that the best available science should inform our care for God’s creation, shaping the direction of responsible programming and policy, especially with respect to public witness concerning emergent environmental issues such as global climate change, desertification and access to potable water, and wetlands/coastal erosion.]”

“[6. Affirm that all living creatures require potable water to live; that water, being essential to life, is a human right that must be accessible to all people, and that plans for urban growth, suburban sprawl, and rural development should all be conditional on the wise stewardship of water.]”

Rationale

On approval: *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice* is and has been an important call in the life of the church. Informing environmental justice ministries and Presbyterians for Restoring Creation (now Presbyterians for Creation Care), this “Call to Restore Creation” continues to guide our understanding of what it means to be in relationship with God’s creation. This call has been reaffirmed by other assemblies, including the 208th General Assembly (2008) that, in *Hope for a Global Future*, appeals to the 1990 “Call to Restore Creation,” affirming that “human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained” (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 534)

On Recommendation 4: Environmental concern is necessarily a whole-world and whole-church commitment as well as a personal commitment incumbent upon all Christians as a means of living faithfully in God’s shared creation. The interrelatedness of elements of the biosphere demands a holistic attention to the environment that reaffirms the Presbyterian environmental policy commitment to “sustainability, sufficiency, participation, and solidarity” in addressing the ethics of ecology and justice. Environmental commitment is also confronted by the reality of new environmental issues that unfold as human-kind inhabits the earth and explores the universe.

On Recommendation 5: Several environmental issues have arisen or become more acute since the 1990 adoption of “Restoring Creation.” While the concerns of “Restoring Creation” remain continuing commitments, these “new” environmental issues have expanded our awareness of a continuing and enlarged need for attention and commitment to the environment. For instance, since 1990, previous General Assemblies have repeatedly called on the United States and the global community to join together in order to mitigate and prevent the worst effects of global climate change. The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved “The Power to Change: U.S. Energy and Global Warming” in which it called for measures to create more sustainable and just energy consumption at all levels of the church—individuals and families; councils, governing bodies, consistent with agencies; and the church’s social responsibility regarding U.S. energy policy (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 934–37).

For its recommendations on climate change policy, the 2008 document drew specifically on the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)’s fourth Assessment Report, which contained scientific recommendations based on the most recent scientific data available. Such data and scientific recommendations have since been updated, leaving the recommendations of the 218th General Assembly (2008) behind the most current data. Urging that responses to climate change be commensurate with the best available science will allow the statement of the 218th General Assembly (2008) to grow with new learnings and understandings (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 935–37).

On Recommendation 6: Water, one of five areas of social policy focus in the 1990 “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice” deserves more focused attention as we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century. The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved the “Report and Recommendations on Limited Water Resources and Takings with Study Guide”

that addressed, in abbreviated form, the balance of water usage (agricultural, industrial, urban) necessary for water justice. As drought continues in southwestern states, and desertification has increased in all regions of the world,¹ and as the issue of water rights grows increasingly contentious within the U.S., the General Assembly may affirm that clean water is a human right for all persons whether living in the developing world or in the United States.² Within the U.S., disputes over sources of water among states and municipalities create political controversy. In addition, the increasing commodification of water, through bottled drinking water and other ways in which water rights are bought and sold, puts in danger the common availability of clean water to all people residing in the United States as well as increasing the burden on the environment through the use of nondegradable disposable containers.

Endnotes

1. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. *Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa* (NY: UN, June 14–15, 1994).
2. World Health Organization (WHO). *The Right to Water*. Geneva: WHO, 2003.

Item 11-02

[The assembly approved Item 11-02. See pp. 39, 41.]

On Endorsing “The Charter for Compassion”—From the Presbytery of National Capital.

The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to affirm the Charter of Compassion and direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate that support to all congregations.

“Charter for Compassion

“The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

“It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

“We therefore call upon all men and women ~ to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion ~ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate ~ to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures ~ to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity ~ to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

“We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.” (www.charterforcompassion.org, created November 12, 2009)

Rationale

We know that: “... In daily life, Jesus took ordinary acts of human compassion—healing the sick, feeding the hungry, washing feet—and translated them into ways of serving God.” (*Book of Order*, W-1.2004)

“God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to exercise compassion in the world,

- “a. feeding the hungry,
- “b. comforting the grieving,
- “c. caring for the sick,

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- “d. visiting the prisoners,
- “e. freeing the captives,
- “f. sheltering the homeless,
- “g. befriending the lonely.” (*Book of Order*, W-7.3001)

“... Concern for the world may be enacted in prayer and ministries of compassion, justice, peacemaking, and witness.” (*Book of Order*, W-3.5302)

“Discipleship may be expressed ... beyond the church cooperating with all who work for compassion and reconciliation.” (*Book of Order*, W-4.3002)

We also know that 150,000 people of the Abrahamic faiths and beyond, from more than 180 countries, have contributed to the Charter for Compassion including the Interfaith Conference of metropolitan Washington through its thirtieth anniversary interfaith concert. The National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. has also endorsed the Charter for Compassion.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-02 from the Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) “to endorse the Charter of Compassion and communicate that support to all congregations in the PC(USA).”

The Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 11-02 be approved.

Rationale

The Charter for Compassion is the product of a multi-faith, web-based collaboration in response to growing misunderstandings, misrepresentations, and, thus, increased hostility between religious traditions. This process is described at <http://charterforcompassion.org/>. The charter calls for treating each human person with “justice, equity and respect” out of deep compassion for each; teaching appreciation for cultural and religious differences; and nurturing “informed empathy” with those who suffer.

The charter’s emphasis on the role of compassion in motivating response to the suffering of any others is fully consistent with the biblical tradition and Reformed theology, as indicated in the overture. Its call for a positive response to religious and cultural differences is supported by the long tradition of the PC(USA) to support basic human rights, including the right to determine one’s own beliefs and participate in the religious community of one’s choosing. In 1949, the General Assembly of the PCUSA endorsed the UN Declaration of Human Rights¹, beginning an on-going series of declarations by assemblies in the area of human rights, including religious rights, that continues to this day.

Endnote

1. *Minutes*, PCUSA, 1949, Part I, p. 250.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 11-02 be approved.

Rationale

As the demographics of our church and our country are changing rapidly, ACREC believes that it is important to be aware of our place as Christians in the broader world and how we relate to people of other faiths. Therefore, we believe that a more diverse and open teaching of biblical and church history is needed in order to broaden the embrace of our neighbors.

Today’s youth and young adults are living in a different and nontraditional environment. In order to keep the church relevant in their lives, ACREC believes we need to provide

- a broader understanding of religions and beliefs;
- a relational understanding of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam and how they all relate to The Charter of Compassion;

- educational materials that assist in understanding their faith in the context of multicultural, multiracial, and multi-faith communities.

Item 11-03

[The assembly approved Item 11-03 with amendment. See pp. 39, 41]

On Making Resources Available Regarding Destruction and Loss of Coastal Wetlands—From the Presbytery of South Louisiana.

The Presbytery of South Louisiana respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Environmental Ministries office, to make educational resources available concerning coastal land loss.
2. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Congregational Ministries Publishing, to work in conjunction with the Presbytery of South Louisiana to develop ~~[curriculum]~~ [resources] on the implications of coastal wetlands loss for God’s creation and God’s community.
3. Establish financial support for a theological wetlands education center in the Presbytery of South Louisiana for Presbyterians of all ages to learn to be stewards of the wetlands and proactive in their repair.
4. Direct the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to examine the role of corporations and institutions in the destruction [and restoration] of the wetlands and report back to the 220th General Assembly (2012).
5. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to advocate with members of the United States Congress to take measures to restore land lost due to coastal erosion in southern deltaic regions of Louisiana.

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$0; (2011) \$28,100; (2012) \$53,100 (GAMC)]

Rationale

“The earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it” (Ps 24:1).

Hurricane Katrina (2005) and other recent hurricanes have exposed the vulnerability of New Orleans and other communities to flooding and destruction because of the loss of wetlands. Coastal erosion is happening in south Louisiana at a faster rate than anywhere else on earth and this massive coastal loss has negative spiritual, cultural, environmental, and economic implications.¹

- A land mass equivalent to the size of the state of Delaware has been lost from the Louisiana coastline in the last seventy years due mainly to human-caused factors.
- South Louisiana is home to a unique blend of cultures including people of Native American, Creole, Vietnamese American, and Cajun descent and is a habitat for a variety of species whose continuing existence is threatened by coastal land loss.
- South Louisiana’s natural resources, such as petroleum and seafood, are vital to the U.S. economy.
- Hurricanes are at their strongest when they make landfall. The wetlands of South Louisiana have historically served as a buffer zone that protected inland communities and estuaries from storm surge and strong winds.
- An increasing amount of damage in terms of suffering and property loss is expected due to the disappearance of this buffer zone unless action is taken to restore the coast.
- The 202nd General Assembly (1990) passed the resolution “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice,” that called for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take stronger action on environmental matters.
- Ezekiel 47:8–12 depicts the ecological richness of coastal wetlands, a special piece of God’s creation:

He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water there will become fresh. Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will

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be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes. People will stand fishing beside the sea from En-gedi to En-eglaim; it will be a place for the spreading of nets; its fish will be of a great many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

Endnote

1. Data obtained through the Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary 2009 Annual Report; National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA CSC- 2009) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2008); and the National Academies of Science 2006.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-03, from the Presbytery of South Louisiana, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding coastal erosion and the loss of coastal wetlands through human activity as well as hurricane flooding and destruction.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 11-03 be approved with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with underline; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with underline.]

“5. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to advocate with members of the United States Congress to take measures to [~~restore land lost due to coastal erosion in southern deltaic regions of Louisiana~~] [halt human activities that contribute to coastal erosion and contamination and the loss of wetlands].

“[6. In light of the recent environmental catastrophe in the Gulf Coast, the largest oil spill in history now encroaching on the shoreline, reaffirm the church’s continuing concern about the United States’ ever-increasing use of energy produced by fossil fuels that endanger our shorelines through off-shore drilling, and our commitment to change our lifestyle to be more sustainable, in keeping with the ‘Call to Restore Creation’ and ‘The Power to Change’ (218th General Assembly (2008)).

“[7. Reaffirm the church’s commitment to support the development of clean, more sustainable sources of energy.

“[8. Call on Congress and the president to stop offshore oil drilling and exploration in the Gulf Coast region until the full range of human, environmental and economic costs and benefits can be understood.

“[9. Call on Congress and the president to commit to long-term clean-up and restoration of the Gulf Coast shoreline.]”

Rationale

The swamps and marshes of coastal Louisiana are among the Nation’s most fragile and valuable wetlands, vital not only to recreational and agricultural interests but also the State’s more than \$1 billion per year seafood industry. The staggering annual losses of wetlands in Louisiana are caused by human activity as well as natural processes. U.S. Geological Survey scientists are conducting important studies that are helping planners to understand the life cycle of wetlands by detailing the geologic processes that shape them and the coast, and by providing geologic input to models for mitigation strategies. (S. Jeffress Williams, retired, U.S. Geological Survey, <http://marine.usgs.gov/fact-sheets/LAWetlands/lawetlands.html>)

While land eroded by hurricane and flood cannot be restored, further erosion and habitat destruction caused by human activity can be halted and at least a scientifically based partial restoration of wetlands effected so that the collateral restorative processes of creation active in the wetlands might “heal itself” of human-caused damage.

The recent oil-well eruption of approximately five million gallons of oil off the Gulf Coast has endangered coastal communities, coastal habitat, the fishing industry, and more all along the Gulf Coast. Even now, twenty years after the Exxon Valdez oil spill of a finite 10.8 million gallons of oil, oil continues to reach the shores of Prince William Sound. This recent escape of oil is potentially limitless and will affect the entire Gulf Coast for decades to come. A long-term commitment to clean-up and restoration is necessary as is a renewed and redoubled effort to develop and implement new sources of sustainable, clean, and affordable energy.

Following the Exxon-Valdez oil spill, the 201st General Assembly (1989) adopted *Commissioners’ Resolution 89-8* that called for “a moratorium on oil drilling in Bristol Bay and oil exploration or drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge until assurances of preventive measures and contingency cleanup and recovery operations can be agreed upon by appropriate agencies in order to protect fully these sensitive ecosystems” (*Minutes*, 1989, Part I, p. 642). Further, the 213th General Assembly (2001) adopted *Overture 01-60* to preserve biodiversity and halt mass extinction. The recommendations include a “call on the U.S. and other governments, on U.S. and international development and lending agencies, and on national and

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multinational corporations and banks to desist from large-scale projects, such as old-growth timber cutting and forest fragmentation, megadam construction, and oil exploration and drilling in vulnerable regions, that devastate ecosystems, threaten wildlife survival, and displace indigenous people” (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 56, 474). The scope of the present catastrophe exceeds even that of the Exxon-Valdez spill and fully warrants our call for and support of cessation of offshore oil drilling and exploration until the full range of human, ecosystemic, environmental, and economic costs and benefits can be determined.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 11-03

Comment on Item 11-03—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

Recommendation 2 “[d]irects the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Congregational Ministries Publishing, to work in conjunction with the Presbytery of South Louisiana to develop curriculum on the implications of coastal wetlands loss for God’s creation and God’s community” (Item 11-03).

The role of the General Assembly Mission Council is changing in response to trends in mission engagement and funding throughout the denomination. The focus of the ministry is to inspire, equip and connect Presbyterians as they engage in ministry.

The GAMC is moving away from:

- creating offices at the denominational level to coordinate every area of specialized ministry, and
- producing its own resources where good resources exist from other sources.

This ministry focus for the GAMC is consistent with the available funding streams and the broad range of ministry support that Presbyterians expect.

We invite Presbyterians with a passion for specialized ministries to form ministry networks for collaboration and coordination. The PC(USA) Web site provides tools for these networks to form and for synergies to emerge. New features are being added to the Web site to improve that capability. These varied ministries are vital for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the GAMC will continue to seek ways to foster connections and collaboration to join in expanding partnership in God’s mission and to grow Christ’s church deep and wide.

Item 11-04

[The assembly approved Item 11-04. See pp. 39, 41.]

Human Rights Update 2010—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) bring to the attention of the church significant trends and developments in human rights, particularly in the areas of trafficking, detention of immigrants, and the continuing problem of torture, by:

1. Directing the Stated Clerk to post on-line this “Human Rights Update 2010,” include it in the General Assembly social witness policy CD, and encourage its study and use in advocacy on matters of Christian ethical concern and General Assembly action;
2. Requesting that “Human Rights Day,” December 10, be included in the program calendar, liturgical resources, web-postings, and public witness activities of appropriate General Assembly Mission Council offices; and
3. Encouraging members, sessions, and other councils of the church to pray for all victims of human rights violations, and for those who persecute them, while also finding ways to act on behalf of those victims.

Rationale

I. Introduction

These recommendations are in response to the following referrals:

2008 Referral: Item 11-13. Resolution to Expand the Church’s Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking, Recommendation 2. Urge the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Regularly Include Trafficking of Persons in Its Human Rights Updates—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1167–70).

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2008 Referral: Item 09-11. A Resolution to Study Immigration Detention in the United States, Recommendation 1. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in Consultation with the Appropriate General Assembly Council and Office of the General Assembly Ministries Areas to Analyze the Social Witness Policy of the PC(USA) Regarding Detention in Relation to Immigration in the United States, Giving Attention to the Experiences of Women and Children Detained and Affected and Report Its Findings and Recommendation to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 958–61).

2008 Referral: Item 07-01. On Calling for Tolerance and Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, Recommendation 6. Identify Violations of the Civil Rights of Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the United States and Other Areas of the World, Along with Other Incidents of Violation of Religious Freedoms, as Part of the Regular Human Rights Report to the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Newton (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 14, 15, 507–10).

Presbyterian General Assemblies have spoken on aspects of human rights since before the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—which the churches helped bring into being—in 1948. The practice of receiving reports at each General Assembly goes back twenty-two years. As in past years, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy coordinates contributions from staff persons in other parts of the General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly, in this case the Fair Food campaign and the Immigration Office, with additional help from a theologian who is also an expert on the ethics of torture. We thus thank the Reverend Noelle Damico, Julia Thorne, Esq., and Professor George Hunsinger for their contributions. We then look at other developments for consideration by readers.

To speak directly to this third referral, in the case of this General Assembly, the most substantial discussion of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian interreligious incidents is in the historical perspective appendix to the Middle East report. They cite the U.S. State Department Religious Liberty report on Israel and the Occupied Territories, finding discrimination against both Muslims and Christians and neglect of their holy sites.¹ The nature of church/state or religion/state issues differs, of course, in Muslim majority countries and Israel. The instances of torture discussed in the third section of this update largely include Muslim detainees, and certainly religiously linked extremism is affecting the conditions of Christian minorities in certain conflict areas. We expect to do more with this referral in the future.

In previous years, prior to the Internet posting of human rights violations, this update included surveys of human rights situations from each of the World Mission regional liaison offices. The Washington Office provided a brief survey of domestic U.S. criminal justice issues, such as prison overcrowding or needed rehabilitation. And a section from the United Nations Office contained information on significant new treaties or “conventions,” part of the continued construction of moral structures and expectations for the international social order. We continue that practice in the “For Future Consideration” section.

Because of the on-line availability of up-to-date information on human rights abuses, the advisory committee’s current approach to the Human Rights Update focuses on trends. In 2006, this was the acceptance of torture by the United States government, along with indefinite detention without due process and new forms of government surveillance. Five presbyteries also asked for action on this matter and called for an investigation by an independent counsel and possible prosecution by the Department of Justice. In 2008, the committee responded to a referral on human rights in the Philippines that also looked at the use of the “war on terror” as a justification for human rights violations. The General Assembly used part of that report to create an additional short resolution on human rights in Colombia, where similar dynamics are documented. In all such cases, we consulted with indigenous church partners. The Latin America regional office, the Peacemaking Program, and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship have also continued to monitor the situation in Colombia, and both mission co-workers, volunteers, and notably the Reverend Larry Emery of Walnut Grove (Calif.) Presbyterian Church monitor the Philippine situation.

In the case of human trafficking, we would note that several representatives of the advisory committee visited five “rescue” and rehabilitation programs for women who had been victims of trafficking in Thailand. The concern for “sex tourism,” sometimes involving children, has been addressed by international organizing and then by international law, partly through the leadership of Presbyterian Women and other church groups starting in the 1970s. Representatives of the ACSWP, including a mission co-worker and one of the committee’s co-chairs, visited the Bangkok offices of World Vision, met with a researcher and consultant with the United Nations, and worshiped in a new church that includes many women free from involvement in prostitution (only some of whom were trafficked). As the reader may find, however, trafficking involves many other dimensions of coerced labor. The advisory committee has also met with human rights and immigration reform experts and activists at its regular meetings, but the anti-trafficking visits were part of the hands-on involvement of the committee in this calling to human liberation and justice.

As we turn to the specifics in the several trends that are the focus of this year’s report, we acknowledge that the scope of human rights is broad—as broad as what The Confession of 1967 calls “one universal [human] family” (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.44). Strong policy statements by the 1974 (UPC) and 1978 (PCUS) on human rights undergird our application of confessional commitments to respect human conscience and to prevent the violation of human personhood, created in the

image of God. May these in-depth, yet still concise studies, guide us in our individual and congregational “facing of this hour.”

II. Human Trafficking: A Human Rights Crisis

A. *The Scope and Definition of Trafficking*

From boys sold into the fishing industry on Lake Volta in Ghana, to girls trafficked into the brothels of Thailand, to domestic workers enslaved and tortured by a husband and wife in their Long Island home or farmworkers locked in a box truck, chained, beaten and forced to harvest tomatoes in Florida fields, slavery is alive and well in a new form in the twenty-first century. Poverty, gender discrimination, violence, and conflict create the breeding ground for this phenomenon, which is complex, global, vicious, and profitable.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that victimizes vulnerable children, women, and men both in the United States and around the world. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 12.3 million people are being trafficked for forced labor, bonded labor, forced child labor, and sexual servitude at any given time, 56 percent of these are women and girls.² The U.S. Department of State notes that other estimates range from 4 million to 27 million.³ It is estimated that 1.2 million children are trafficked within and across borders.⁴

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been urged by its General Assemblies to become informed about human trafficking, to advocate for the elimination of all forms of human trafficking, and to witness to the fullness of life that God desires for all people.⁵ The General Assembly Mission Council has convened a Human Trafficking Roundtable to assist the church in these efforts.

Human trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining, by any means, any person for forced labor, slavery, or servitude in any industry or site such as agriculture, construction, prostitution, manufacturing, begging, domestic service, or marriage. Recent trends have also shown persons trafficked for organs and body parts.⁶

While much of the public focus on human trafficking has been on the trafficking of children and women for sexual purposes, the International Labour Organization (ILO) asserts that the majority of human trafficking in the world takes the form of forced labor. Forced labor or involuntary servitude affects men, women, and children alike. Of course many are often subjected to sexual exploitation as well. Forced labor can be far harder to identify than sex trafficking because it may not involve the same kinds of criminal networks but rather individuals in domestic work, smaller scale businesses like nail salons, or landscaping. Forced labor also happens at the base of corporate supply chains by employers in factories, mines, and fields. Further its products may be sitting right on our kitchen tables (tomatoes, coffee, fish, and chocolate) or imbedded in the wedding band or necklace we are wearing (gold).⁷

The use of the legal term “human trafficking” can mislead the public into thinking that the phenomenon is principally about the transport of persons for profit. It is much more than that. It involves all aspects of this exploitative process from recruitment to forcing a person through violence or threat of violence to labor against their will. Also the media often wrongly equates human trafficking with smuggling, where a person consents to be moved across an international border. “The critical additional factor that distinguishes trafficking from migrant smuggling is the presence of force, coercion, and/or deception throughout or at some stage in the process—such deception, force, or coercion being used for the purpose of exploitation” explains the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.⁸

It is imperative to understand that trafficked persons can be citizens of their country as well as either authorized migrants or unauthorized migrants. Neither the country in which a person resides nor a person’s residential status are litmus tests for whether they are a trafficked person. The central component of human-trafficking is the total control exercised over all aspects of people’s lives, that is solidified through coercion, threat, and violence. The U.S. Department of State is clear, “Human trafficking is, in essence, a modern-day form of slavery.”⁹

Modern-day slavery is neither an exaggeration nor a metaphor. It is, as the name suggests, a new form of slavery that involves the complete control of one person by another through the use of physical or psychological violence, hard labor for little or no pay, all for the purpose of profit for the slaveholder.¹⁰ Such servitude is illegal under U.S. and international law. Depending on the form of servitude, there are others who profit as well: corporations and employers who benefit from the artificially low cost of labor and consumers who have access to cheap goods.¹¹

Trafficking is a grave violation of human rights, most obviously the right to liberty and not to be held in involuntary servitude. But trafficking is related to a range of violations of other human rights including the right to be free from cruel and inhumane treatment and the right to health. The violation of human rights is both a cause and a consequence of trafficking. The widespread lack of basic economic rights like the right to food, to housing, to sustainable-wage jobs, and the right to safe migration all foster an environment ripe for slavery. Women and children are particularly vulnerable because of the multiple violations of economic, civil, cultural, and social rights that they experience.

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Furthermore the human rights of trafficked persons are often violated in the very acts of investigating, identifying, freeing, and assisting them and prosecuting their traffickers. Migrants are at particularly high risk of misidentification, inappropriate detention, lack of translation and legal services, and deportation even in nations, such as the U.S., that place a high priority on combating human trafficking. Women who have been trafficked into prostitution have been misidentified as prostitutes and released on bail back to their traffickers or imprisoned for the crime of prostitution without having access to necessary social or legal services they deserve as trafficking victims. Children trafficked for sexual purposes have too often been returned to a family member who may have been the very adult who sold them into sexual servitude.

1. *Legal Standards*

Human trafficking is a violation of the 13th Amendment of the Constitution. The U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division has prosecuted cases in the U.S. either under laws forbidding peonage and indentured servitude passed just after the American Civil War during Reconstruction (18 U.S.C. Sections 1581-9) or under the 2000 Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA), which was subsequently reauthorized in 2003, 2005, and 2008.¹²

Human trafficking is also prohibited under international law. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime came into force on 25 December 2003. Referred to as the “Palermo Protocol,” it is the main legal and normative framework to combat human trafficking. As of September 2008, 119 nations have ratified the Palermo Protocol. Many, like the United States, have passed their own human trafficking/modern-day slavery laws. Numerous regions and subregions have also passed their own instruments. From South Asia to the African Union, Europe, and the Americas, specific regional initiatives strengthen and instantiate the principles imbedded in the Palermo Protocol.¹³

Human trafficking is a twenty-first century human rights crisis requiring cooperation and collaboration among all sectors of our society—governments, judiciary, law enforcement, religious bodies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), corporations, and international organizations—if we are to successfully put an end to this brutal crime that violates human rights and devastates lives.

2. *Who Are Trafficked Persons?*

Trafficked persons may be women and men, children and adults, citizens and migrants; all are people whose human rights have been fundamentally violated.

Children are often trafficked for sexual purposes as well as for labor in domestic service, fishing, mining, agricultural work, child soldiering, and the drug trade. Both boys and girls are affected.¹⁴ One new area in which the trafficking and sexual exploitation of boys is occurring is in sports, reports Joy Ngozi Ezielo, the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons. The UNICEF notes boys have been trafficked to labor as camel jockeys.¹⁵ Women and girls are trafficked into forced marriage, domestic service, the agricultural and mining industries, as well as forced prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation. Ngozi adds that though little attention has been paid to men who are trafficked, that it is “becoming rampant,” particularly in the agricultural, mining, and fishing industries.¹⁶

People can be trafficked within their country of origin, across national borders, or across multiple national borders until they reach their final destination. Citizens and both authorized and undocumented migrants, are trafficked both here in the U.S. and around the world.¹⁷ Some examples: Jamaican men brought to New Hampshire under the H2 guestworker program to cut trees were enslaved, Ugandan boys kidnapped by militia and forced to train as child soldiers and torture and kill others, children from Mali trafficked to work in gold mines in Cote D’Ivoire, young women abducted in Azerbaijan and forced into prostitution in Turkey, homeless African American men who are U.S. citizens trafficked within Florida and to North Carolina to harvest produce.

B. *A Human-Rights Based Approach to Addressing Human Trafficking*

Modern-day slavery is the extreme point on a continuum of the degradation of rights among groups of people or in the workplace itself. Jesus Christ came that we might have life and have it abundantly. Scripture witnesses to God’s intention that our world be characterized by shalom, the just, harmonious well-being of all. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has joined the United States and the United Nations in affirming that modern-day slavery is first and foremost a violation of human rights.

Adopting a human rights-based approach to addressing human trafficking means that upholding the human rights of trafficked persons is at the center of all our efforts. Therefore, any process of identifying or assisting trafficked persons that violates their human rights must be ceased or revised.

The human rights of trafficked persons can be violated during government interventions to stop trafficking. For example, many governments still prosecute trafficked people for crimes they were forced to commit while being trafficked, such as

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prostitution or drug dealing. In other instances governments simply consider trafficked people criminals if they are undocumented and summarily deport them. Here in the U.S., federal law provides for T visas for trafficked noncitizens that allow them to remain in the U.S. (if they so choose) and U visas for noncitizens that have been forced to commit crimes. However to qualify for a T or U visa, trafficked persons must cooperate with law enforcement in the prosecution of their traffickers. The Special Rapporteur for Human Trafficking explains trafficked persons are not given sufficient time for reflection or counseling before they have to agree to cooperate. “It is very wrong to have this condition. Countries must avoid that.”¹⁸

Some organizations advocate buying people out of slavery, which may sound good because it removes a person from a situation of enslavement. But the questions are: remove them how and to what? Buying people out of slavery does not ensure that trafficked persons will receive needed services, that their choices will be respected by those who have just bought them, or that slavers will be prosecuted. Further it perpetuates the slave economy; other vulnerable people will take the place of the person who is “rescued.”

Even in assisting trafficked persons after they’ve been freed, governments and NGOs must take great care not to again violate trafficked persons human rights. Persons who have been enslaved have been under extreme control of others. Yet trafficked persons are too often kept in jails and locked shelters under constant watch. Such conditions replicate conditions of slavery. If such immediate shelter is all that is available, trafficked persons must be moved as quickly as possible to other safe locations where they can exercise control over their “assistance” including their desire to leave if that should be the case.

C. *Preventing Human Trafficking: Examples of Tourism with MRTI and Agriculture with Fair Food*

Identifying trafficked persons, assisting them, and prosecuting their traffickers is really dealing with modern-day slavery after the fact; after lives have been devastated, rights have been violated, and profits have been made. While the church has an important role to play within a broader community-based response to help identify and assist trafficked persons, Holy Scripture testifies to God’s covenant vision of well-being for our world and the confessions of the PC(USA) demand that we also adopt human rights based efforts to eliminate the conditions in which slavery flourishes. Here are two ways that the PC(USA) General Assembly has been working to address the causes and demand for trafficked persons.

Along with ecumenical partners, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through its Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), has worked to promote corporate social responsibility in the travel and tourism industry. Hotel chains, airlines, and cruise lines are urged to adopt The Code (www.thecode.org) committing to develop a corporate policy against child sex trafficking, train their employees on how to recognize problematic situations and what to do, educate customers, and report on corporate performance.

In the United States, few companies have signed The Code (an exception is Carlson, a company that has been exemplary in promoting responsible tourism), but some have implemented aspects of it following dialogues with religious investors. Continental Airlines and U.S. Airways have adopted policy statements, and worked to educate their customers. The MRTI worked hard to get Hilton Hotels to respond to the issue without much success. The company declined to meet about the issue, but finally said it would include a reference to its opposition to child sex trafficking in its operations manual. Following the sale of Hilton to The Blackstone Group, no further communication was received. With ECPAT-USA (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking), MRTI will continue to promote The Code, and encourage consumers to patronize responsible tourism companies.

Since 2002 the PC(USA) has worked in partnership with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) through the Campaign for Fair Food to address modern-day slavery in U.S. agriculture by insisting the major retail food corporations work with the community-based farmworker organization to establish codes of conduct with a zero-tolerance policy for modern-day slavery in their suppliers’ fields. When a case of slavery occurred and was successfully prosecuted in November 2008, six corporations either cut or suspended their purchasing from the two growers in whose fields enslaved farmworkers harvested. This is the first time the U.S. agricultural industry has faced market consequences for turning a blind eye to human trafficking.

In addition to addressing particular cases, the Fair Food Codes of Conduct also require retail food corporations to pay an increase per pound of tomatoes purchased, directly to farmworkers to improve their wages. This is to correct the downward pressure the companies’ high-volume/low-cost purchasing contracts have had on workers’ wage—they’ve been stagnant for thirty years. Consumer action together with farmworkers has ensured that farmworkers themselves are establishing and ensuring their own human rights together with other necessary partners in the food industry.¹⁹

D. *The Complexity of Addressing Human Trafficking; Testing the Helpers, Too*

Human trafficking is a highly complex phenomenon demanding rigor and care from the church as it endeavors to understand its dimensions, assist trafficked persons, and eliminate the conditions that produce it. For the purposes of this report, many aspects of human trafficking have necessarily received abbreviated treatment and some are not discussed at all. But

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here is a glimpse of the complexity involved in identifying and assisting persons who have been trafficked as well as working to end modern-day slavery.

Pastors are often on the front lines of meeting trafficked persons; one place traffickers will bring their slaves is to church. Most pastors aren't looking for trafficked persons, and few know the signs for which to look. Traditional pastoral care approaches coupled with the desire to help can endanger the trafficked person and complicate possibilities for assisting them and prosecuting of their traffickers. This is why the General Assembly is partnering with presbyteries to sponsor Human Trafficking Awareness training events where clergy and other religious leaders are trained together with professionals from the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Labor, law enforcement, FBI, social services, medical professionals, and others to promote a collaborative, effective response.²⁰

A further example, some organizations unhelpfully conflate adult prostitution with human trafficking. But it is imperative to distinguish between adult prostitution and adults who are trafficked into prostitution if we are to be effective in identifying and assisting victims here in the U.S. and around the world. While all child prostitution is human trafficking, all adult prostitution is not human trafficking. For various reasons some women (and men) want to remain in prostitution and some trafficked persons once coerced into that trade may return to prostitution after being rescued. Sex workers have been instrumental in leading investigators to women, children, and men who have been trafficked into prostitution.

A final consideration; with the rise of public awareness around human trafficking, many NGOs have sprung up making many different sorts of claims about how to end human trafficking and offering projects and advocacy to assist people who have been trafficked. We urge individuals and congregations to carefully assess groups, their claims and their work. A central question must always be, do these efforts put the human-rights of trafficked persons first and foremost? For example, there are dizzying array of charities that offer jobs to people who have been trafficked. While employment is needed by people who have been trafficked, it is important to ask if trafficked persons are paid a living wage for their labor (according to the country), if they are able to leave this place of employment if they desire, if they have to pay for their housing, whether a reliable party other than the employer guarantees the fair and safe treatment of workers among other questions. Many NGOs are trying hard with little resources to make a difference, but we must make sure that at base, the partners with whom we choose to work put the human rights of trafficked persons first. The General Assembly Roundtable on Human Trafficking is preparing materials to assist congregations in discerning with whom and how to partner.

E. *Conclusion*

The PC(USA) congregations, presbyteries, organizations, mission partners, and the General Assembly have been actively seeking a greater understanding of human trafficking, its causes, and how we can best work to ensure the human rights of trafficked persons. Simultaneously our global society is endeavoring to better identify, address, and prevent human trafficking. As the church, may we continue to witness to the creation of humanity in God's image by upholding human rights and ending human trafficking. For further resources and information, please visit www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking.

III. Immigrant Detention and Human Rights

A. *Overview*

Responding to the request of the 218th General Assembly (2008) cited in I. Introduction, this survey supplements the most recent Presbyterian immigration policy approved in 2004, the *Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the U.S.A.*, particular presenting concern was the break-up of families and in some cases the detention of minor children in the detention system. After noting late nineteenth and early twentieth century immigration detention history, this report focuses on the period after 1980 and particularly the period since 1996, and then describes the human rights issues present in this large-scale detention and deportation bureaucracy. The workings of the detention system are outlined, as are the related processes and costs of this enforcement, including local law-enforcement and short-term detention. The role of for-profit prisons is also noted, as this is a concern of the assembly's 2003 *Resolution on the Abolition of For-Profit Private Prisons*. In terms of context, the economic downturn has reportedly led to a decline in the numbers of undocumented immigrants but the new administration has also begun a reform process and indicated plans to return to immigration reform efforts in the coming year.

B. *Historical Background and the Rapidly-Expanding Detention System*

The detention of immigrants pending the resolution of their legal status and potential deportation was not always the norm. Immigrants were not detained at all until the 1890s when the United States opened its first federal immigration detention center in Ellis Island, New York. A shift in immigration policy occurred in 1952 when Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), which eliminated detention except in cases in which an individual was a flight risk or posed a serious risk to society. Ellis Island subsequently closed.

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While the U.S. government suspended the widespread use of immigration detention between the 1950s and 1980s, the country has a long history of immigration restrictions and quotas that spans the detention and exile of Native Americans since colonial times to detentions at Ellis and Angel Islands in New York and California in the early twentieth century. Health concerns were very real, as were concerns for various classes of immigrant (more well-to-do immigrants did not go through Ellis Island).

The 1980s saw the beginnings of a shift in detention policy, largely influenced by Cuban, Haitian, and Central American refugees. The Presbyterian church and others, concerned that many Central Americans were fleeing massive human rights violations in their countries that were unrecognized by the U.S. immigration process of that time, supported a “Sanctuary Movement” that protected those fleeing repression in churches. Churches have also supported fairness in the treatment of Haitian would-be immigrants, whose welcome is very different than that of Cubans.

In the 1990s, the United States made a monumental shift in immigration policy, using detention as a primary means of enforcing immigration law, regardless of whether or not the individual was a flight risk or serious risk to society. In 1996, the United States enacted legislation that dramatically expanded the use of detention. The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA)²¹ and the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)²² expanded mandatory detention without bond to large categories of noncitizens, including those convicted of crimes, including misdemeanors, and all applicants for asylum. These immigrants are not entitled to a bond hearing (as criminal defendants are) to determine whether they are actual flight risks.

The drastic expansion of mandatory detention has resulted in the rapidly increasing number of individuals detained since the 1990s. In 2001, the U.S. detained approximately 95,000 individuals. By 2009, the Department of Homeland Security is estimated to have detained 369,483. The average daily population of detained immigrants has grown from approximately 5,000 in 1994, to 19,000 in 2001, and to 32,000 by the end of 2008. In 2004, Congress authorized the creation of 40,000 new detention beds by 2010, which will bring detention capacity close to 62,000.²³

The 1996 laws also established a new procedure called Expedited Removal that allows immigration inspectors to summarily remove immigrants arriving at a U.S. border or airport without proper documentation. This is done without a hearing, and detention is mandated for the time it takes to remove that person from the United States. The U.S. government maintains that detention is the only way to ensure that immigrants appear for their immigration court proceedings. The government considers immigrants to be “flight risk,” and labels others a “danger” to their communities if they have previous criminal records, without any individualized assessment.²⁴

C. *Detention Is a Human Rights Issue*

International law prohibits arbitrary detention. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), art. 9, requires that anyone who is deprived of liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, in order that the court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of the detention and order release if the detention is not lawful.²⁵ This right is guaranteed regardless of national origin. International law also requires that anyone deprived of liberty must be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the person (ICCPR, art. 10.).

Detention places extreme financial and emotional burdens on families by separating children, parents, siblings, and spouses from one another. As many as a fifth of American families are of “mixed” status with U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, and undocumented family members in one household. When someone is detained it impacts families and local communities—children become parentless and families lose their breadwinners. International law requires that the United States protect the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society (ICCPR, art. 23.).

Being in violation of immigration laws is not a crime. It is a civil violation for which immigrants go through a process to see whether they have a right to stay in the United States. Immigrants detained during this process are in noncriminal custody. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the agency responsible for detaining immigrants through its subagency for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Yet the obstacles for immigrants seeking a fair process are daunting.

Detention and deportation are themselves extreme and punitive measures for individuals going through a civil administrative process. The very act of detention attaches the stigma of criminalization to immigrants and enmeshes them in the U.S. criminal justice system. Immigration detention facilities look, feel, and operate like jails—which many are. The human rights abuses that sometimes occur in these environments, such as a lack of access to proper nutrition and exercise, medical care, legal and educational materials, phones, and visitation, are exacerbated in cases where immigration detainees are held for long periods of time in facilities designed for short-term detention. Reports of physical and sexual abuse, sleep deprivation, and isolation are common.²⁶

The detention system is virtually invisible. Many detention centers have few markings and are in remote and isolated locations. As a result, the public is generally unaware of the high numbers of immigrants that are detained across the nation and in their local communities. The detention system is vast, ever-changing, and shrouded in secrecy. The ICE frequently refuses

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to share information or allow visits to facilities, resulting in the public having little knowledge of harsh conditions and rights abuses within the system while U.S. immigration agencies remain unaccountable.²⁷

Just as incarceration in our jails and prisons is thought to influence criminal behavior, detention is used to deter immigrants from coming to the United States. United States policymakers have seen detention and deportation as a politically acceptable “quick fix” to broken immigration policies and to the complex issues of global and regional poverty and instability. Instead of recognizing and addressing larger economic and political structures that cause people to migrate, politicians focus on interior and border enforcement as a way to repel people from migrating.²⁸

The reputation of the detention and deportation system prompts many immigrants in the U.S. to go into hiding and live in fear. Undocumented persons—as many as twelve million is the common estimate—often do not seek help in emergencies or report crimes for fear of exposing themselves to immigration authorities, making communities more unsafe. Those escaping persecution in their home countries may also be deterred from applying for asylum, putting them at grave risk.

D. *The U. S. Detention System*

Immigrants in detention include families, both undocumented and documented immigrants, many who have been in the U.S. for years and are now facing exile, survivors of torture, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable groups including pregnant women, the elderly, children, and individuals who are seriously ill without proper medication or care.²⁹

Although DHS owns and operates its own detention centers, it also “buys” bed space from more than 312 county and city prisons nationwide to hold the majority of those who are detained (more than 67 percent). Immigrants detained in these local jails are mixed in with the local prison population, sometimes in considerable danger. Well under half of all immigrants held in detention have no criminal record at all. The rest may have committed some crime in their past, but they have already paid their debt to society. They are being detained for immigration purposes only.³⁰ Torture survivors, applicants for asylum, victims of human trafficking, and other vulnerable groups can be detained for months or even years, further aggravating their isolation, depression, and other mental health problems associated with their past trauma.³¹

E. *Immigration Customs and Enforcement*

1. *ICE Enforcement—An Overview of Current Structure and Operations*

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is part of The Department of Homeland Security. It is the second largest law-enforcement agency in the country with vast resources and infrastructure, including as many guns as the FBI. The ICE is in charge of the investigations, arrests, detention, and deportation of noncitizens both at the border and throughout the interior of the country. Because immigration policies already enmeshed people in the criminal justice system, and the 1996 immigration laws already involved concern for terrorism (from the first World Trade Center bombing, Oklahoma Federal Building, etc.), the concern that detention and deportation would be considered part of the “war on terror” was heightened by the amalgamation of federal agencies.

- March 2003—Department of Homeland Security Act: This act dismantled the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and transferred its responsibilities to a Department of Homeland Security (DHS), with three bureaus: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

- March 2004—Operation Endgame: This strategic plan from DHS’s Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) set out a ten-year goal to “remove all removable aliens” from the United States.

- August 2006—DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff announced the replacement of ICE’s practice of “catch and release,” in which non-Mexican immigrants who were apprehended along the border were eligible to be released on bond, with a policy of mandatory detention for anyone apprehended within one hundred miles of the border within fourteen days of entry into the U.S. This policy shift greatly added to the accelerating use of detention.³²

2. *The Impact of Enforcement*

The recent impact of ICE enforcement includes:

- The average length of detention is currently 30.49 days.
- More than 349,000 immigrants were deported in 2008, a record for the agency and a 20 percent increase over the previous year.
- The DHS has spent more than \$2.8 billion on efforts to deport immigrants since the creation of ICE in 2003.

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In total, 2.2 million immigrants have been deported since 1994.

- A twelve-fold increase in worksite arrests between 2002 and 2008. A trend was to use “identify theft” charges to put immigrants in the category of “criminal alien” to make it easier to deport them.
- More than 100 “Fugitive Operations Teams” and the development of other specialized operations. The ICE claims these are focused on specific groups but they are often used as a pretext for wide-scale arrests in apartment complexes, workplaces, and public spaces.
- 67 percent of ICE detainees are housed in local and county jail facilities, 17 percent in contract detention facilities, 13 percent in ICE-owned facilities, and 3 percent in other facilities such as those run by the Bureau of Prisons.
- The government holds more detainees a night than Clarion Hotels have guests, operates nearly as many vehicles as Greyhound has buses and flies more people each day than do many small U.S. airlines.³³

3. *Transfer of Detainees*

The DHS’s practice of regularly transferring immigration detainees from one jail to another, often far from where they were initially arrested, have a devastating effect on a person’s ability to retain counsel and maintain an attorney-client relationship, present a defense to deportation, and obtain release from detention. Recently revealed statistics show that more than half of all people detained by DHM are transferred from one detention center or jail to another. In 2008, one out of every four detainees was transferred multiple times. Ten years ago the government transferred only one in every five detainees.³⁴

Although the government does not appoint a lawyer for people facing removal proceedings, some people are able to retain their own lawyer. When they are transferred to a jail hundreds or thousands of miles away, attorney-client communication and adequate case preparation are severely compromised. Typically, there is no advance notice that the person is being moved, and after the transfer, lawyers often are unable to locate their clients. Moreover, even if a lawyer is willing and able to maintain long-distance representation, the immigration courts often are not accommodating. Some immigration judges preclude lawyers from appearing by phone or video, and many detainees simply cannot afford to pay for their attorney to travel to the new location. For individuals who are unrepresented, transfers hinder their ability to retain a lawyer. Not only are they far from families and friends who could have assisted these efforts, but there are far fewer lawyers and pro bono resources in many of the remote locations where DHS transfers detainees.

4. *Costs of Enforcement*

In 1996, before enactment of mandatory detention laws, the budget of the entire Immigration and Naturalization Service was \$2.6 billion. This included not only the functions now carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), but also the immigration services sector (now DHS’s Citizenship and Immigration Services), and border enforcement (now DHS’s Customs and Border Protection), which at that time fell under the INS umbrella.

In 2009, the United States is expected to have spent nearly \$6 billion on ICE operations alone. Government funding for ICE continues to increase almost exponentially. The total budget for ICE in the 2008 fiscal year is \$5.58 billion and \$5.93 billion for 2009. The average cost of detaining an immigrant is \$95 per person/per day. Alternatives to detention, which generally include a combination of reporting and electronic monitoring, are effective and significantly cheaper, with some programs costing as little as \$12 per day. These alternatives to detention still yield an estimated 93 percent appearance rate before the immigration courts.³⁵

5. *Local Law Enforcement Collaboration with ICE*

The ICE embarked on a trend of collaborating with local law enforcement through its ICE Agreements of Cooperation in Communities to Enhance Safety and Security (ACCESS) program. Authorized through INA, Section 287(g) allows local law enforcement to arrest and detain anyone suspected of violating federal immigration laws. The DHS has also expanded a program [called Secure Communities](#), started by the Bush administration, which requires local police to check the immigration status of everyone booked into a local jail, matching fingerprints to other data.³⁶ Undocumented immigrants can eventually be deported, regardless of whether they are convicted on criminal charges. Those convicted are deported after serving their sentences. The DHS, which [recently received \\$200 million](#) to expand Secure Communities, has estimated that “tens of thousands” more immigrants will be deported under the Secure Communities program next year.³⁷

In addition to the ACCESS program, a recent proliferation of state and local laws barring undocumented immigrants from working, obtaining housing, or using public benefits has created a disturbing intrusion into what has historically been a federal responsibility and has created widespread fear and disruption in communities. On the enforcement side, local agencies often do not have the resources to exercise this dual unfunded mandate and find that it suppresses crime reporting by immigrants as well as alerts to emergency situations. It can also further politicize local immigration debates.

F. *Related Issues: Border Enforcement, Short-Term Detention, and Community Impacts*

1. *Border Enforcement*

Since 1994, the U.S. government has spent an estimated \$35 billion to “secure” the U.S.-Mexico border. From 1993 to 2008, the number of Border Patrol agents has exploded from approximately 4,000 to 18,049 and the amount of spending on border enforcement has increased tenfold from \$1 to \$10.2 billion per year. The U.S. Border Patrol’s annual budget for 2009 has risen to \$2.7 billion from \$326 million in 1992. United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is now the largest arms-bearing branch of the U.S. government, excluding the military. Militarization of the U.S. border continues to accelerate. Instead of providing effective measures to ensure safety, recent enforcement trends utilized by CBP tend to further the linkage between immigration enforcement and human rights abuses.³⁸

Despite exponential increases in enforcement spending and the number of border agents in recent years, there is no evidence that increased CBP funding has limited the number of unauthorized migrants entering the U.S. According to new data from the Center for American Progress, a think-tank, the cost of apprehending immigrants is rising. In fact, the number of migrants crossing the border has more than doubled since 1993, from 400,000 a year to almost one million. Apprehensions have not increased, either. There were 1,031,668 border apprehensions in 1993, 931,557 in 2003, and 1,020,438 in 2008 at a cost of just over \$3,000 for each arrest.³⁹

Building fences along the border merely channels migration to other places, usually more remote and dangerous terrain, and results in increased deaths and cases of human smuggling. For example, after triple-fencing was constructed in San Diego, arrests of undocumented immigrants there dropped 300 percent between 1994–2002, but arrests in the Tucson, Arizona, sector increased 342 percent during this same period. Some have claimed victory for reducing unlawful immigration in San Diego when, in reality, it appears to have moved elsewhere. Between 1994 and 2006, more than 4,000 people have died trying to cross the U.S. border. This is fifteen times more lives than the Berlin Wall claimed in its twenty-eight years of existence.

2. *Short-Term Detention, Dangers of Abuse*

Border militarization hurts the 11.8 million people living along the border. Border communities experience what some report as systematic harassment, racial profiling, and human and civil rights violations by CBP agents and armed civilian vigilante groups that were alleged to operate with impunity. Individuals held in short-term custody (under seventy-two hours) by CBP for immediate deportation are most vulnerable to harsh conditions, forced exercise, and abuse, without safeguards assuring them food, water, or basic medical care during their detention.⁴⁰

3. *Community Impacts*

As this study approaches its close, the testimony of church groups and others speaks to needed shifts in emphasis. Communities are more secure when border enforcement policies focus on criminal activities going in both directions. Community security is an integral part of national and border security, but this would put the emphasis on dangerous criminals, traffickers, and exploiters rather than immigrants per se. Communities themselves could benefit from greater involvement and oversight of border enforcement activity and encourage improved human rights training of officers, strengthened complaint procedures, and measures to end racial profiling in the borderlands.

Communities are literally divided by the devastating impact of the border wall. The construction of the border wall has overwhelming social, environmental, and legal impacts. Just from a cost-effectiveness standpoint, the current border wall and fencing projects have not proven successful in stopping immigration flows, while construction costs have nearly doubled from \$4.5 million per mile to \$7.5 million per mile.⁴¹

4. *Economic Interests and Detention Policies*

The detention and deportation of immigrants is a multibillion dollar industry. Many private prison corporations and state and county governments profit from detention. By contracting out detention bed space, the government maintains it is able to save money. However, the regular reports of poor detention conditions and other abuses indicate that facility operators may be cutting financial corners at the expense of immigrants’ well-being. These are concerns identified in the General Assembly’s recent policy statement, *Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Prisons* (2003).

Of the approximately 400 facilities used by the Department of Homeland Security to detain immigrants, only eight of these are ICE-owned and operated. In addition, as noted, ICE contracts with more than 300 local or county facilities through intergovernmental agreements, private prison corporations, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Two examples: The Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) is number one in America for detention contracts, and has made record profits every year since 2003. The CCA boasts being the sixth largest corrections system in the U.S., behind only four states and the federal government. The CCA operates sixty-five facilities in nineteen states and the District of Columbia with more than 75,000

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beds and nearly 17,000 employees. Twelve of CCA's facilities are used to hold immigration detainees. In 2007, CCA earned \$1.5 billion in revenue with a net income of \$133 million.⁴² Then comes GEO Group, one of the largest security firms in the world and the nation's second largest for-profit prison operator. The GEO operates fifty facilities in sixteen states and one in Guantanamo Bay. In 2007, GEO Group earned \$1.02 billion in U.S. revenue with a net income of \$41.8 million.⁴³

Similarly, border security has historically been considered the sole responsibility of the federal government. But as part of the government's "Secure Border Initiative," it awarded The Boeing Company a \$2.5 billion contract in 2006 to build a new security system along the U.S.-Mexico border. Boeing's contract bid included plans to build 1,800 towers along the northern and southern borders equipped with radar, cameras, and infrared sensors to detect border crossings at night. The privatization of border security operations provides incentives for the continued build-up of securitization.

The delegation of the federal task of detention to private and local facilities has its origins in the 1980s during a time of accelerated privatization in all sectors. The government's contracting out of detention management is rationalized as more efficient and cost-effective. However, detention and deportation have numerous human costs:

- Detention contracting creates an additional layer of opaqueness in an already complex and impenetrable detention system, making oversight of detention standards and securing of detainee rights even more difficult.
- Private companies and local governments vie for contracts to expand ICE detention bed space at an average price of \$95 a day per bed in a process that both lines corporate pockets with taxpayer money and turns human beings into commodities.
- Detention contracting allows both the federal government and contract facilities to cut financial corners in providing immigrants with adequate care and basic necessities, resulting in regular reports of egregious detention conditions that violate U.S. and international human rights laws.

5. *Conclusion: The Need for Reform of Detention Practices*

Reform of the detention and deportation systems are clearly related to the larger need for immigration reform. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has joined many others in supporting proposals to give immigrants a fair path to citizenship and has recognized the social costs, including the costs in depressed wage levels and exploitation of vulnerable workers. The church has also recognized a legitimate need for security focused on areas of real risk. The Office of Immigration Issues, located in the Office of the General Assembly, provides resources for congregations and individuals, working closely with immigrant fellowships and justice organizations, as well as advising presbyteries and the church's Washington Office.⁴⁴

Yet it is important to recognize that some changes are being made and that there is hope of more. Speaking at the Migration Policy Institute on January 25, 2010, John Morton, assistant secretary of Homeland Security for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, noted the creation of a new Office of Detention Policy and Planning, discussed the investigation and prevention of death and abuse in federal custody, and outlined several reforms:

- An effort to centralize immigration detention facilities in specific hubs where access to legal counsel, families, and medical treatment would be plentiful. In addition, these facilities would be managed at the top by federal employees subject to clear, transparent, and fully implemented detention standards.
- Medical treatment will be helped along by a planned classification system that all detainees would go through upon intake, as well as "regional case managers" who will be responsible for serious medical issues in detention.
- Reducing the number of detention facilities. The ICE detains 32,000 people per day and around 380,000 per year. Morton stressed the importance of keeping the system compact and organized
- An online detainee locator system, which is expected to be launched in June. Morton also mentioned reducing dependence on contractors, but was quick to say that they would never completely eliminate contractors.
- The ICE's preference to detain only criminal immigrants. A desire for smart, cost-effective alternatives to detention in order to ensure court appearances for noncriminal immigrants who pose a flight risk. Morton revealed that the Executive Office for Immigration Review is conducting a pilot program for alternatives to detention, and that after testing is complete there could be 16,000–17,000 slots available for immigrants to be placed in these programs.⁴⁵

It will be important for the church and other stakeholders to continue to review progress and to defend the rights of asylum seekers and other immigrants, despite even good promises of assistant secretaries to good Washington think tanks. In all the complexity of international migration and economic inequality, we welcome the stranger because we may see in him or her, not a danger, but a fellow agent of God's redeeming grace.

IV. Torture and the Need for Truth

A. Overview

Valuing human rights means opposing torture. This brief report focuses on an ugly piece of unfinished business that remains before our nation and other nations, the task of seeing that this violation of the person is effectively abolished. We review the action against torture taken by the 217th General Assembly (2006), which was in two parts, and which includes the following

1. That an independent inquiry be conducted into whether any official or officer of the United States government bears direct or command responsibility for having ordered or participated in violations of ... law in the mistreatment of persons detained by the ... United States at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib Prison, or elsewhere, or in transporting persons into detention in nations with known records of brutality and torture, and that the findings of such inquiry be entered into the public record.
2. That violations of law in the mistreatment of persons detained by the government of the United States or transported by it [into] detention in nations with known records of brutality and torture cease, and be prosecuted and punished regardless of the rank and station of the offender.⁴⁶

The two requests above have not been fulfilled, and although an investigator was appointed by a new administration's attorney general, neither a special prosecutor nor a commission of inquiry has been authorized at the level necessary to pursue the truth, much less prosecute more than the few low-level soldiers who were caught on film. And without justice and real disclosure, there can be no restitution or compensation for the innocent or resolution for their families far away. The chief facility for indefinite detention without trial, Guantanamo Bay prison, has not been closed despite a very public promise by a new president. It's very "extraterritorial" location was intentionally extra-constitutional; undoing the damage in a credible way involves the Department of Justice, the U.S. military, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Congressional oversight committees, special intelligence courts, concern for national and international prosecution, decisions between civilian and military "tribunals." Thus, this section of the Human Rights Update is a summary of some of the developments that have come to light, and a sharpening of the many questions that remain unanswered.

As the 217th General Assembly (2006)'s *Resolution Against Torture* states: "... the purpose of torture is not actually to extract intelligence but to break the sense of self; it is a form of intimate, humiliating terror, a crime against the human spirit and God's image in us. Neither does such torture prevent terrorism"⁴⁷ Yet we know that our nation's agents engaged in torture since early in 2002 through sometime in 2005—or do we still torture people, or have them tortured for us overseas? One prisoner in Guantanamo, previously held in a secret prison or "black site," Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, was water-boarded 183 times, and allegedly provided information of value sometime in that process.⁴⁸ Perhaps the most decisive action that the Obama Administration has made was to release four memoranda written by the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel in 2002 and 2005 to immunize the CIA and its contractors.⁴⁹ These memos detail specific techniques for which permission is given by the lawyers Jay S. Bybee, John Yoo, and Steven G. Bradbury, whose actions have been critically evaluated by the Office of Professional Responsibility though without prosecution.⁵⁰

Since the 2006 statement of the General Assembly, there have been a number of books published, much data retrieved, and key testimony given in several venues both nationally and internationally. The difficulties in assessing the "facts" may be seen in one investigation based on some 1,700 pages of documents from a report by the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service, obtained by Seton Hall University researchers under the Freedom of Information Act. This is the case of three alleged suicides that occurred in the same night, June 9, 2006, which were referred to by the commander of Guantanamo, Rear Admiral Harry Harris, as "asymmetrical warfare waged against us," presumably to de-legitimize the facility.⁵¹ While much of the documents remains "blacked out," the official reconstruction of events that would allow three tightly supervised men time and concealment to tie themselves up as well as rig nooses through mesh cell fronts has been challenged by four members of the Military Intelligence unit who were on guard that night. "All four soldiers say they were ordered by their commanding officer not to speak out, and all four soldiers provide evidence that the authorities initiated a cover-up within hours of the prisoners' deaths."⁵² Clearly, these are claims that can only be properly considered in a court of law, but one of the questions is precisely what kind of court, and where? Rules of court procedure, evidence, access to lawyers, and chain of command are very different in the military tribunals from civilian courts, as has been seen in the resignations of military prosecutors and volunteer defense lawyers working with Guantanamo detainees.⁵³

National security and the dangers of terrorism are the chief justifications for torture, and public opinion polls show considerable support for torture, even among church members.⁵⁴ There is a 20 percent point difference, however, between "mainline" and self-described "evangelical" Protestants in the acceptance of torture, with 53 percent of mainline Protestants generally opposing it while only 33 percent of evangelicals do.⁵⁵ There is no specific claim here for the influence of public statements of church leaders like the Stated Clerk, organizations like No2Torture and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), and even policies like the 2006 statement quoted above, which came from an overture from five presbyteries. Yet the significance of theological position and frequency of church attendance are relevant factors as people assess the arguments for and against this practice.

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In terms of update, given the 217th General Assembly (2006)'s clear position in favor of investigation and accountability, it is significant that on June 11, 2010, eight heads of faith groups and other religious institutions will join with the NRCAT in calling for a Commission of Inquiry on Torture. A clear set of questions on this comes from George Hunsinger, professor of Theology at Princeton Seminary and founder of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture.

B. *Torture: A Compelling Need for the Truth*

Here are some of the questions that a commission needs to pursue.

1. *Who authorized the torture program?* When? Were the first Justice Department Office of Legal Counsel opinions authorizing it actually written after the fact? A complete timeline of the official documents authorizing torture needs to be established. Once the torture program was in operation, what was the flow of information and decision-making about how it was going? Did information and decisions go all the way up to the Oval Office—or the vice president's office—and back down again? Furthermore, how many personnel implicated in the torture program still hold positions, sometimes in very high places, in the government? What does their presence say about our ability to flush torture out of our system?

2. *Who were the prisoners?* Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff in the State Department under Colin Powell, has claimed that “no meaningful attempt” was made to vet the detainees.⁵⁶ He added that “the U.S. leadership became aware of this lack of proper vetting very early on and, thus, of the reality that many of the detainees were innocent of any substantial wrongdoing, had little intelligence value, and should be immediately released.” The U.S. military reported in 2008 that 2,500 youths under the age of eighteen had been detained, almost all in Iraq, for periods up to a year since 2002.⁵⁷ Was their treatment in accord with the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of a Child? Was rape ever documented during interrogation, authorized or not? How many female detainees were killed in detention (many are listed as having “died”)? What exactly was done to women and children by U.S. interrogators at Abu Ghraib?

At one point there were believed to be more than one hundred prisoners at black sites. By the time President Bush announced that the high-value detainees were being moved to Guantanamo, there were believed to be thirty-four. Fourteen were moved to Guantanamo. What happened to the rest? Did any of them die?

3. *What has happened to the on-site torturers employed by the U.S.?* From past experience it is known that many become an ongoing threat to society, and that, among other things, they all need as much healing as the victims. According to researchers Fred Grunfeld and Alette Smeulers, “Some continue to deny or minimize their roles. Others feel guilt, shame, remorse, some suffer nightmares, depression or post traumatic stress disorder. Others can't live with the reality of what they have done.”⁵⁸ Others will commit suicide. Some will find new avenues to continue in their ways.

4. *What use has been made of the information taken in torture?* It is illegal to use information derived from torture in a judicial proceeding. On what authority was it used? How many prisoners have been detained or convicted based on information derived from torture by the U.S. or any collaborating government? Are the highly publicized but authoritatively challenged allegations true that terrorist plots were divulged and prevented because of torture?

5. *What are the loopholes that need to be closed so that the U.S. never resorts to torture again?* The history of U.S. involvement in torture is the history of loopholes. How do we rid our system of the torture bacillus lurking in the shadows of our permanent government? How do we get rid of the loopholes inserted into the Army Field Manual (especially Appendix M)⁵⁹ and in the Military Commissions Act? What are the funding lines, overt and hidden, in the national budget that continue to make torture possible? How can we cut them off?

6. *What kind of example have we set?* What are the costs of allowing torture regimes all over the world to legitimate themselves by our example? Consider Thailand. According to Journalist Shawn W. Crispin, “Rights advocates monitoring southern Thailand's conflict note a striking similarity between the torture techniques U.S. agents are known to have used ... with those now in practice by Thai security forces against suspected Thai Muslim militants.”⁶⁰ An increasing number of brutal regimes, including China, have defended their use of torture by citing the U.S. example.

7. *What compensation should be provided to the torture victims?* It seems clear that many of them were guilty of no crime. Isn't an official apology and significant monetary compensation the least that could be done for all who were tortured, especially those known to be innocent, and who will suffer untold trauma for the rest of their lives? Monetary compensation, apologies, explanations of why they were tortured, and details of what was done—all these allow the voices of the victims to be heard and provide hope for their treatment and rehabilitation.

In the aftermath of resorting to torture, America is faced with a compelling need for the truth. An increasing number of religious, political, and military leaders agree that a commission of inquiry is indispensable to ensure that this wrongdoing is never sanctioned again. As General Ricardo Sanchez, the former top coalition commander in Iraq, has stated: “If we do not find out what happened, we are doomed to repeat it.”

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The conclusion from another statement by Hunsinger may properly close this section. After recalling the Pew Research data cited above, noting where it calculates higher acceptance of torture by those who attend church more regularly of whatever designation, he tells a brief story: In 1948, in the immediate aftermath of the crisis years in Europe, Albert Camus, the French existentialist philosopher, was invited to speak at a Dominican monastery. The friars wanted him to address them about how an “unbeliever” viewed Christians in the light of the era that had just passed.

What the world needs today, Camus told them, are “Christians who remain Christians.” He continued, describing his own loss of faith for moral reasons. Camus then issued an unforgettable appeal:

What the world expects of Christians is that Christians should speak out, loud and clear, and that they should voice their condemnation in such a way that never a doubt, never the slightest doubt, could rise in the heart of the simplest man. That they should get away from abstraction and confront the blood-stained face history has taken on today.

What Camus voiced more than sixty years ago has lost none of its urgency today. The crisis of our national descent into torture is, for our churches, supremely a crisis of faith. If Camus was right about what the world expects of Christians, then how much more must be expected of them, and not just by the world, today?⁶¹

V. Conclusion: For Future Consideration

The recommendation of an impartial “Truth Commission” to bring clarity, accountability, and potential compensation to the victims of torture is one of a number of actions that would help the United States regain its place of leadership in human rights. Cooperation with the International Criminal Court (to which the U.S. now sends observers), steady work to improve the still new UN Human Rights Council (since June 2007, replacing a more-compromised body), quiet and public diplomacy to challenge dictatorial regimes, alternatives to the “militarization” of foreign policy: these are areas where Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, has identified mixed progress by the Obama Administration.⁶² Roth notes with disappointment “Washington’s strong criticism” of the report by South African jurist Richard Goldstone “that accused Israel (as well as Hamas) of war crimes during its December 2008–January 2009 invasion of the Gaza Strip and called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.”⁶³

Roth notes two treaties supported by past General Assemblies that have not yet been put before Congress for ratification: the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (only U.S., Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga, and Nauru have not joined), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (only U.S. and Somalia), as well as the 1997 treaty banning antipersonnel land mines and the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions.⁶⁴ This is the area where human rights can reshape foreign policy and the standing of the United States in the world. In the words of the Social Creed approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supports “Peacemaking through multilateral diplomacy rather than unilateral force, the abolition of torture, and a strengthening of the United Nations and the rule of international law.”⁶⁵

The role of the church at every level is to be at least part of the conscience of society. The basis for our daring to hold Amos’ plumb line of justice is our understanding that the prophetic role is willing to challenge those in power, kings of Israel then, governments today. The Human Rights Update has always recognized the global scope of God’s justice and honored all of the organizations and individuals who work to bring cruel practices to light and open prison doors. We see God’s spirit leading and calling in the countless acts of conscience to which brief reports can only point. With that awareness, we acknowledge one particular area of concern for renewed witness and ministry by our church and others: reform of the criminal justice system of the United States and the laws and lack of rehabilitation that currently put one in 133 of our citizens in prison, the highest proportion in the world today.⁶⁶ Other international treaties could be mentioned, and domestic initiatives with human trafficking and immigration reform could be lifted up. But the great cost of the prison system in lives stunted and perhaps made more violent, the cycles of broken families and hurt children, the sick tolerance of sexual abuse in the prisons, the cost in tax moneys put to unproductive use, combined with the actual decline in crime in many areas even in a severe recession: all of these call for the church’s heart of conscience and ministry here at home.⁶⁷ May God hold us accountable even as we seek to hold others accountable, and may Christ give us steadfastness and energy as we remember the cross and claim the power of redemption.

Endnotes

1. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/index.htm>. This is the overall State Department site that lists 199 countries and summarizes the religious liberty situation in each. With this we add a Roman Catholic link that comments on Muslim Christian issues discussed in various country reports: <http://www.zenit.org/article-27483?l=english>.

2. ILO, *Fighting Human Trafficking: The Forced Labor Dimensions*, Background Paper prepared for the Vienna Forum on Human Trafficking, Vienna, 13–15 February 2008.

3. *Trafficking in Persons Report*, U.S. Department of State, 2008, p. 7.

4. Report by the executive director of UNICEF cited in the *Special Rapporteur on Human Trafficking’s Report to the Human Rights Council of the UN*, March 2009, p. 6; similar figure cited by the ILO *Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings*, 2008. A CIA report in

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2004 estimated that 14,500 to 17,500 people were trafficked into the U.S. every year, but the data upon which this estimation was founded have been seriously questioned. While we know that the problem of human trafficking is global and victimizes millions of people, the data on human trafficking is limited and varies widely. Both the use of different data gathering methodologies as well as different foci make it difficult to reconcile and integrate the data we have. A top priority articulated by the UN Special Rapporteur on human trafficking is to develop a system for coordinated data management and gathering.

5. See *A Resolution to Expand the Churches Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking*, 218th General Assembly (2008), *On Preventing the Trafficking of Women Internationally and Nationally*, 218th General Assembly (2008), *Resolution in Support of Ongoing Partnership Work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Campaign for Fair Food*, 216th General Assembly (2006). General Assembly policy available at <http://www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking/ga-policy.htm>.
6. The major forms of human trafficking are: forced labor, bonded labor, debt-bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, child soldiers, sex trafficking, and child sex trafficking and related abuses. To read more on these forms see the *Trafficking in Persons Report*, U.S. Department of State, 2009 at <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2009/123126.htm>.
7. See the ILO report, *The Cost of Coersion, 2009*; U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons*, 2009; U.S. Department of Labor, *Slave Made Goods*, 2009; and U.S. Department of Justice press release on sentencing in *U.S. vs. Navarrete*, 2008 at <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2008/December/08-crt-1134.html>.
8. *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002, p. 7.
9. U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, 2009, p. 15.
10. Dimensions of slavery summarized from Kevin Bales and Ron Soodalter, *The Slave Next Door: Human Trafficking and Slavery in America Today*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, p.13.
11. It should be noted however that a low or high retail price of a good is not necessarily an accurate reflection of whether it has been produced by slave labor. For example, designer clothing may be sewn in a factory by slaves but sold to consumers at very high prices. The UN's Office on Crime and Drugs, which published its second global trends in trafficking in persons report in February 2009, said that the worldwide rise in modern-day slavery is a result of growing demand for cheap goods and services. They expect the impact of the financial crisis to push more business underground to avoid taxes and unionized labor. And they anticipate increasing use of forced, cheap, and child labor by multinational companies strapped by financial struggles. See the report above as well as a discussion of the impact of the financial crisis in the U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, 2009, p. 37.
12. The TVPA defines what constitutes trafficking, makes provisions for T and U visas for noncitizens who have been trafficked and who cooperate with law enforcement, allowing them to remain in the U.S. if they so choose, mandates the U.S. Department of State produce an annual Trafficking in Persons report (TIP) assessing countries' efforts to combat human trafficking worldwide and ranking them in tiers, mandates the U.S. Department of Labor produce a report on goods it has reason to believe were produced with child or forced labor, and establishes grants to NGOs working with trafficked persons. To read this law in full as well as its reauthorizations, visit www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking.
13. For the full text of the Palermo Protocol, visit www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking. For a full list of regional initiatives to address human trafficking, please see *Special Rapporteur on Human Trafficking's Report to the Human Rights Council of the UN*, March 2009, pp. 11–12.
14. Because of the particular vulnerability of children, their inability to ever give informed consent as minors, and the massive psychological harm they suffer, the United Nations advocates special measures for the protection and support of child victims of trafficking. See *Human Rights: Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2002, Guideline 8, pp. 17–18.
15. UNICEF, Child Protection Information Sheet, 2006, <http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Trafficking.pdf>, accessed 1/19/10.
16. *Promotion and Protection of All Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Including the Right to Development*, report of the special rapporteur for trafficking in persons, especially women and children to the United Nations Human Rights Council, Tenth Session, Agenda Item 3, March 2009, p. 8.
17. Guestworkers here in the U.S. and abroad are vulnerable because guestworker programs typically do not provide portability—the ability for a worker to change employers once they are in the country. Further the employer is also responsible for the workers' housing and transportation, giving the employer many points of control from which to exert both coercion and force.
18. Laura Bauer, *Sex Slavery: The Desperate Plight of Many Women*, *The Kansas City Star*, 14 December 2009.
19. Learn more about the PC(USA) Campaign for Fair Food at www.pcusa.org/fairfood and read the details of the farmworkers' fair food agreements with the following corporations (as of 1/18/10): Yum! Brands, McDonald's, Burger King, Subway, Whole Foods Market, Bon Appétit, and Compass Group North America.
20. To learn more about human trafficking and how to sponsor a human trafficking awareness training in your presbytery visit www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking.

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21. <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/96-499.htm>. Charles Doyle, American Law Division, June 3, 1996, Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996: A Summary. In addition to habeus corpus restrictions (statute of limitations, etc.), this law tightens definitions of financial and material support for possible international terrorism and the most relevant section, “addresses immigration-related terrorism issues. It establishes or adjusts mechanisms to bar (or remove) alien terrorists from the U.S. ... to narrow asylum provisions ..., and to expedite deportation of criminal aliens.”
22. <http://www.visaportal.com/keywords/keyword.asp?id=261>. “The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (the 96 Act) Pub L. 104-208, was enacted on September 30, 1996. It includes increases in criminal penalties for immigration-related offenses, authorization for increases in enforcement personnel, and enhanced enforcement authority. There are a number of measures designed to enhance Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) presence and enforcement at the border. The 96 Act undertakes a comprehensive reorganization of the process of removal for inadmissible and deportable aliens, including a provision for the expedited removal of inadmissible aliens arriving at ports of entry. The 96 Act requires the conducting of three types of employment authorization verification pilot programs. It includes restrictions on the eligibility of aliens for public benefits and imposes new requirements on sponsors of alien relatives for immigration.” (The INS has been renamed, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE.) This entire act is an amendment to the Immigration Nationality Act and it includes a section deputizing local law enforcement to enforce immigration law.
23. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Office of Immigration Statistics, various years, <http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/archive.shtm>. Very similar presentation of this data can be found in Immigrant Detention: Can ICE meet its legal imperatives and case management responsibilities, Donald Kerwin & Serena Yi-Ying Lin, Migration Policy Institute, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/detentionreportSept1009.pdf>.
24. This is a summary of parts of laws noted at 2 and 3 above.
25. http://www.eisil.org/index.php?t=link_details&id=240&cat=514. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is one of the basic documents contained in the International Bill of Human Rights. It was adopted and opened for signature by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of December 16, 1966. Specific civil and political rights are enumerated in this instrument, such as inherent right to life, right to liberty and security of person, right to a fair trial, and many more important rights. This site provides the text of the instrument, ratification information, declarations and reservations, and a link to the monitoring body.
26. Nina Bernstein, Officials Hid Truth of Immigrant Deaths in Jail, *The New York Times*, Jan 10, 2010, Nina Bernstein, Immigrants in Detention to Be Sent Out of State, *The New York Times*, January 14, 2010. These are two examples of a recent series by an immigration reporter investigating detention facilities.
27. <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/03/16/detained-and-dismissed>, Detained and Dismissed, Women’s Struggles to Obtain Health Care in United States Immigration Detention, March 16, 2009. This seventy-eight-page report by Human Rights Watch is only one of many reports based on visits to facilities. A larger Human Right Watch project in 2008 to visit detention facilities, in which a PC(USA) intern was to have been involved, did not materialize due to difficulties in gaining entry to facilities.
28. <http://ncronline.org/news/politics/toxic-politics-prevent-immigration-reform> Jerry Filteau. “Toxic politics” prevent immigration reform, National Catholic Reporter On-line Nov. 05, 2009. This particular analysis of the U.S. political impasse notably draws on assessments by high level Roman Catholic leaders.
29. http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the_big_business_of_family_detention. Courtney E. Martin, The Big Business of Family Detention, The American Prospect On-Line, February 2, 2009. This article looks at three current family detention facilities and projections for three more. It also notes work by the Center for Immigration Studies, the American Civil Liberties Union, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, and The Women’s Refugee Commission on the issue of children and families in detention. The DHS estimates that one in ten undocumented immigrants is a minor: More Children Held in Detention Centers. La Opinión, Posted: Sep 22, 2009 http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=c0f833ffddd440a5554f5e351b6089e.
30. Much of this information is drawn from the website of Detention Watch, the largest association of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), law firms, churches and other groups: <http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/aboutdetention>.
31. Anwen Hughes ‘Denial and Delay: The Impact of the Immigration Law’s “Terrorism Bars” on Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the United States’, *Human Rights First*, Nov. 19, 2009.
32. ICE Budget Factsheets, including 2009: <http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/factsheets/index.htm>.
33. *The Washington Post*, February 2, 2007 (boxed item).
34. <http://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/220/>. Huge Increase in Transfers of ICE Detainees. Several organizations, foundations, and Syracuse University were involved in analyzing a large amount of FOI derived ICE data, contributing to other studies as well: “[Locked Up Far Away: The Transfer of Immigrants to Remote Detention Centers in the United States](#),” *Human Rights Watch*, December 2, 2009. The Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse under a grant to TRAC from the Four Freedoms Fund prepared an analysis of ICE transfer records, results from which were incorporated by HRW in their report.
35. These paragraphs condense material from *DetentionWatch* (op. cit. at 11) and the ICE budget Factsheets (op. cit. at 13).
36. [Daphne Eviatar, Fingerprinting Plan Will Dramatically Increase Deportations](#): “Secure Communities” Would Ensnare Minor as well as Serious Offenders *The Washington Independent*, 5/22/09 <http://washingtonindependent.com/44141/fingerprinting-plan-will->

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dramatically-increase-deportations. This article also notes the controversial Sheriff Joe Arpaio of the Phoenix area, of whom the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy heard in its meetings with local justice advocates in October of 2009. The Obama Administration is reportedly beginning to rein in such local programs despite new money going in—see next item.

37. Appropriations Committee posting is a good summary of the range of programs and costs. http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:D9XnLkxz59kJ:appropriations.house.gov/pdf/Homeland_Security_FY10_Conference.pdf+secure+communities+and+million&hl=en&gl=us&sig=AHIEtbSpPi9dYtXxGLIWjECqscu5tUkaIQ.
38. Ibid. For the financial numbers; the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's own site is <http://cbp.gov>. A different perspective is provided in a report issued in September of 2008 that includes testimonials of abuse and recommendations for reform by immigrant advocates and rescuers: <http://nomoredeaths.org/index.php/Abuse-Report-Crossing-the-Line/View-category.html>.
39. *Economist*, Jan. 20, 2010.
40. "Unanswered questions remain for U.S. border agent," *International Herald Tribune*, December 13, 2008, quotes Isabel Garcia, founder of Derechos Humanos: "This climate of impunity for Border Patrol agents and the attitude of total misinformation and lies about immigrants prevent, I think, any real justice."
41. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2009/0919/p02s09-usgn.html>. Daniel B. Wood, "Billions for a US-Mexico border fence, but is it doing any good?" *Christian Science Monitor*, September 19, 2009.
42. CCA <http://www.correctionscorp.com>.
43. GEO Group, North American Facilities <http://www.geogroup.com>. Other major security firms with ICE contracts are Cornell Corrections, Inc. <http://www.cornellcompanies.com>, and Management and Training Corporation <http://www.mtctrains.com>.
44. See <http://www.pcusa.org/immigration/getinformed.htm> for resources.
45. Travis Packer, "ICE Assistant Secretary Stakes his Legacy on Detention Reform," Jan 25, 2010, <http://immigrationimpact.com/2010/01/25/ice-assistant-secretary-stakes-his-legacy-on-detention-reform/>.
46. *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 783; Reprinted in booklet, *Resolution Against Torture*, p. 13.
47. Ibid., p. 870; Ibid., p. 31.
48. John Goetz and Britta Sandberg, New Evidence of Torture Prison in Poland, Spiegel/Truthout translation by Paul Cohen, April 27, 2009, identifies the site where Sheikh Mohammed's waterboarding probably took place, near Szymany military airbase in northeastern Poland, after his capture in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and transit through Afghanistan, as part of the extraordinary rendition program.
49. Mark Mazzetti and Scott Shane, "Memos Spell Out Brutal C.I.A. Mode of Interrogation," *The New York Times*, April 17, 2009, pp. 1, 10.
50. Ibid., p. 10. Ray McGovern, twenty-seven-year CIA veteran and briefer of four presidents, underlines the obstacles the new Administration faces in "Torture: The Fault Is Not in Our Stars," Truthout perspective, September 16, 2009, and also discusses the "Special Review" by the CIA's own inspector general, released on August 24, 2009.
51. Scott Horton, "The Guantanamo 'Suicides': A Camp Delta Sergeant blows the whistle," *Harpers*, March 2010, pp. 27–37. The existence of the "camp within the camp," a black site at Guantanamo, was confirmed earlier: Andrew O. Selsky, "AP Confirms Secret Camp Inside Guantanamo," February 6, 2008. Jane Mayer's *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned Into a War on American Ideals*, Doubleday, 2008, also inventories the black sites and many still-open questions.
52. Ibid., p. 28. Much of the article is a reconstruction of events based on the four soldiers' accounts and evidence gathered under FOI Act from Guantanamo.
53. William Glaberson, "Ex-Guantanamo Prosecutor to Testify for Detainee," *New York Times*, February 28, 2008, and William Glaberson, "Guantanamo Prosecutor Is Quitting in Dispute Over a Case," *New York Times*, September 25, 2008, (Different men: Morris Davis and Darrel Vandeveld).
54. <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1210/torture-opinion-religious-differences>. There is further discussion of this Pew Research data at: <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=156>. This datum is borne out by a more specific poll by Public Religion Research Institute: <http://www.publicreligion.org/research/published/?id=136>, which focused on 600 Southern Christian Evangelicals (self-description) and show almost 60 percent holding that torture "can be often (20 percent) or sometimes (37 percent) justified in order to gain important information."
55. Ibid.
56. http://www.thewashingtonnote.com/archives/2009/03/some_truths_abo/. Guest Post by Lawrence Wilkerson: Some Truths About Guantanamo Bay, March 17, 2009.

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57. <http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?ID=17352>. Child Rights Information Network, USA: 500 youths detained in Iraq; 10 in Afghanistan, May 28, 2008.
58. <http://arno.unimaas.nl/show.cgi?fid=101>. “The Role of the Perpetrator and the Bystander in Human Rights Violations” By Fred Grunfeld and Alette Smeulers, October 12, 1999.
59. <http://www.amnesty.org.au/hrs/comments/20575/>. Amnesty International, The Army Field Manual: Sanctioning Cruelty? March 19, 2009.
60. http://www.atimes.com/atimes/southeast_asia/ja25ae01.html, “U.S. and Thailand: Allies in Torture” by Shawn W. Crispin, *Asia Times*, Jan. 28, 2008.
61. George Hunsinger, “U.S. Torture: The State of the Crisis Today,” paper available from author and ACSWP.
62. Kenneth Roth, “Empty Promises? Obama’s Hesitant Embrace of Human Rights, *Foreign Affairs*,” March/April 2010, pp. 10–16.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
65. *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 925; see www.pcusa.org/ascwp for materials on the Social Creed.
66. Associated Press, “U.S. Prison Population Rises Despite a Drop in 20 States,” *The New York Times*, December 9, 2009. The total number of persons in prisons and jails, excluding 34,000 immigrants in detention, was 2.3 million.
67. David Cole, “Can Our Shameful Prisons Be Reformed?” *The New York Review*, Nov. 19, 2009, pp. 41–43, reviews three books on this subject. David Kaiser and Lovisa Stannow, “The Rape of American Prisoners,” *The New York Review*, March 11, 2010, pp. 16–19, review six studies of this epidemic of abuse.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

Item 11-04 requests the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to post on line the Human Rights Update 2010 report, to request that Human Rights Day—December 10—be included in the program calendar, liturgical resources, and web-postings, and to encourage various bodies of the church to pray for all victims of human rights violations and their persecutors.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 11-04 be approved.

Rationale

Human trafficking, immigrant detention, and torture are serious human rights concerns of our society today. In March 2009, members of ACREC toured an immigration detention facility near Newark, New Jersey, and witnessed firsthand an out-of-the way detention facility, long-term detention of immigrants, and the resultant separation of families and lack of adequate legal counsel. We are encouraged by some of the reforms being proposed by the Obama administration, but recognize that much more needs to be done to expose the plight of detained immigrants and to prevent any human rights abuses.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

The ACWC advises approving the Human Rights Update 2010 as a document that upholds the commitments of the PC(USA) to the treatment of all people as image-bearers of the Creator and to the respect of all of humankind as beings worthy of basic respect and humane treatment. As a document that draws attention to the most vulnerable in our world, ACWC supports the update, especially in those places where it lifts up the experiences of women, who in our world always find themselves most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. In light of this, ACWC would highlight more specifically the experiences of women in situations of trafficking and detention in particular.

Though the report states and repeatedly highlights that there has been an increase in the number of men being trafficked, as a whole, women are still the most vulnerable to being exploited in this way. The report itself cites the United Nations Pro-

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TOCOL to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (The Palermo Protocol), and notes that women and children are indeed most susceptible to trafficking. Yet the report repeatedly draws attention to the experiences of trafficked men, particularly in the context of forced labor. While forced labor is indeed becoming the most prevalent form of trafficking of both women and men, the report fails to appropriately emphasize the fact that women, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO) are the majority of people subjected to forced labor or trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Exploitative employers prefer to use trafficked women—traditionally seen as submissive, cheap, and pliable—for simple and repetitive tasks in agriculture, food processing, labor-intensive manufacturing and domestic servitude.¹

The Human Rights Update (2010) unfortunately insinuates that men are the larger group trafficked for labor purposes.

In a similar vein, ACWC notes that in 2008 Referral Item 09-11, ACWC requested and the 218th General Assembly (2008) approved the recommendation to “analyze the Social Witness Policy of the PC(USA) Regarding Detention in Relation to Immigration in the United States, *Giving Attention to the Experiences of Women and Children Detained and Affected* and Report Its Findings and Recommendation to the 219th General Assembly (2010) (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 958). Unfortunately, the Human Rights Update (2010) fails to mention the particular experiences of women and children as the most vulnerable in society.

The ACWC recommends that the report is approved, but with the advice to those who study the report to explore more fully the experiences of women in particular.

Endnote

1. *Trafficking in Persons Report*, U.S. Department of State, 2009, p. 36.

Item 11-05

[This item has been moved to 10 Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues—A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness as Item 10-11.]

Item 11-06

[The assembly approved Item 11-06 with amendment. See pp. 39, 41–42.]

Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), recognizing the need for a new approach to the plague of gun violence, recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following:

To awaken members and communities to the faith dimensions of our on-going tragedy:

1. Encourage the church at every level—from individual member to congregation, presbytery, synod, and national church—to become informed and active in preventing gun violence, to provide pastoral care for victims of gun violence, and to seek a spiritual response of grief and repentance, grace and courage to resist that violence and celebrate the Lord and Giver of Life. [This proposal does not preclude the legal use of personal firearms for hunting or sports-related purposes.]

2. That the church take responsibility to build public awareness of gun violence and the epidemic of preventable gun-related deaths, totaling more than 620,000 over the past twenty years, with hundreds of thousands more wounded. Even while taking the focused and urgent efforts below to achieve practical solutions, that the councils and congregations welcome discussion from all viewpoints, and that the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy review and summarize responses for the 220th General Assembly (2012).

3. That congregations address the temptation to gun suicide and murder-suicide among both old and young people, and that pastors especially present practical theologies of peace as alternatives to fantasies of power, idolatries of force, strategies of vengeance, and the gravitational pull of nihilism or depression.

4. That the church liturgies not only call for periodic preaching on gun violence but also contain prayers for the victims and perpetrators of gun violence and confession of our own complicity in the perpetuation and toleration of violence in all its forms in the culture.

To assist congregations and members in supporting focused local and state initiatives:

5. That, to embody its spiritual awakening in response to this tragic devaluing of life, the church work to build a movement of urban-suburban ecumenical partnerships in order to better understand the problem of gun violence and take more effective action.

6. That local congregations lead or join in ecumenical gatherings for public prayer at sites where gun violence has occurred and to support, or assist with, appropriate law-enforcement guidance, “ceasefire,” and other urban gang intervention strategies based on the public health model of addressing the most vulnerable populations.

7. That the church, particularly in its congregations, work with local law-enforcement agencies and community groups to identify gun shops that engage in retail practices designed to circumvent laws on gun sales and ownership, encourage full legal compliance, and support higher marketing standards, and if necessary, take nonviolent action against gun shops and gun shows that are known to sell guns that end up in crime, using the faith-based campaign of *Heeding God’s Call*, a group active in Pennsylvania as an example.

8. That the church at presbytery, synod, and General Assembly levels, and in cooperation with colleges, universities, and seminaries, sponsor regular educational and summer conference events on gun violence and its prevention, in order to raise the awareness of the faith community and call it to informed action.

9. Due to the recent expanded provisions in concealed carry laws in many states that now allow guns to be carried openly, including into houses of worship, we recommend that churches and other entities prominently display signs that prohibit carrying guns onto their property.

10. That the church encourage citizens, hunters, and law-enforcement officials who regularly handle weapons properly to be wise examples in reducing risks and teaching how to prevent the misuse of deadly force.

11. That the church direct and support its Washington office and other advocacy bodies to continue to advocate for the policies previously approved by PC(USA) General Assemblies and that can receive wide public support to

- a. limit legal personal gun acquisition to one handgun a month;
- b. require licensing, registration, and waiting periods to allow comprehensive background checks, and cooling-off periods, for all guns sold;
- c. close the “gun show loophole” by requiring background checks for all gun buyers;
- d. ban semiautomatic assault weapons, armor piercing handgun ammunition, and .50 caliber sniper rifles;
- e. advocate for new technologies to aid law-enforcement agencies to trace crime guns and promote public safety;
- f. raise the age for handgun ownership to the [legal drinking] age [of] [twenty-one]; and”
- g. eliminate the Tiahrt Amendment to annual appropriations for the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) [~~that forbids local law enforcement agencies from receiving any information from gun traces, and to keep data on background checks for at least ninety days for comparative purposes and assist enforcement of ‘11.a.’ above~~] [that impedes local law enforcement agencies in their use of gun traces and requires the Justice Department to destroy within two hours the record of a buyer whose NICS (National Instant Criminal Background Check System) check was approved].

12. Following the recommendations of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, to support laws to “require judges and law enforcement to remove guns from situations of domestic violence, as well as from people whose adjudicated mental illness, drug use, or previous criminal record suggests the possibility of violence,” and to increase police training in nonviolent proactive intervention.¹

13. To urge the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to develop a corporate engagement strategy for working with corporations in which the church may be invested that are producers or distributors of weapons that do not comply with its policies on gun violence prevention, recommending shareholder proposals and divestment actions appropriate to the integrity and effectiveness the church seeks.

14. That the Compassion, Peace, and Justice and Racial Ethnic Ministries areas include in their ongoing strategic reflection means through which church-wide faithfulness to these commitments can be monitored, supported, encouraged, and resourced, in order to strengthen especially those congregations most exposed to gun violence, and that appropriate resources continue to be made available to help in worship, pastoral care, and public policy work.

15. That councils of the church seek to partner with other faith institutions to create and sustain a national, activist faith-based social movement to save thousands of lives yearly.

16. That the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly be directed to post this report on-line, distribute it through the social witness CD, and print it in limited quantity for councils, congregations, and other educational and advocacy use.

Rationale

I. Introduction

This resolution is in response to the following referral: *2008 Referral: Item 09-05. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Prepare a Comprehensive Study on Gun Violence—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 860).*

This directive read as follows:

a. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Office of Theology and Worship, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, and the Presbyterian Washington Office, to prepare for the larger church a comprehensive study on the concerns raised in this overture [on gun violence]. The study should articulate a Reformed Theology of proactive, constructive nonviolence way of life and tactical method for bringing God's justice and peace to our communities and around the world; assess the social and economic costs of gun violence; explore how gun violence fits into a larger national culture of violence, and identify ways that the church can effectively address gun violence issues domestically and internationally, and to report these findings along with proposed action items to the 219th General Assembly (2010) (*Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 860*).

Gun violence in America has escalated to persistently astonishing levels, consistently about 30,000 deaths per year. We are shocked but increasingly not surprised by the tragedies that bleed into the news and into our neighborhoods, towns, and cities. "Shoot outs" once associated with the Wild West or romanticized gangsters now occur in spaces long considered safe havens: high school cafeterias, college campuses, malls, community centers, playgrounds, gym clubs, even church sanctuaries and our homes. Time and distance are no longer buffers from gun violence. Everyone is at some risk, and the phenomenon of multiple or mass shootings appears to be growing.² Currently there are about 270 million privately owned firearms in the United States.³ If they were evenly distributed, almost every woman, man, and child in the entire population would possess a gun. We are, as a country, armed and dangerous—to ourselves.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been concerned about this frightening phenomenon, and has consistently spoken out about it for three decades, as have our sisters and brothers in virtually every other faith tradition. This report does not advocate more controls than the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has asked for in the past, yet it is clear that our voices have not been persuasive in themselves and our actions too limited to stem the tide of gun violence. There are too many places in America where it is difficult to hear the gospel over the persistent retort of gunfire. We continue to be convinced that God calls us to protect the lives of all within the human community, as each is loved by our Creator. In order to be faithful to our vocation to seek God's shalom, we need to seek new and active ways of effectively bringing life-saving change. We can no longer tolerate such a preventable exile from God's peaceable kingdom or reign. It is time to discuss these deadly social outcomes in our congregations. We believe there is much common ground within society for both responsible gun ownership and real reduction of gun violence. Yet we also know the way the dangers of accident, the prevalence of suicide by gun, and the high rates of homicide in the U.S., are in direct relationship to the accessibility to and possession of guns. We need to be willing to ask ourselves whether we should voluntarily limit our ownership of guns so that we may become more faithful stewards of the gospel. Presbyterians are called to be agents of change in the world, to be reconcilers because we ourselves have been reconciled. Therefore, we are calling upon the church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to help build an effective spiritual and social awakening that says "No" to the prevalence of gun violence in this country.

What might this look like? At the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, a group of members gathers in the parking lot for prayer before heading from the suburbs into a neighborhood of Philadelphia, where they meet up with a racially diverse and ecumenically mixed group of representatives from local communities of faith. Their focus: a gun shop linked to hundreds of illegal gun sales to "straw purchasers," that is, people without criminal records who buy weapons to be sold on the underground market. First, they seek to persuade the owner to comply with a code of conduct, a set of business practices designed to diminish "straw purchasing."⁴ If that fails, they hold peaceful, public protests. Increasingly in Philadelphia, this suburban-urban partnership, based in the churches, is seeing results—gun shops engaging in this illegal practice are being forced to close, and other shops are getting the message and complying. Some of those involved in the protests are hunters themselves (as are several of this study group's members) and they recognize the alternative to inaction is simply more death. This organization and others like it are not just engaging in legal debates with gun lobbyists. They are putting their bodies where their faith is.

Alongside this locally based and practically focused approach, which may bring to mind the local chapters that helped create the "Million Mom March" on Mother's Day, May 14, 2000, the focus of "Heeding God's Call" reflects the application

of “public health” approaches to the problem of gun violence.⁵ This approach builds on “two of the principles that help define the discipline of public health ... (1) preventing damage to humans by injury and disease is preferable to repairing damage after it has occurred; and (2) prevention is best accomplished by protection that is provided automatically on a population basis and does not require each individual to always act carefully. Applying this approach to the area of gun violence, it is considered more effective and therefore preferable to address the design [and marketing] of guns before they get into the hands of millions of people rather than rely upon our ability to control the behaviors of those millions.”⁶ Authors Mair, Teret, and Frattaroli recommend design changes in weapons to increase their safety, but acknowledge that approximately 40 percent of guns are sold in the “largely unregulated secondary market,” and that half of guns sold are secondhand.⁷ Thus the authors cite data on the willingness (as of 2001) of varying percentages of the 64,000 licensed gun shop owners to sell to “straw” (or proxy) buyers and urge changes in marketing practices, noting areas of higher gun violence risk. Thus the public health approach to “vectors” by which illegal or simply unregulated weapons end up in the hands of dangerous or immature persons.⁸

At the same time, Mair, Teret, and Frattaroli note opposition to regulation in all industries being regulated; auto companies resist seatbelt laws and better mileage requirements, tobacco and alcohol companies resist advertising limits, and strong lobbies are linked to these interests. Thus public education and legislation become the chief areas for change, as enforcement can be weakened by laws that prevent effective data collection and sharing and tort litigation (aimed at product liability) can be blocked by laws that prevent damage claims for individuals or groups.⁹ This points to the need for effective community standard-setting on a regional basis, precisely the work of creative ecumenical coalitions. It is such groups that can help society as a whole implement a consensus that is arguably present in current polling data: widespread acceptance of “gun rights” (responsible personal gun ownership as supported by the Supreme Court’s recent decision) combined with high support for commonsense violence prevention.¹⁰ As this resolution is completed, the Supreme Court is seen as likely to extend the application of its decision preventing the outright banning of firearms in Washington, D.C. (the “Heller” decision); presumably this would still allow for laws regulating the kinds and conditions under which firearms could be sold in states, cities, and municipalities.¹¹

Christian gospel values challenge gun violence in order to protect human life from unnecessary tragedy. The public health approach and predominant law-enforcement approach focused on individual perpetrators. Both need a public consensus rooted in moral conviction, hope, and trust. The spirit-awakening and movement-supporting approach of this resolution builds on previous Presbyterian emphases on legislation and education and is reflected in this report’s recommendations and in the structure of this rationale. Just because a social need is urgent does not mean that the moral climate will easily change. Thus a study of five elements of successful social movements provides a lens for analysis. Our understanding of the fullness of God’s peace is larger than definitions of freedom that focus on the possession of weapons; we affirm a social bond with grassroots movements that is rooted in our identity as Christians. We are already part of the movement of God’s people through history toward the promised realm of peace.

Our church can and should lead the way in the broader faith community to the creation of a broad-based social movement to prevent gun violence, beginning with and led by an opening to the Holy Spirit, and drawing its strength from the grassroots, especially people in the pews. Such a coalition of congregations and other faith communities can take practical direct action on local levels while generating critical change in cultural norms and attitudes toward guns, their possession, distribution, and use. In this way our church, the faith community, and the movement they can lead, will heed God’s call to protect more of God’s children.

II. Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Study Rationale for a Social Movement Strategy on Gun Violence

A. *Introduction*

As Presbyterians, we know God’s call becomes clear to us only when we are paying careful attention. But paying attention becomes more difficult in times and cultures as complex as ours. The cacophony of messages can drown out God’s call on our lives as believers and as a community of faith. Real anxiety about change meets reflexive ideology. Then, too often, slogans replace thought. In this context, the church is called to give steady support to prevention and protection despite political paralysis and powerful interests. We must pay attention as well to those sources that have always fed our understanding of God’s calling—our biblical and theological tradition, the commitments of people of faith, and the signs of the times. Together, they create a kairos moment when God’s time intersects our time and human history is changed. But first we need to pay attention and respond to the call. We need to heed.

We need to pay attention to the disconnects between what our faith, values, and common sense tell us about the realities of gun violence and what groups opposing reasonable public protection would want us to believe. Even after the massacres at Columbine High School, Northern Illinois University, and Virginia Tech, pro-gun advocates called for allowing guns on our campuses.¹² Even though many have died by assault weapons since the ban was allowed to expire in 2004, lobbyists have argued that to restrict access to such military-style weapons is an attack on personal rights.¹³ Despite the fact that workplaces which permit employees to carry guns are five to seven times more likely to be the site of workplace homicide, the pro-gun

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lobby continues to advocate legislation relaxing restrictions to carry guns to work in a number of states.¹⁴ Even though research shows that gun owners are six times more likely to be a victim of gun violence than to use their weapon in self-defense, the lobbyists representing the gun industry link gun ownership with increasing personal safety.¹⁵ As people of faith, we need to pay attention to these contradictions between tragic facts and gun advocacy group fictions; we need to allow our consciences to be troubled into a new wave of response.

To state that there is a “gun lobby” of considerable power should not surprise most Americans. The pro-gun organizations and lobbies, preeminently the National Rifle Association (NRA), are legal in our country, and their influence frequently debated. This report does not assume that all members believe all positions of any lobbying group; a recent poll suggests more support within NRA for protective measures than may be expected.¹⁶ Yet organized and focused special interests are a major reason for political immobility on many issues in U.S. politics, and the gun issue illustrates this vividly. The issue here is not between freedom and oppressive government control; it is between commonsense laws and resistance to any safeguards from predictable and preventable death.¹⁷

Gun violence as an issue is not new but has been building for decades—and the national church has not been silent about it. The PC(USA) and its predecessor bodies have addressed gun violence through the actions of eight General Assemblies in the last thirty years.¹⁸ Each resolution reflected a sense of moral urgency in response to rising gun violence and the cultural trends that contributed to it. Yet after these thirty years we see the same patterns continuing unabated: a culture that accommodates and even cultivates violence and fear, the proliferation of assault weapons that go beyond the legitimate needs of hunters and gun collectors, the alarming number of preventable gun-related deaths of victims of homicide, suicide, and accident, and the increasing incidence of child-related gun violence. General Assembly resolutions have called on the church to be involved in education and advocacy at the federal, state, and community level to prevent gun violence. These were backed up with strong educational curricula in 1991 and 1996¹⁹ as well as comprehensive strategies for advocacy especially at the national level. The General Assembly resolution in 1990 called on the U.S. government to

establish meaningful and effective federal legislation to regulate the importation, manufacture, sale and possession of guns and ammunition by the general public. Such legislation should include provisions for the registration and licensing of gun purchasers and owners, appropriate background investigations and waiting periods prior to gun purchase, and regulation of subsequent sale.²⁰

Little change has been seen in the policies enumerated, and these same calls can and should be echoed today.

Presbyterians have a significant but by no means unique witness within the wider church in speaking out against gun violence:

- The United Methodist Church passed similar resolutions in 1976, 1988, and 2000 calling for education and advocacy to reduce the availability of guns and regulating their sale and possession.
- The United Church of Christ passed resolutions in 1969, 1995, and 1999 that specifically called for the denomination to negotiate directly with the National Rifle Association and endorsed policies of one handgun a month, banning assault weapons, and regulation of gun dealers.
- The Episcopal Church passed eight resolutions between 1976 and 2000 advocating for greater regulation of handguns, including banning assault weapons and prohibiting the carrying of concealed weapons.
- The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued policy statements in 1995 and most recently in 2005 advocating for the reinstatement of the ban on assault weapons and supporting “measures that control the sale and use of firearms and make them safer ... and we reiterate our call for sensible regulation of handguns.”
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America passed a message to the church on Community Violence in 1994, reaffirmed in 2008, which called on the church to “stem the proliferation of guns in our streets, schools and homes,” and to “build strong anti-violence coalitions in our neighborhoods and communities.”
- The National Council of Churches has given voice to the ecumenical community’s appeal through the Interfaith Call to End Gun Violence (2000) which then-General Secretary Robert Edgar reiterated in speaking out against the tragic killings at Virginia Tech University (2007)

Clearly, a diverse national faith community has been clear, outspoken, and consistent over the last twenty years about the crisis of gun-related deaths in the U.S. and around the world. Regrettably, beyond general agreement, those who have heeded these calls to study and action are the exception, rather than the norm.

B. *Theology and Political Responsibility*

In the 1990 Resolution on Gun Violence, the 202nd General Assembly (1990) refers to the “peaceable kingdom—a society where God’s justice reigns, where reconciliation replaces anger, where an open hand and a turned cheek replace retaliation.”

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tion, where love of enemies is as important as love of neighbor.” Based on the vision presented in Isaiah 65 of “new heavens and a new earth ... [where] the wolf and the lamb shall feed together,” the idyllic image has become the soft focus sentiment of Christmas cards. It has been robbed of its power. The people of God must continue to hold sacred the visions recorded in Scripture of the Creator’s intentions for humankind. Such visions provide the basis of critique, so that we can see how far, in fact, we have strayed from God’s will for us. Visions also compel us to action, giving us moral clarity and courage. Truly, without vision the people will perish.

for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,
and its people as a delight.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and delight in my people;
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,
or the cry of distress.
No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;
For one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth ...²¹

Here is a radically different vision of human community, where parents do not have to worry about letting their children play in the neighborhood and adults do not have to fear walking down the street at night. Remembering this vision stirs our longing for a different society, built on solidarity and trust, and not on terror. It is in the context of the community, especially the community of faith, that the full value of human life is honored and celebrated. We therefore constantly seek to remove double standards and differing expectations between God’s intentions for those inside and outside the church. Those within the Reformed tradition continue to be instructed by Calvin’s sense of the “peace of Christ,” which is distinctive in nature and uncompromising in facing evil and its violence.

For Calvin, biblical principles also had direct applicability in the ordering of civil society. So in his commentary on the Sixth Commandment, “You shall not kill,” Calvin expressed a theological perspective on the ordering of society that is based on the value each human life as loved and redeemed by God and therefore in need of protection.

The purpose of this commandment is, that since the Lord has bound the whole human race by a kind of unity, the safety of all ought to be considered as entrusted to each. In general, therefore, all violence and injustice, and every kind of harm from which our neighbor’s body suffers, is prohibited. Accordingly, we are required faithfully to do what in us lies to defend the life of our neighbor, to promote whatever tends to his tranquility, to be vigilant in warding off harm, and when danger comes, to assist in removing it.²²

It is not only the church that is knit together as a body of interdependent parts (1 Corinthians 12). Our Reformed tradition affirms that indeed the whole human community is meant to reflect the very unity of the triune God who created us. We creatures of the Living God have organized government structures that enable us to provide protection for all members of society. Our governments, then, most closely reflect the image and intentions of the Creator when they “defend the lives of all our neighbors,” build community or “tranquility,” and protect our citizens from harm. When we, instead, allow individuals to arm themselves without regulation at the price of the safety of innocent victims, the good of the whole is threatened.

Thus, in the Reformed Christian approach, we link of value of individual life with the democratic respect for the individual that is the basis of our governmental system. We Presbyterians are also not a lawless people: laws are not simply forms of social control; they can be “guides to the elect,” rooted in our trust in God’s good purposes and helping structure the bearing of burdens of social life. The two approaches to government can clearly be seen in the public debate around guns—one nurtures fear and one safety. We advocate a government role that protects its citizens and raises the standards for responsible gun ownership, which we support with careful protections for the safety and freedom of all.

The United States Supreme Court ruled for the first time on June 26, 2008, in *District of Columbia v. Heller* that the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is not a collective right for a militia, but rather that individuals have a right to possess handguns in their homes for self-defense. Since this five-to-four decision was made, it has been taken as affirmation by those who advocate guns for self-defense, even against the U.S. government. The fear of government tyranny has been clearly voiced and an “open carry” movement has led to a highly visible and sometimes intimidating presence of armed individuals at public meetings, demonstrations, and even children’s sporting events and worship services. At its extreme points, legal scholars Horwitz and Casey argue that this concern for individual freedoms at the expense of the public good aligns itself with a secessionist or insurrectionist philosophy.²³

Such thinking runs counter not only to that of the Framers but to the instruction of Reformed theology on the role of government. John Calvin believed that God worked through established governments to order society and prevent it from devolving into anarchy. He considered civil authorities, including law-enforcement officials, to be ordained by God to protect the innocent public against the terror of mob rule or individual rapacity. For Calvin, the public trust of government was the structure through which biblical principles were made real, including the principle of freedom.

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For those who subscribe to insurrectionist thinking, “guns are both the symbols and tools of freedom.”²⁴ Wayne LaPierre, the CEO of the National Rifle Association famously declared, “Those with the guns make the rules.” He does not speak for all members of the NRA, but he does reflect a particular view of individual freedom that is gaining a disturbing amount of momentum as we enter the second decade of the new millennium. However, the Scriptures give another perspective on freedom. Peter exhorts his friends to live with respect for human authorities and for all people: “As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor” (1 Pet. 2:16–17). Freedom, in the biblical sense, is never considered for an individual apart from community, but is linked to the responsibility we have for one another in our life together. Martin Luther defined the Christian as “the most free lord of all, and the most duty bound slave of all” (The Freedom of a Christian).

These conflicting perspectives on freedom do not represent an abstract difference of theological perspective or even political world views, but a clash of commitments that has serious consequences. The National Rifle Association and other gun lobbyists have been working persistently (and successfully) to thwart any limitation on the freedom of individuals to acquire any kind of gun, at any time, and in any quantity. The NRA lobbyists are ubiquitous at the United Nations, as well as in the Capital, where they encourage representatives from around the world to include a “Second Amendment provision” in their national constitutions.²⁵ The mantra is that “self-defense, via arms, is a God-given right.” It is the partial result of their efforts that not only our nation but countries around the world see large-scale weapons availability for use in conflicts. These matters are addressed more fully in the General Assembly’s 2001 *Resolution on Small Arms* (Minutes, 2001, Part I, pp. 274–78).

C. *Cultural Analysis: Behind the Trigger: Dimensions of Violence in Our Culture*

The American culture of the 21st century is pervaded with violence. Our language itself reflects how thoroughly, and comfortably, we have accommodated violence as a dominant paradigm: “Stick to your guns!,” “Bite the bullet!,” and “pull the trigger,” are unconscious figures of speech, among literally hundreds of others²⁶ (See Appendix A). Through media, video games, and toys our children have been fed a diet of violence so that by young adulthood we are not shocked by violent images, but sometimes numbed and sometimes stimulated by them.²⁷ Bullying sometimes leads to deadly reprisals. Despite our national identity as a peace-loving people, violence, and particularly gun violence, is woven deeply into our national identity. Legal scholar Allen Rostron points to the duality in how Americans view guns:

The dual nature of guns is reflected in the very different feelings that people have about them. For many Americans, guns have overwhelmingly positive associations. To them, guns are about families and traditions, about growing up and spending time learning how to shoot and to hunt, and about each generation passing something on to the next. For many other Americans, guns have completely different connotations. For example, to a young person in an inner city, guns may be associated with only bad things, like being scared, having grandparents afraid to go outside, or knowing someone who was shot. ...²⁸

Some of the violence in U.S. culture is often linked to our national narrative, including the periods of settlement and slavery, or to a regional and ethnic subculture influential on the frontier.²⁹ The justly fought wars in our nation’s story may also have become distorted into a glorification of violence as a way of resolving conflict. Some theologians maintain that we have incorporated the myth of redemptive violence into our framing of conflict.³⁰ Therefore, at times our foreign policy has looked too quickly toward military solutions rather than negotiations or mediation. For too many people, gun power is not a problem, but a solution. Armed force undergirds our civil order but also permeates it, especially where that civil order is most frayed.³¹

However, the myth of redemptive violence has not inoculated veterans from depression that can exacerbate or create despair years after their military service. Recent research has shown that suicide in men is more likely among older white veterans in states with higher accessibility to guns. These are predominantly not men who have had a long history of depression, problems with alcohol, or suicidal attempts. Similarly, women who end their lives by gun are older, white, married women, also disproportionately veterans, who have not necessarily been on a suicide watch. The profile that emerges is that when despair reaches a critical point, an available gun too often offers a quick and final resolution to psychological pain.³² It does not make a difference whether the victims are in crowded cities or sparsely populated rural areas—suffering and isolation become overwhelming. In such cases, when terminal illness or economic devastation reduce life prospects, the gun represents precisely the freedom of exit.

There is a somewhat different dynamic in urban cultures, where guns are woven into the social fabric of many neighborhoods. Religious historian James Noel writes about the ways violence becomes racially coded in urban African American settings, drawing partly on his years of church involvement in Oakland, California.³³

The issue of social trust and community deterioration is not a theoretical concern, though theory helps understand what the statistics underline: an enormous amount of gun violence occurs in inner cities, even though these numbers have gone down from highs in the 1980’s (high point, 1993). But the predictably higher percentages of African-American and Hispanic young men involved in gun violence reflect a long-term exposure of these minority communities to physical and structural violence, patterns reinforced by limited opportunities and by the criminal justice system itself the violence that has become such a dominant feature of the urban poor must be seen as operating consequentially and reciprocally to the violence that structures and permeates the space they are forced to inhabit. In other words, historical and contemporaneous forces and variables conspire to subject the so-called offenders to unrecognized forms of “violation” that are not punished by society because the inner city IS one of its components. Robert Johnson and Paul Leighton make the following observation in their discussion of black on black crime:

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In America, at least, poverty rarely kills directly. Few people drop dead in the streets from hunger or exposure to the elements. But poverty does produce a range of physical and psychological stresses, and some reactions to these stresses are expressed in behaviors that destroy life. . . . Members of the victim group may contribute to their own victimization through adaptations to bleak life conditions that include violence directed at self or others (e.g. suicide or homicide) as well as self-destructive lifestyles (notably drugs and alcohol).³⁴

Johnson and Leighton admit that the causal connection between the larger social structures and “social pathology” in the inner city is very hard to demonstrate. “The larger society is quite removed from the grim life circumstances and daily degradations experienced by poor blacks, and hence the average American has little real feeling for the forces that shape their lives.” They point out that most of the destruction of black life occurs right within the ghetto itself and therefore—in agreement with Wacquant—they say: “these environments are . . . the functional equivalent to prison.”³⁵

The irony here is that black and other minority communities are those most able to argue historically that they might need weapons to protect themselves from tyranny from the majority population. This study cannot provide a full analysis of the lure of violence in relation to such phenomena as powerlessness or gang life. The public health approach, particularly developed by the Johns Hopkins University gun violence program, addresses cultural factors but is also highly practical in the targeted policies it recommends to reduce the armed conflict in urban areas, many of which are reflected in the recommendations of this report.³⁶

There are signs of hope in urban communities, areas where public health and law enforcement approaches have joined in proactive interventions that have decreased gang violence and increased trust between black communities and largely white police forces. An article on the C.I.R.V. (Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence) describes the approach of David Kennedy: “Ceasefire, as Kennedy’s program is sometimes known, begins with the fact, commonly recognized by criminologists, that a small number of hardened criminals commit hugely disproportionate numbers of serious violent crimes. Often, much of the violence is caused by gang dynamics: score settling, vendettas, and turf issues. . . . Arresting the shooters doesn’t generally stop the killing; nor does threatening them with long prison sentences. But one thing does work, Kennedy had discovered: telling them to stop.”³⁷ By using the public health approach to focus on social networks (or transmission), and adding to the criminal justice skills of the police alternative modes of deterrence (observation and inoculation), gang members would be gathered in a social space and given a forthright moral appeal, often by ex-gang members and church and community leaders. Survivors of shootings would sometimes show their wounds and discuss their hardships at these “call outs.” The results: “homicides in Cincinnati in 2007 were down 24 percent from 2006. The trend continued into 2008—by April, there had been a 50 percent reduction in gang-related homicides.”³⁸

Racial meanings run deep in American society. The election of the first African American president at the crest of the economic recession tapped into fears among many. At a later point, we note the hope that was embodied in the change in administrations, but realism prompts us to consider the reaction that has also appeared and the role guns play in it. Soon after the election, gun and ammunition sales rose, indicating a rise in fear and a decline in trust in government and in neighbor. Threatening public display of weapons became part of rallies during the summer of 2009, prompting memories of the assassinations in U.S. history. Though the causes for these partly populist displays of anger are still being debated, and free speech rights are always deserving of respect, these events did not celebrate the social trust that is the glue of a civil society.³⁹ With the erosion of trust comes the deterioration of healthy social interaction; eventually civil society can be undermined. The proposal to reverse this defensive pattern is precisely an effort to build solidarity and bridge the racial and economic divides in our society.

D. *Toward a Strategy That Counts the Costs*

While Presbyterians and other communities of faith were issuing statements against gun violence over the past twenty years, however, the violence continued at consistent rates, resulting in more than 620,000 Americans killed and 1.4 million injured by guns during this period.⁴⁰ It is time, therefore, for the church to pay attention not just to the faithfulness of our spoken word, but the effectiveness of our action in stopping the preventable deaths of so many of our sons and daughters, parents and siblings, friends and neighbors. It is time to enact God’s “No.” It is time to recover a constructive moral outrage of the prophets and the moral courage of the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before. It is time to repent of our tolerance of that which is unacceptable.

If the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), along with our ecumenical partners in peacemaking, are to be effective in facilitating social change, which is deeply grounded in our faith, we need to be smart and intentional about how to generate that change. The church’s primary calling is to help prepare people for the possibility of a real spiritual awakening that can instigate a social movement. A social movement is broad based in its organization, drawing much of its energy from the grassroots, rather than from a small group of leaders. It seeks to change not just laws, but the cultural norms and ways of thinking about a social problem, be it drunk driving, tobacco usage, or gun violence.

Social scientists have long studied the phenomena of social movements, not only those that are effective in bringing about change, but also those that never gain traction or simply dissipate, despite having a compelling cause. Such has been the case with gun policy. Despite waves of outrage over assassinations and the strength of the Million Mom March, there has not been a sustained, effective, grassroots movement in this country to control access to firearms.⁴¹ A relatively small number of gun control advocates have worked for years, with limited resources, within a limited sphere of legislative change, pri-

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marily focused on federal policy. They have been faithful in their efforts but not as effective in developing and sustaining a movement needed for change that is deep, wide, and lasting.

Scholars of social movements have shown that there have to be a number of coexisting conditions for the mobilization of people seeking change to take place. Each condition is vital to an effective social movement, but taken individually cannot spark and sustain an effective movement. First, having a clear cause or grievance is necessary for change to be desired, but will not spark an awakening. Like the proverbial frog in a kettle, we can adapt ourselves to rising levels of suffering and injustice. This is abundantly clear in our tolerance of gun violence. Second, moral arguments, prophetic sermons, and hard data about a social problem may fuel an awakening, but in and of themselves do not create a social movement, much to our disappointment. Third, some expect “sparking events” (or “shifts in political opportunities”) to create tipping points, and unleash pent up frustration into a coherent movement for change. But such large media events have exploded onto our national radar screen only to fade without provoking or sustaining a social movement for change. Fourth, a focus on resources—both human and capital—has shown that they are an essential component for any successful social movement. But in isolation, an abundance of funding, connections, or even leadership does not mobilize people for social change. Even Sarah Brady, with her credibility and connections, has not built a grassroots movement. Social theorist Doug McAdam of Stanford University has identified a fifth critical condition that needs to be present in combination with all four of the other variables in order for an effective social movement to take place: a sense of viability.⁴² This is the belief that, in fact, our actions can bring real change that sustains movements for social change. What we do matters, both in the immediate and in the transcendent understandings of time. This is what people of faith call hope.

These five variables are not mutually exclusive. For example, we cannot frame an issue in moral or theological terms independent of there being a problem to begin with. But when all five are aligned, “perfect storm” conditions exist that can spark and sustain an effective social movement:

- a critical understanding of the problem, or high sense of grievance;
- a living connection to the commitments from our tradition for moral action, or a strong moral imperative;
- an informed perspective on the shifts in political, cultural, and social realities that open up new opportunities for collective action;
- an appreciation of the abundance of resources we bring to our effort;
- a sense of hope, that by pursuing our vocation and in the power of the Holy Spirit, change is indeed possible.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness policy and its gun violence study team believe that the time is right for transformation in this society’s treatment of gun violence—in part because of the Supreme Court’s assurance that personal ownership of guns is secure for the foreseeable future. We make no determination here on Second Amendment interpretation. But in a time when social costs of all kinds are being reassessed, we call on the whole church to look realistically at our context, and to commit itself to study and action to stop the unnecessary killing of so many of God’s dear children. We now suggest how the five elements of analysis above may guide us today.

1. *The Grievance of Gun Violence*

a. *The Loss of Human Life*

The numbers are so overwhelming as to be numbing. Consider: every day in the U.S. 85 people die from guns and 191 are injured.⁴³ Over the course of a typical year, about 30,000 will be killed through gun-related murder, suicide, accident, or police intervention. Approximately 70,000 will survive gun injuries, only to have their lives and those of their families forever changed. Most tragically, almost 21,000 of the victims are American children and teens (ages 0–19). More than 3,000 kids killed—that’s 9 children a day—and 2,225 of these children were murdered. Almost 800 children pick up guns and end their own young lives each year. All told, every year is 9/11 for our children. Statistics can make our eyes glaze over, but understanding the pain involved for each of these families can only lead us, to grieve like Rachel,

A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.⁴⁴

b. *The Economic Burden*

It is, of course, impossible to calculate the worth of a human life, for each one is of inestimable value to God. But we are, as a human community, related to one another as we participate in the oikoumene of the Creator. We particularly experience our interdependence through the economy. Clearly, when one hurts, all are impacted. Ten years ago Jens Ludwig and Philip

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J. Cook tried to calculate the financial burden created by gun violence and shouldered by the American taxpayer. Taking into consideration the health-care costs of its victims, the additional security costs of prevention, and the judicial and penal costs of processing its perpetrators, they estimated that the already strapped American economy takes on an additional \$100 billion per year.⁴⁵

c. *The Spiritual Malaise*

Even if we are not physically affected by gun violence, the preventable deaths and injuries of so many impacts us all in ways other than economic. Our commonwealth is diminished when lives are unnecessarily cut short, their contribution to the human community never known, their children not born. But most fundamentally, the cost has been spiritual: we have come to accept what is unacceptable to the Creator. We, like Rachel, should be inconsolable, yet we find ourselves numbed and passively tolerating higher levels of violence in our communities, in our television and movies, video games, and in our streets. Where is our grief at the loss of life and the loss of conscience? How have we gotten to this point of passive acceptance of gun violence?

Ours must not be a grief that immobilizes us or is expressed only in sympathy to victims. Ours must be, instead, a godly grief that calls us to transformation. As Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, “Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance; for you felt a godly grief. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death” (2 Cor. 7:9–10).

d. *The Intersection of Widespread Gun Ownership and Fear in the Culture*

With the constant depictions of violence, a narrative justifying conflict resolution through force, and powerful guns easily available, a dangerous cocktail is being stirred. Add to that the national and international data showing a high correlation between the percentage of households with firearms and the rate of gun-related homicide, suicide and accident.⁴⁶ That is to say, whether comparing communities, states, or countries, where there are more guns, there is more gun violence. Consider:

- With almost half of American households legally owning guns, there are about eleven gun deaths per 100,000 population. In England very few households are armed (less than 5 percent). In 2006 there were 159 gun deaths there, or .31 per 100,000. Japan prohibits handguns and long guns are highly regulated. There were 96 gun deaths in 2006 or .08 per 100,000.

- More than half of gun deaths are suicide.⁴⁷ Studies of suicide survivors show that 70 percent contemplated killing themselves for less than an hour. While there was no difference in the rate of non-gun related suicides in states with high or low rates of gun ownership, the picture changed drastically when looking at suicides by gun—there were almost four times the number of successful suicides by gun in those states with higher rates of gun ownership.⁴⁸ If guns are accessible, they will be used in moments of depression.

- The African American community is the hardest hit by gun violence, as we have suggested earlier. The deterioration of social trust and the consolidation of poverty in inner-city neighborhoods has spawned a culture of violence in which guns have become the “symbols and tools” not so much of freedom as survival. The result: the firearm death rate for African Americans is twice what it is for white Americans. Although African American males only make up 6 percent of the population, they account for 47 percent of gun homicides. Young African American men (aged 15–34) are more likely to die by bullet than disease, accident, or suicide. This is not true for any other demographic group.⁴⁹ Tragically, most of these homicides are the result of black-on-black violence, an extreme expression of what Cornel West has labeled a culture of nihilism.⁵⁰

- United States guns have been documented to fuel the heightened levels of gun violence in Northern Mexico related to the drug trade. Limited enforcement of existing laws, use of “straw buyers” without criminal records, and other forms of cross-border trafficking have all contributed to a widespread availability of guns.⁵¹ On August 5, 2009, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) received a letter from Mexico:

The National Presbyterian Church of Mexico is worried due to the high percentage of violence that we are living within our country today. Kidnapping and murders are everywhere, especially in cities such as Tijuana, Monterrey, Juarez, Morelia, Acapulco, just to mention those with the highest percentage of insecurity. This is why we come to you, brothers and sisters in Christ, so that you may help us ... in transmitting our concerns to those in charge of selling guns to Mexican people ... (which kill) in many cases ... innocent people. So, as leaders of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, we have come to the conclusion that we have to raise our voices against violence; and together with you all, we might share the same feeling, so that our presidents may work hard to make stability a reality in our countries.⁵²

- Despite some restrictive legislation in the 1990s that prohibited those with prior history of domestic violence to get a gun, their accessibility continues to turn family fights into deadly confrontations. A recent study showed that having one or more guns in the home made a woman 7.2 times more likely to be the victim of gun homicide.⁵³

Clearly, if there is a gun easily within reach in one’s pocket (or cupboard, garage, or glove compartment) a moment of rage or despair can become tragic. Ironically, one of the primary arguments for gun ownership is self protection. But a recent study from the University of Pennsylvania confirms the correlation between gun ownership and becoming a victim of gun

violence. The study found that those with guns were 4.5 times more likely to be shot in an assault than those not possessing a gun.⁵⁴ If guns did in fact protect us from violence, the U.S. would be the safest country on earth. Instead, we are the most at-risk for gun violence among developed countries. And the costs are most visible in our urban hospital emergency rooms, backlogged courtrooms, and still growing prison population.⁵⁵

The international dimension of our context is not only in globally popular Internet games or the specific gun fight the army of Mexico is having with the drug cartels whose arms are more powerful than those of the army. Dependence on force has not only been a dominant paradigm in foreign policy, it is also reflected in lucrative exports. Currently, the United States is the number one supplier of small arms to the developing world; many of these guns are sold illegally.⁵⁶ One of the consequences of the “war on terror” has been a sense of insecurity that fosters violence and ironically spreads it across borders. This fear of terror is certainly not the reign of shalom that God wills for our beloved human community.

2. *The Gospel Imperative*

Jesus went further in naming the idols that become the foundation of an unredeemed society. He reprimanded Peter for first grabbing a weapon in his defense. “Those who live by the sword will die by it,” Jesus clearly put it. If weapons become the basis of your social relations, they will kill you. If preserving your guns has become more important than the safety of thousands of other people, then weapons have become your idol, in diametric opposition to the vision of a city that is a joy, where children and old people live out their years, and the weeping of grief-stricken mothers is no longer heard.

It is not enough to have a social critique, however. The first letter of John challenges us “not (to) love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.”⁵⁷ We must struggle with how to implement the vision, a challenge that was taken up by John Calvin as well. At the very core of his theology was an understanding that the intentions of God should be implemented on earth.

Let us be clear: this is not a call to arms but to community. There is a direct connection, as we have seen, between God’s intentions, the prophets’ visions, Jesus’ teaching, and the implications for our own actions. If God commands that we not kill and that we work for a future when former enemies work together as friends, then the injunction extends beyond our own individual choices, as important as they are. We are compelled to work for policies, or ways of ordering society, which “defend,” “promote tranquility,” “ward off harm,” and remove harm. How we love the stranger is not through our good feelings or individual acts of charity but through advocating for policies that will extend protection to the greatest number of people.

Confronting the crisis of gun violence in the U.S. and indeed around the world, we are called to advocate policies—and to act upon them—which will defend and protect the public, not only from external threats, but too often from itself. The church is not as disturbed with the legitimate possession and use of hunting rifles, shotguns, and sport shooting guns, but we are categorically opposed to the poor regulation and easy flow of guns that are manufactured to efficiently kill human beings. We must exert special efforts to stop unlicensed sellers peddling guns at our country’s thousands of gun shows with “no questions asked,” and to stop unscrupulous licensed dealers from selling to straw purchasers who then turn guns over to traffickers. Too often, this easy access results in harm to self or others that could have been prevented.

3. *If Not Now, When? (A Shift in Political and Social Opportunity)*

Critical to any effective movement for social change is the capacity to read the signs of the times ... not only to be able to recognize and name a crisis, but to identify those shifts in opportunity that introduce brief windows of time in which change becomes possible.

Clearly as we conclude the first decade of the 21st century we are in such a time. On January 20, 2009, the nation celebrated the inauguration of Barack Obama, who was swept into office on a wave of hope for change. The stunning political moment expressed the frustrations of a public who would not accept the trends of war, violence, and economic instability as deterministic trajectories. While unclear of the policy implications, there was a consensus that change was needed. Concurrent with the recession, Americans were also experiencing the need to make changes in their personal lives and family budgets. The sea was changing.

Paradigm shifts occur in different ways besides political and economic changes. There was also a sense of uncertainty about the future that was stirred up by the political transition. Many whose jobs and economic stability was fragile experienced a new wave of fear. Perhaps related to this, a number of gun-related tragedies occurred in 2009—the murder of a doctor who had performed abortions while he was at Sunday worship, the killing of an abortion protester, the massacre of dedicated staff people at a community center for new immigrants, the murder of three police officers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and four in Oakland, California, and the killings of women at a fitness center, among them. Tragedies such as these become a moment when we can publicly lament and bitterly weep like Rachel, but also cry out “No more!” If guns were less accessible and more carefully monitored with licensing and waiting periods, if policies for carefully following disturbed and threatening individuals were in place and enforced, then these lives might have been spared. But the first step is to pay careful attention to what is happening—to shifts in social opportunities that make change possible—and to make sure that we do not become

inured to the tragic and preventable loss of life. To honor the silenced voices we must pay attention, speak out, and give witness to God's "No" to gun violence.

4. *Resources Available*

Significant social change is possible only when there are resources available to support movements that address policies, structures, and cultural values. Financial resources are of course important to make advocacy efforts possible. Americans still give more to their communities of faith than to any other charity or cause. Certainly the stewardship of our treasure will need to reflect the commitments of our hearts in supporting efforts to prevent gun violence.

But capital comes in many other forms as well—social, cultural, and spiritual. Prayer and worship cannot be undervalued as the most powerful resource of the church. In worship we can give voice to the suffering caused by gun violence and join in prayer to align our hearts with God's intentions through the Holy Spirit. The church also brings many kinds of "social capital" to the table. We are part of a connectional system and a larger ecumenical community representing millions of people. We have the capacity to train leaders and educate ourselves on the issues. We have spaces for meetings and can have credibility as moral leaders.

An underutilized resource is public opinion. Currently three out of four Americans believe that gun laws should be "stricter, making it harder for people to purchase guns."⁵⁸ Looking more closely at the respondents, there is a large consensus across Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish perspectives. Those who attend worship weekly, monthly, or yearly do not differ significantly in their perspectives. Even political ideology does not make that much of a difference: about 71 percent of self-defined political conservatives favor stricter laws compared to 79 percent of those who consider themselves liberals. Over the past thirty years, in fact, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of Americans who want more regulation of guns⁵⁹:

- Those supporting police permits to carry guns increased from 70 percent to 79 percent.
- 85 percent now support limiting sales of high power/50 caliber rifles.
- 82 percent want to limit sales of semiautomatic assault weapons.
- 80 percent now support mandatory criminal background checks for private gun sales.

This common sense is a resource that needs to find its collective voice. In this we agree with Allen Rostron's paper, "Cease Fire: A 'Win-Win' Strategy on Gun Policy for the Obama Administration" with its sense of practical possibility and claim that despite the shrill voices, there is a massive desire in our culture to make some progress again.⁶⁰

5. *A Sense of Viability in Change: the Christian Hope*

Even with a compelling grievance, strong moral imperative, shift in political opportunities, and an abundance of resources, social change cannot take place without the most important ingredient—a sense of viability that change is, indeed, possible. For Reformed Christians we claim the hope that God is active in the world and that there is hope in this world, as well as the next, that God's glory can be manifest. As sinful as humans are, individually and collectively, the Good News is that God does not give up on us. Ever. Transformation is possible and God's "Yes" in Jesus Christ confirms for us every day that we are worth the effort.

As people of faith, we need to embrace and celebrate this hope, which continues to be incarnated in history:

- Who would have imagined that a Baptist preacher and determined people of faith could have successfully challenged the unjust laws and practices of segregation?
- When the world expected a bloody resolution to the struggle against the iron fist of apartheid in South Africa, who knew that local and global resistance movements could bring about a peaceful transition to a democratic, racially inclusive society?
- Who would have predicted that a country addicted to cigarettes and the power of the Big Tobacco could be transformed?
- Who would have imagined that the mobilized grief of mothers who had lost their children to drunk drivers could change cultural values, social practices, and legal accountability around drunk driving?
- Despite the protestations from the ubiquitous gun lobby, we know that increased regulation of guns does work. The six states with the lowest per capita rates of gun death (Hawaii, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey) are all considered to have strong gun laws.

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God's work in the world through people of faith needs to be lifted up. We must repent of our lack of faith, which laments that nothing can change. Our hope must be nurtured, informed, and celebrated with a resolve in our faith communities to resist those who cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). Let us study and act to heed God's call to prevent gun violence.

E. *The Call to Action*

God has provided us with the elements to be agents of change in the world. The change needs to be comprehensive: we need to address the idolatry of guns, the violence that permeates our culture, our obsessions with personal rights over public responsibility, the practices of widespread and indiscriminate sale of military style weapons, as well as the legislation necessary to regulate the accessibility and sale of military weapons disguised as "sporting guns." We must keep our "eyes on the prize," of preventing gun violence and the unnecessary deaths and injuries that result. Enough blood has been spilled. We affirm that through good organizational effort, animated by the passion for justice that comes to the people of God through the Holy Spirit, gun violence can be dramatically reduced.

May our Church re-dedicate itself to this crucial task.

[Note: The Gun Violence Study Group met twice in addition to a September 2008 conference that initially brought together three of the group members and staff. The team was chaired by Bryan Miller, director of Cease-Fire, NJ, formerly in international sales; James Atwood, a retired pastor and former mission co-worker in Japan; Catherine Snyder, a campus minister at Virginia Tech; Deborah Brincivalli, executive presbyter, Presbytery of West Jersey, formerly a pastor and police officer; Vernon Carroll, National Parks administrator and former rancher; James Noel, professor at San Francisco Theological Seminary; and John Knapp, university professor of ethics at Samford University who was also liaison member from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). Julio Medina, also appointed, was unable to serve. Professor Katie Day, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, served as consultant writer, with Christian Iosso, ACSWP coordinator, serving as staff. The report's title comes from the title of the September 2008 conference co-sponsored by ACSWP, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, and the Stony Point Conference Center, which hosted the event. The team's meetings in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., included meetings with experts in the field with different views on strategy and message.]

Endnotes

1. See "Taking a Stand: Reducing Gun Violence in Our Communities," a report from the International Association of Chiefs of Police 2007 Great Lakes Summit on Gun Violence: p. 6. <http://www.theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=%2Fs0LiOkJK5Q%3D&tabid=87>. [Endnote 1 can be found in the recommendation section.]
2. Data from the past year is incomplete, and yet cases of family and small group shootings are regularly reported.
3. Data from the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey organization: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/sas/publications/yearb2007.html>.
4. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Philadelphia-and-surrounding-areas/Heeding-Gods-Call-Taking-Action-to-End-Gun-Violence/236075819633>.
5. The Million Mom March linked with the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence in 2001: <http://www.bradycampaign.org/chapters/>.
6. www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472115103-ch1.pdf: Julie Samia Mair, Stephen Teret, & Shannon Frattaroli, A Public Health Perspective on Gun Violence Prevention, p. 50. The authors particularly recommend low-cost, loaded chamber indicators and magazine safeties to let owners know if a bullet remains in the gun chamber even if a magazine of bullets is removed. "Owner-recognition" technologies are also being developed that personalize guns and prevent their use when stolen or in the hands of a child; this goes beyond gun locks and locking up guns.
7. Ibid, p. 52.
8. Beyond the Centers for Disease Control, which have added more data collection on the causes of death to their statistics on morbidity and mortality (with funding and research limitations enforced by Congress), one of the chief public proponents of the public health approach is the Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health, re-named and supported strongly by the mayor of New York in his private capacity.
9. Ibid, pp. 54–55, 61.
10. Allen Rostron, "Cease Fire: A "Win-Win" Strategy on Gun Policy for the Obama Administration," *Harvard Law & Policy Review*, Vol. 3, pp. 347–67, notably pp. 350 and 355, which summarize and cite poll data and also indicate that in the 2008 election "gun policy was well down on the list of issues that mattered most to voters," a positive development in his view. See also "Public Attitudes Toward the Regulation of Firearms," by Tom Smith, cited later in resolution.
11. Adam Liptak, "Justices Lean Toward Extending Gun Rights," *The New York Times*, March 3, 2010, pp. 1 and 18. The case, *McDonald v. Chicago*, No. 08-1521, has to do with the scope of the Second Amendment to govern not simply the federal government itself (and

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- the District of Columbia) but all state regulation, based on the court majority's opinion that gun rights are individual and not only related to "militias" or common defense.
12. Siebel, Brian J., and Allen K. Rostron, *No Gun Left Behind: The Gun Lobby's Campaign to Push Guns into Colleges and Schools*, Washington, D.C.: May 2007.
 13. Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence. *Incidents of Assault Weapon Violence Reported Since Ban Expired*. Washington, D.C., updated regularly, see [.pdf](#) for most recent incident.
 14. May 2005, Vol 95, No. 5 | *American Journal of Public Health* 830–32 2005 [American Public Health Association](#).
 15. Hemenway, David and Deborah Azrael., "The Relative Frequency of Offensive and Defensive Gun Uses: Results From a National Survey," *Violence and Victims*, 15(3) (2000): 257–72.
 16. E.J. Dionne Jr. "Beyond the NRA's Absolutism," *The Washington Post*, December 10, 2009. Dionne comments on a poll conducted by Frank Luntz for the anti-gun violence lobby, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, which surveyed 832 gun owners, including 401 NRA members. 86 percent of the group agreed with the statement: "We can do more to stop criminals from getting guns while also protecting the rights of citizens to freely own them." Luntz himself says, "I support the NRA." but he doesn't agree with the NRA's "slippery slope argument" which declares that any new gun law is but the first step for confiscation. "When the choice is between national security and terrorism versus no limits on owning guns," Luntz says, "I'm on the side of national security and fighting terrorism."
 17. Kristin A. Goss, in *Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America*, Princeton, 2006, documents NRA battles over gun-related initiatives and funding of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (now, and Explosives: BATFE) and the Centers for Disease Control (pp. 80–89) and effective political framing of gun "control" issues (pp. 151–64).
 18. General Assemblies: 108th, PCUS, 1968; 184th, UPCUSA 1972; 116th, PCUS 1976; 193rd, UPCUSA, 1981; 201st, 1989; 197th, 1985; 202nd, 1990; 213th, 2001. In 1989–90 organized discussion was held with pro-gun groups as part of the church policy process.
 19. *Hope, Respect, Reconciliation: A Christian Response to Gun Violence* by Brian Arnold (1991) and updated by The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence (1996).
 20. *Resolution on Gun Violence*, 1990: 40.121b.
 21. Isa. 65:18–20.
 22. Institutes, Book II, Chapter VIII, Number 39.
 23. *Guns, Democracy and the Insurrectionist Idea*, Josh Horwitz and Casey Anderson (University of Michigan Press, 2009), p.6.
 24. *Ibid*, p. 2.
 25. <http://www.nraila.org/Legislation/Federal/Read.aspx?id=5224>. This National Rifle Association-Institute for Legislative Action on-line newsletter describes the years they have been working to counter UN efforts.
 26. James Atwood, Presbyterian minister and former mission co-worker in Japan, has assembled a disturbing yet amusing collection of gun or violence-related phrases. See www.pcusa.org/acswp and look for gun violence resources.
 27. <http://www.miller-mccune.com/culture-society/this-is-your-brain-on-violence-4779/> Tom Jacobs, "This is your brain on violence," Miller-McCune magazine on-line, January 4, 2008: "A team at Columbia's Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Research Center found that on-screen violence stimulates specific responses in the human brain— activity that does not occur in reaction to other types of imagery. The study suggests that repeated exposure to violent images heightens our readiness to take action even as it suppresses the region of the brain that modulates aggression." The director of this study, Joy Hirsch, does not argue causal linkages between exposure to imagery and specific acts of violence, but use of the new brain-scanning technology has changed a debate that has been going on for fifty years and has involved a range of behavior-affecting drugs. It is beyond the scope of this resolution to describe all elements in the culture related to violence. One of ACSWP's commenters, William Laws, points to the film by Michael Moore, *Bowling for Columbine*, which parodies the culture but contains two places of reconciliation and genuine grief.
 28. Allen Rostron, *op. cit.*, p. 357.
 29. <http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/199211/southern-discomfort>. Richard Nisbett, Southern Discomfort, *Psychology Today*, Nov. 1, 1992. "In scrutinizing national opinion surveys, Nisbett found that white male Southerners don't endorse violence in general—but in three specific ways: for protection, in response to insults, and in the socialization of children. Asked whether a man has the right to kill to defend his home, 36 percent of Southerners say yes, versus 18 percent of Northerners." *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South* by Richard E. Nisbett, Dov Cohen Softcover, Perseus Books, ISBN 0813319935. This matter of honor exceeds, in their view, settler, slavery, and poverty influences and also influences higher resort to violence in rural areas, legacies of Scotch-Irish shepherding sub-cultures. A similar argument is made in James H. Webb's *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America* (2004)
 30. http://www.ekklelesia.co.uk/content/cpt/article_060823wink.shtml. In this sermon, biblical scholar Walter Wink, author of a major trilogy examining the language of "the powers" in the Bible, summarizes and applies "the myth of redemptive violence" to aspects of U.S.

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culture: “In short, the Myth of Redemptive Violence is the story of the victory of order over chaos by means of violence. It is the ideology of conquest, the original religion of the status quo.”

31. <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/history/healthlegacies.cfm>. This symposium at the University of Alberta illustrates the range of influences attributed to military hierarchy, cohesion, training, experience, and institutional requirements on societies. Cultural variables such as the role of the military in society and the impacts of wars are as hard to quantify as they are to deny.
32. Kaplan, McFarland, Huguet, “Characteristics of adult male and female firearm suicide decedents: findings from the National Violent Death Reporting System,” *Injury Prevention* 2009 (15:5) 322–27.
33. James K. Noel, *Discussion of the Macrostructure of Black on Black Inner-City Violence*, January 2008 (before a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy).
34. <http://www.paulsjusticepage.com/reality-of-justice/blackgenocide.htm>. This article appeared in the *Journal of African Men*, v 1 #2, Fall 1995. © 1995 Robert Johnson and Paul Leighton.
35. Ibid. Noel’s discussion of structural factors did not deny personal responsibility but situated it within the bleak opportunities of the ghetto and the “prison industrial complex;” he also cited, Loic Wacquant, *From Slavery to Mass Incarceration*: <http://www.newleftreview.org/?view=2367>.
36. Webster, Vernick, Teret, *How Cities Can Combat Illegal Guns and Gun Violence*, Center for Gun Policy and Research, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (2006). http://www.jhsph.edu/bin/q/z/How_Cities_Can_Combat_Illegal_Guns.pdf.
37. John Seabrook, “Don’t Shoot: A Radical Approach to the Problem of Gang Violence,” *The New Yorker*, June 22, 2009, p. 33.
38. Ibid., p. 38. See David Kennedy, *Deterrence and Crime Prevention* (2008).
39. See *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam (New York: Simon & Schuster), 2000.
40. Based on statistics and projections from the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
41. See *Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America*, Kristin A. Goss (Princeton University Press, 2006).
42. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970*, Doug McAdam (University of Chicago Press, 1999) 2nd edition; see also *Readings on Social Movements: Origins, Dynamics and Outcomes* (Oxford University Press, 2010).
43. Brady Campaign, www.bradycampaign.org/studies/view/92/.
44. Jer. 31:15.
45. Ludwig, Jens & Philip J Cook, *Gun Violence: The Real Costs*. Oxford University Press, 2000.
46. See *Global Firearm Deaths* (Toronto: Small Arms/Firearms Education and Research Network, 2005); United Nations *Eighth International Crime Victims Survey, 2000* and Gun Control Network (www.gun-control-network.org).
47. It should be noted that suicide is not always a solitary act. Often domestic violence results in “murder-suicides,” and usually the perpetrators of massacres end up taking their own lives. In fact, suicide is often their driving emotion—they want to take others with them perhaps to be noticed or to satisfy their personal rage. The effects of bullying and personal isolation are additional factors.
48. “Guns and Suicide in the United States,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, 9/4/08.
49. Statistics from 2004, Brady Campaign.
50. *Race Matters* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), “Nihilism is to be understood here ... (as) the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and (most important) lovelessness. The frightening result is a numbing detachment from others and a self-destructive disposition toward the world” (p.14).
51. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2009/0408/p06s19-woam.html>. Patrik Jonsson and Sarah Miller Liana, “Are Mexican drug traffickers armed with U.S. guns?” *Christian Science Monitor*, April 8, 2009. “At the center of the debate are claims that most of the weapons Mexican drug traffickers employ—creating sensational headlines as cartels battle the Mexican military—come from U.S. sources. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) says more than 90 percent of the guns seized in Mexico that can be traced, originated in the U.S. In 2008, the Mexican government sent the ATF 11,000 arms for tracing. According to an ATF spokesman, all were successfully traced (testimony of March 24, 2008, by Agent William Newell) ... Guns sold illegally in Mexico reportedly are bought legally in US gun stores along the border by so-called ‘straw purchasers,’ such as those employed by (trafficker named) Hernandez in San Antonio.”
52. Copy of August 5, 2009, letter available on ACSWP website, gun violence resources section.
53. See Violence Policy Center, http://www.vpc.org/fact_sht/domviofs.htm.
54. *American Journal of Public Health*, November 2009.

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55. Associated Press, “U.S. Prison Population Rises Despite a Drop in 20 States,” *The New York Times*, December 9, 2009, p. A22.
56. A most sustained treatment of this, including a lengthy assessment of the Mexican situation, is in “Guns: The Small Arms Trade in the Americas, NACLA (North American Congress on Latin America) *Report on the Americas*, 41:2, March/April 2008. Other data can be found at the New America Foundation’s Arms and Security Initiative: www.asi.newamerica.net/home.
57. 1 John 3:18.
58. General Social Survey, 2006.
59. “Public Attitudes Towards the Regulation of Firearms,” Tom W. Smith, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, 2007.
60. Allen Rostron, op. cit. at Endnote 10 above.

Appendix A
Guns and Violence in Our Language
Compiled by Jim Atwood

Big shot	bite the bullet
shot down	The world ends not with a bang but with a whimper
gun shy	pistol whipped
the smoking gun	Who’s riding shotgun?
lock, stock, and barrel	he blew his brains out
like shooting fish (monkeys) in a barrel	he blew it to smithereens
we reached a stand off	he jumped the gun
trigger an idea	the third bullet on the page(a list of items)
trigger happy	he’s got an arm like a cannon (baseball, football)
brushed his teeth with gunpowder	he shot through the line (football)
he shot his mouth off	she’s got an explosive personality
don’t jump the gun	pull out the big guns
a shotgun wedding	shot down an argument
he’s a trouble shooter	shoot holes in one’s approach
she blew me away	Be loaded for bear
go off half-cocked	Stick to your guns
she’s a pistol	He is grace under fire
that’s a notch in the old gun belt	He got flack from the citizens
stick to your guns	I’ve got a question. O.K. Shoot
I’ll be a son of a gun	I’ve got a question. O.K. Fire away
Take true aim	Someone’s gunning for me.
sure shot	What are we aiming at?
go off with a bang	What are we shooting for?
I dodged a bullet	He’s shooting blanks
the Senator is under fire	We were outgunned.
I hope he won’t go postal (re: fired employees)	You’ve given me some ammunition for my talk
She went ballistic	Getting shot at from every direction
shoot to the top	He’s a hired gun
a scatter shot approach	He shot his mouth off
Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition	We killed them 42-0
shoot for the moon	Is that a trigger for you? (Used in counseling)
Have gun will travel	Nice kill, Mary! (Volleyball)
Supershot	Shoot me an e mail
Hot shot	Double barreled approach
Going great guns	Looking down the barrel of a gun
on a hit list	Blast off
Sharpshooter	She’s a blast

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I'll give it my best shot
He's just shooting blanks
he's shell shocked
Shoot me for a billy goat
shot to hell
Where is your piece? (gun)
You call the shots
gang bang
gat (gang slang for a gun)
shoot the works
shoot up the joint
went off like a gun
who is our target audience?
He is packin heat
a bang of a good time
on target
right on target
off target
bullseye
my aim was off
Forewarned is forearmed
it's a long shot
shooting the bull
it's just a warning shot
a shot over his bow
he grabbed the wrong end of the barrel
pulling the trigger
he shoots from the hip
he's a straight shooter
he took a shot to the head(Boxing)
Keep firing (Basketball-hockey)
Rodriguez is their big gun
there goes the whole shooting match
faster than a speeding bullet
just take a shot in the dark
What weapons are at our disposal?
high caliber, low caliber people
pop a cap

Torpedo an idea
I bombed out (failed)
We oughta nuke 'em.
Give me some cover
He was bombarded by questions
Now, this is the "killer"
Where are the land mines?
Let's get fired up.
Aiming to kill
You do that & I'll kill you
Fire at will
Fire when ready
Got a rocket in my pocket
Draw a bead on you
They've got you in the crosshairs
Sounds like a booby trap
It's a straight shot into the city
Duck and cover
It will backfire on us
We'll have a shootout
Got him in our sights
We'll have three shots to the end zone
Reporters asked rapid-fire questions
It's not a magic bullet, but it will help
Where's the silver bullet?
Shotgun formation (football)
He's (quarterback) in the gun
She knocked 'em dead
What's the plan of attack?
It was a bang-bang play at first base
Don't shoot the messenger
The guy needs killin'
They took pot shots at the speech.
It's a shotgun approach, not a rifle.
He went to a gun fight with a knife.
More bang for your buck
Young guns (new leaders)
Guns (for biceps)

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 11-06

Comment on 11-06—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women (RE&WM/PW) ministry area works with congregations in the areas of racial ethnic and new immigrant church growth and transformation, leadership development, networking with women, and assuring that the church is inclusive, expansive, and racially just. The RE&WM/PW ministry area would be able to support and encourage church-wide faithfulness to these commitments. However, the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry Area of the General Assembly Mission Council is the more appropriate entity to continue to provide resources on gun violence to Presbyterians.

The Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry area concurs with this comment.

Item 11-07

[The assembly disapproved Item 11-07 with comment. See pp. 39, 42.]

[Comment: With thanksgiving for the diligence and hard work of the authors of the study paper, *On Living a Human Life Before God*, the original paper, *The Nature and Value of Human Life* (1981), is in many ways superior as a tool for moral discourse. Moreover, the concerns of the overture approved by the 212th General Assembly (2000), *Overture 00-95: On Gun Violence*, are more adequately addressed by Item 11-06 of this year's report: "Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call."]

On Living a Human Life Before God—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

1. Recognizing that God calls Presbyterian congregations to become communities of moral discourse, approves the study paper, "On Living a Human Life Before God," as a resource and directs the Stated Clerk to have it posted on-line, distributed to congregations in the social witness policy CD, and printed in limited quantity.
2. Directs the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Theology, Worship & Education ministry area, to develop resources that will aid congregations in identifying and developing practices of ethical reflection as communities of covenantal responsibility seeking to hear the voice of God and the voices of others in the context of serious and complex issues.
3. Authorizes the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in conversation with Presbyterian seminary and college ethics and religion faculty, to develop study and discussion papers on major ethical questions working with themes in "On Living a Human Life Before God" and noting its predecessor studies on human life issues, including "The Nature and Value of Human Life" (1981).

Rationale

On Living a Human Life Before God

Abstract

This study paper and recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2000 Referral: Overture 00-95. On Gun Violence, Recommendation 2. Direct[ing] the General Assembly Council to Instruct the National Ministries Division of the PC(USA) to Update and Reissue the Following: a. The 121st General Assembly (1981) of the PCUS' Council on Theology and Culture Study Paper, "The Nature and Value of Human Life" (Minutes, 2000, Part I, pp. 52, 482).*

This request was subsequently referred to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). The 1981 report followed a 1975 request for "a theology of life true to the Scriptures." The primary concerns at that time were abortion, euthanasia, war, and capital punishment (all issues that involve the taking of human life).

The study paper, *The Nature and Value of Human Life*, or *NVHL*, provides clear guidance and continues to be helpful to members of the PC(USA) in pastoral counseling as well as in defining the denominational stance. It has since been supplemented by other related documents, but thirty years after the adoption of the *NHVL*, new opportunities and questions face us in areas including violence, genetics, climate change, human rights, pollution of water and air, and the management of resources needed to sustain human life.

In light of these changes, we invite congregations to reflect anew on what it means to live a human life before God at the beginning of the 21st century. What is our proper relation to God's other creatures and to the ecological systems of which we are a part? How can we manage and distribute food, fuel, and water in a way that reflects God's desire for justice?

This study paper sets forth a scripturally based, globally grounded responsibility ethic for the 21st century.

Blessing is the fundamental fact of our existence. Genesis 1 describes our creation on an abundant earth with two unique gifts: being "in God's image" and having "dominion over." We are to be responsible, both sharing in and promoting the blessings God gives. In the covenants with Noah and his family, Abraham and Sarah, Hagar and Ishmael, God's blessing and call to responsibility are further clarified. When God chooses to become present on earth in human form, we receive additional blessing and responsibility.

This paper outlines the history of Reformed perspectives on social responsibility and concludes with a call to congregations to form a "community of moral discourse"—that is, a group committed to reflect together on our values and how we can respond to specific challenges we face in this century.

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Study Paper

A. *Introduction*

In 1975, the PCUS General Assembly directed its Council on Theology and Culture to prepare a statement “setting forth a theology of life true to the Scriptures.” The primary concerns at that time were abortion, euthanasia, war, and capital punishment (all issues that involve the taking of human life).

The resulting 1981 paper begins with a statement of the proper valuing of human life as found in Scripture. Using Ex. 20:13 and Ps. 8, the argument repeatedly sets forth an ethic of “doing no harm” and “acting to prevent harm.” In any particular case of conflict between these principles, the document recommends the course of action “most consistent” with valuing human life as Scripture does. Next it provides a theological analysis of the nature of human life, followed by issue studies on abortion, euthanasia, human medical experimentation, capital punishment, war, and suicide. The *NVHL* provides clear guidance and continues to be helpful to members of the PC(USA) in pastoral counseling as well as in defining the denominational stance.

It has since been supplemented by other related documents, such as:

- *The Covenant of Life and the Caring Community* adopted by the UPCUSA General Assembly in 1983.
- *Covenant and Creation: Theological Reflections on Contraception and Abortion* also adopted by the UPCUSA General Assembly in 1983.
- *Genetics, Health and Personhood* produced by the UPCUSA task force and published in *Church & Society* 73:1, September–October, 1982.
- *Problem Pregnancies and Abortion: Do Justice, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly (Micah 6:8)*, approved by the PC(USA), 1992.
- *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, PC(USA), 1996.
- *Statement on Post-Viability and Late-Term Abortion*, PC(USA), 2003; revised 2006.
- *Resolution on Violence, Religion and Terrorism*, PC(USA), 2004.
- *Transforming Families*, PC(USA), 2004.
- *Living into the Body of Christ: Towards Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities*, PC(USA), 2006.
- *The Power to Change: U.S. Policy and Global Warming*, PC(USA), 2008.

Some of these publications were approved by the General Assembly; others were only received for study. Together they represent a body of research and reflection worth remembering at this time. Regarding the six issues addressed in the 1981 paper and in subsequent documents, there is little fundamentally new to be said; our church remains divided over many of them.

Thirty years after the adoption of the *NVHL*, new opportunities and questions face us. The earth now produces enough food to end hunger, so justice in management and distribution of food has become an important issue. Human pollution of water and air are major problems. Climate change has become a concern worldwide, as well as the need to move toward renewable sources of fuel. In addition, science and technology have given us new ways to fight disease and to understand the genetic blueprint that defines each of us. The threat of violence, however, haunts our lives, from our city streets to terrorist attacks and the possibility of nuclear warfare.

In light of these changes and pressures, we invite congregations to reflect anew on what it means to live a human life before God at the beginning of the 21st century.

Our human nature and our ultimate value are rooted in God’s fidelity in the past, as recorded in the Bible and in the lives of God’s servants. They are also rooted in the Spirit’s present activity in, among, and through us, and in our eschatological hope for the fullness of salvation in Jesus Christ for all of creation.

Along with Jews and Muslims, we trust in the covenants God has made with us, recorded throughout God’s Word, first in Genesis and Exodus, then in the words of the prophets. As Christians, we share in a renewed covenant centered in God’s act of redemption on the cross. We take Jesus as the model of what it means to be truly human and as the One who transforms us by the Spirit so that we too may learn to love and live justly in this world, trusting in the goodness and power of the Creator.

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In this paper, we invite groups within churches to become intentional communities of moral discourse, that is, groups committed to reflect together on who we are, what our values are, and how we can respond to specific challenges we face in this century.

Genesis 1:26–28 presents stewardship as a defining aspect of our human nature: the earth and all its beings are gifts from God for our responsible use and care. Many of the problems facing the human race in 2010 are related to our unwise use of these resources. How can we manage and distribute food, fuel, and water in a way that reflects God’s desire for justice? Violence has been used to capture and control resources since the beginning of civilization. As a church, can we begin to understand and decrease the violence in our homes, streets, and international relations? What is structural violence, and how do we participate in it?

What is our proper relation to God’s other creatures and to the ecological systems of which we are a part? How can we decrease our impact on what these beings need to sustain their families and communities? How can we manage human genetic knowledge to benefit—not harm—our generation and future generations? These are questions that humanity faces at the beginning of the 21st century.

The scriptural, theological, and ethical traditions of Reformed thought provide abundant resources to guide us as we work through these moral issues. When we read Scripture and the founders of Reformed tradition, blessing and covenant emerge as central themes. Along with blessing comes responsibility, often expressed as part of a covenant.

Thus our study brings us to a scripturally based, globally grounded responsibility ethic, in which we acknowledge and live out appropriate human choices among possible courses of action.

In our conversations as a community of moral discourse, we may disagree on specific choices and ways of being responsible before God. But perhaps our greatest task is simply to reflect God’s image by listening to each other and communicating honestly—not retreating into separate corners and condemning our brothers and sisters in Christ.

B. *God’s Blessing in Creation and Our Response*

We are blessed: this is the fundamental fact of our existence. We walk in beauty on a green planet nourished by water and sunlight, surrounded by plants and animals of astounding variety. Starry skies, ocean depths, and mountain heights fill us with curiosity and awe; they speak to us of a Creator, who also reaches out to us through prophets and Scriptures, even taking on our human form.

The first chapter of Genesis repeats the chorus, “And God saw that it was good,” seven times. God blesses “swarms of living creatures” brought forth from the waters, as well as blessing humankind and the day of rest.

We learn from this account that God gave humans a unique blessing and role: “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26). These words define both the nature and the value of humanity.

Many have debated what it means to be “in God’s image” and to “have dominion over,” but it is clear that image and dominion are linked. Our position in relation to the rest of creation is to be like that of God: caring and providing, as God nurtures and delights in creation. We are to be responsible, both sharing in and promoting the blessings God gives.

God’s creative power and grace have from the beginning been at work in the world. Blessing is thus grounded in what Reformed Christians have called common grace. It is there for all human beings and always has been. The message of God’s benevolent presence can be read in each sunrise and sunset by anyone with ears to hear and eyes to see. In short, all humans have been blessed and can become agents of God’s blessing—these two facts alone express the value to God of human life. They also define the core of human nature.

The pattern of God’s blessing conferring human responsibility recurs throughout Scripture. This special bond of trust and expectation between creature and Creator is given the name covenant in Gen. 9:9, when God blesses Noah and his family after the flood. In fact, this covenant encompasses not only humans but “every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you.” All creation is good and welcomed into this covenant—even the earth itself: “I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth” (Gen. 13).

C. *Blessing in Jesus Christ*

We who have been made new in Jesus Christ experience another kind of blessing: awareness of God in Christ, “reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). Our lives become an expression of the work of redeeming grace in us. As we drink in God’s

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blessing, we accept a responsibility to be blessing to others, even to humankind as a whole. As individuals, as a church, and as members of the social order, we can make tangible God's intention for human life.

Being blessed means carrying God's gift of deep well-being with us in all we do and say, and ministering that well-being to the lives of others. By being in Jesus Christ, we can be channels of the gift of blessing, not only to people we know but to all human beings and to other creatures on this planet.

We believe that the Creator of the universe entered into solidarity with human reality in Jesus Christ. God's choice to become present on earth in human form—in our quarrelsome, violent species—reveals profound confidence in who we are and who we can become. Thus incarnation was a gift, and one whereby we receive a tremendous responsibility. "Follow me," Jesus said (Mk. 1:17; Lk. 18:22). "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances," wrote Paul (1 Thess. 5:16–18).

In addition to our personal walk with Jesus, we are to love our neighbor and to "have dominion"—to care about God's promises to all life on earth. We are not responsible for bringing about the promise of God's reign on earth (that would be works righteousness), but we are responsible to that promise. We must live in hope, accountable before God, who desires that every tear be wiped away.

1 Peter 3:15 is instructive here: "Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you." This passage is usually interpreted to mean being ready to use persuasive words in explaining or defending one's faith, but it may also mean to be accountable for how we have used the hope given to us. We are called to witness to a fear-filled world that God will not abandon God's own creation.

D. *God's Call to Do Justice*

By faith in "Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate," we receive and obey the Bible as "the word of God written" (*The Book of Confessions* 9:27). Our Scriptures are among the most profound and complex moral narratives to have been produced in the developmental history of the human species.

God's Word to us begins with blessing and calls us to response. Each story of the people of Israel and the disciples of Jesus refines our sense of what it means to be in covenant with a loving but righteous Creator. Moses learns that his life is not his own to spend tending sheep in Midian. He is called to return to Egypt and be God's instrument in freeing the Hebrew people from slavery. Then at Mt. Sinai the Creator reveals to Moses both God's nature and human responsibility in the Ten Commandments: "I, YHWH, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment . . . for wickedness . . . but bestowing mercy..." (Ex. 20:5–6).

God continues to speak through Moses and to call the people of Israel not only to obedience but to love, in the great *Shema Israel*: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4–5). In addition to this preeminent commandment, God presents through Moses many specific ways of being responsible to God: details of sacrifice and prayer and priestly dress; laws regarding slaves, property damage, and loans; offerings for the expiation of various sins.

When the nations of Israel and Judah ignore God's mandates, prophets arise to call them to repentance. In each case, God reminds the people of the great blessings they have received and calls them to respond accordingly. One memorable restatement of God's call comes from the prophet Micah: ". . . and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic. 6:8).

Hundreds of years later when someone asks how to inherit eternal life, Jesus answers, "What is written in the law?" and approves the man's answer quoting the *Shema*: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Lk. 10:25–28; cf. Deut. 6:4–5).

In the 21st century it sometimes puzzles us that the same Scriptures speaking these profound truths also contain passages in which customs such as genocide, slavery, and the subordination of women are taken for granted. The Bible contains many voices with differing perspectives. There are "justificatory narratives" that legitimate privilege and power, but there are other voices in the Bible that raise prophetic challenge to privilege.

To include God's voice in our community of moral discourse, we must stay grounded in study of the Bible. If we search Scripture, we will learn more about blessing and responsibility. We will find that blessing must not be equated with comfort or privilege. The call to responsibility is not license for condescending instruction to the less privileged. Regardless of our socioeconomic status, we are blessed with God's image and have the capacity to seek God's face (Ps.27:8), as well as the responsibility to carry blessing to others.

Both blessing and responsibility are grounded in our fundamental relation to our Creator; they increase when we grow in faith and experience of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

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E. *Historical Covenants and Renewed Blessing*

Human history in Genesis begins with creation and a blessing that connects us to responsibility for living creatures and for the earth. In later chapters of Genesis and other books of the Hebrew Scriptures, we find historical accounts, psalms, prophecy, and poetry that clarify what it means to live as humans carrying God's image.

1. *Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar*

We see both blessing and responsibility in Gen. 12:1–3, the call to Abram to decamp from Mesopotamia (the territory now called Iraq) and travel to Canaan (now called Palestine).

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." [An alternate translation, "by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves," gives other nations an active role as they honor Abraham's great blessing and wish a similar one for themselves.]

In any case, God calls Abram to accept new responsibilities, no longer as a nomad chieftain but as a world-historical religious figure. Abram in himself and through his descendants will become a blessing, a source of abundant life. Those who curse him will find that abundance withdrawn.

Note that the promise does not come to fruition immediately. Many points of tension unfold: a famine in the land of promise, a sojourn in Egypt, a prophecy of slavery for four hundred years.

Furthermore, God's offer of blessing comes to a man who is far from perfect. He secures his well-being at the expense of Sarai when he makes her sexually available to Pharaoh and to King Abimelech: "at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother" (Gen. 12: 11–20; 20:13). He and Sarah send Hagar and Ishmael into the desert. He calculates how to enrich himself at the expense of the peoples of the world for whom he is supposed to be some sort of blessing. In fact, his blessing is a call to grow into God's promise, neither a sign of moral stature nor a license to exploit.

As Abram struggles and grows, he learns that he and Sarai are equal partners in the blessing. God tells him twice, "I will bless her." He learns that the ambiguous earlier promise, "I will make of you a great nation," included Sarai from the beginning: "... she shall give rise to nations" (Gen. 17:16). Both are renamed to reflect blessing.

Their earlier plan to help God out by having a son through Hagar had left no role for Sarah. As the years passed, she recognized "the wrong done to me" (Gen. 16:5). No longer the cooperative wife, she called on God to hold Abram accountable and to "judge between you and me." At this point the blessing was imperiled by conflict between the two primary actors in the drama.

In addition, the slave woman Hagar was abused by both Sarah and Abraham. Twice she and her son Ishmael were abandoned in the wilderness to die. Powerless and in despair, Hagar asked only, "Do not let me look on the death of the child" (Gen. 21:16). Then she "lifted up her voice and wept."

God intervenes at this point to correct the wrong done to Hagar and Ishmael by Abraham and Sarah, the two bearers of blessing. The first single parent and the first person in the Bible to flee oppression, Hagar becomes also "the first person whom a messenger of God visits; the first woman to receive an annunciation; the only woman to receive a divine promise of descendants," as Phyllis Trible notes in *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children* (2006). (Sarah's promise is mediated through Abraham.) Hagar's and Sarah's sons will each become fathers of "a great nation." Thus Hagar also is blessed by God, not just Abraham and not just Abraham and Sarah.

Though both Abraham and Sarah wanted to take their blessing as a sign of privilege, God corrected them, saying in essence "You are part of my plan, but the powerless are also included in the sweep of my blessing. I hear their voices." We learn that living a human life before God requires being like God in the world. The privileged are to care about each person, including those who work for them and those who face injustice. Those with less social standing are also to care and reflect God's image, calling for justice and God's intervention.

The lines of tension in this story—patriarchy and women, slaves and abuse—point toward prophetic analysis of power and social corruption. In later passages of Scripture, faithfulness is not just a matter of worshipping God or keeping the Ten Commandments. The prophets care deeply about the plight of the poor and disenfranchised on the margins of the covenant community. They should be our model as we organize a community of moral discourse in our congregation. We need to make special efforts to listen to people who are most disadvantaged or impacted by injustice. Giving greater weight to the voices of persons economically disadvantaged is called "the preferential option for the poor."

Through this study of Genesis, we can conclude that blessing means a conferral, by God or on behalf of God, of both deep well-being and a specific vocation of responsibility in the world. Abraham and Sarah also pass down to us a responsibil-

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ity to be instruments by whom all are blessed and to learn from their mistakes of misusing and disrespecting Hagar. When we live properly empowered by blessing, God and God's name are blessed in return.

In succeeding generations of the life of Israel, much goes wrong with implementing the promise given to Abraham and repeated to Moses. God's blessings come to be considered as possessions—of land and crops and wives and children—rather than as responsibilities to a promise of blessing for all earth's families. Israel's kings try to be like those of the nations around them, obsessed with grandeur and military power, rather than carrying out their responsibility to be a blessing. Conflicts follow between monarchical Israel and other nations; prophets repeatedly call Israel back to the global responsibilities of the covenant and foresee a messiah who will put things right and renew the original blessing of Gen. 1:28.

As Christians, we believe that the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, is the beginning of fulfillment of the promise in Genesis 1 to which we are called to be responsible. The promise remains real though we live out a history of distorted attempts to achieve it. God renews the promise in Revelations 21, which speaks of the coming Holy City of God and an end to the suffering begun in Genesis 3. Finally, Rev. 22:7 reinstates for us the original blessings of Genesis: "Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

2. *Elizabeth, Mary, and Jesus*

Jesus Christ is the One who fulfills the covenant promise, who heals creation by taking on himself all the wounds of a fallen world.

In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus is the teacher describing what all humans need to do as sharers in the covenant with Abraham: "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Many of his parables challenge customs regarding agricultural economics and the debt system of Palestine in the first century, so ruinous to the poor. Jesus is concerned with the well-being of humans, asking those around him to be responsible to God's blessing.

Jesus' life as recorded in the Gospels is our foremost model for what it is to live a human life before God, and in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John we find the repeated theme of blessing followed by responsibility. Jesus' birth is heralded by Elizabeth, who prophesies to Mary "with a loud cry," in Lk. 1:42–45:

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. . . . For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.

Two women in a small town in the Roman-controlled province of Judea experience blessing physically, in their pregnant bodies, with questions, wonder, and acceptance of the responsibility that lies ahead. In this passage we are reminded that God blesses and uses the poor and illiterate. Indeed, these two were chosen to reveal God and call us all to responsible living.

Mary responds to Elizabeth's blessing with a profound sense of the call to which blessing leads. She moves from praise to prophecy, affirming that from the first covenant with Abraham, the Creator's intent has been mercy and justice. Mary realizes that her life and that of her child will bring fulfillment of promise. God has acted for those who are hungry, lowly, and God-fearing. Although Mary does not specifically mention Sarah or the covenants with Noah, Hagar, and Ishmael, we understand Sarah to be an equal partner in that first covenant with the Hebrew people and all these covenants to be expressions of the one covenant of grace.

The most well-known record of Jesus' preaching begins, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God," and continues with "you who are hungry," "you who weep," (Lk. 6:20–26), and in Matthew "the meek," "the merciful," etc. (Mt: 5:3–13) These statements may be acts of blessing, conferring well-being, or they may be primarily gifts of responsibility to *be* what these words say. Alternatively, they may be expressions of recognition that blessings are already at work in these types of persons.

In any case, being educated, powerful, or wealthy is not necessary for being blessed or for extending blessing to others. In fact, this status may be a hindrance as Luke explains: "But woe to you who are rich . . . Woe to you when all speak well of you" (Lk. 6:24, 26). These people are aligned with Israel's false prophets, not with those who called for justice. It is the poor and disenfranchised who are blessings to the rest of us, witnessing to injustices in our society and in our own lives that we would prefer not to see. If we are willing to learn how our choices may be tied to conditions that perpetuate hunger, we begin to be blessed by the poor. We may become close to a poor family and learn from its members about generosity and radical trust in God.

3. *Parable of the Sheep and Goats*

The final parable in Matthew's gospel is often seen as summing up Jesus' teaching (Mt. 25:31–46). We are familiar with the comparison to a shepherd separating sheep and goats, but here the "Son of Man" on the throne of glory separates "the nations" (*ethne* meaning "peoples, tribes") not individuals.

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Actually, this is a parable about blessing. The issue is whether the peoples practice social justice, ordering their lives around the responsibility of bringing blessing to the least privileged of the families of the earth. The words “Come, you that are blessed by my Father” clearly refer to those whose lives with one another have fulfilled the responsibility toward others laid on them by having received God’s blessing.

Jesus here places great value on the just organization of society, based on love for each person, especially those most vulnerable. He cares about the social contexts necessary for humans to develop their capacity to be a blessing to others.

This parable reflects Jesus’ mode of presence in the world, expressed by deeds such as eating with sinners, honoring a Samaritan, and commending the widow who gave a mite. We find Jesus when we share in his solidarity with those most excluded from prosperity and from having a voice.

Many more New Testament passages describe human life before God in terms of blessing. To understand further the connection between Jesus and the ancient promise “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” we will now briefly survey Reformed understandings of social responsibility.

F. *Reformed Perspectives on Social Responsibility*

The PC(USA)’s stance on social responsibility is grounded in Reformed tradition and is affirmed in resolutions and statements approved by the General Assembly or received for study over the past thirty years. See, for example, those listed in the introduction to this document. The church has expressed responsibility in areas such as peacemaking, global economics, sustainable development, violence, contraception, and abortion. What we know today as the Reformed tradition began, and has continued, as one strand in the long history of biblical interpretation. Luther, Calvin, and other leaders of the Reformation implemented a re-reading and re-interpretation of Scripture, one among many in the history of the church.

“Reformed tradition” is actually a complex history of many voices. The term designates the broad theological and ecclesiastical vision characteristic of Reformation churches in such places as Switzerland, France, Hungary, Scotland, the Netherlands, northwestern Germany, New England, and the Middle Atlantic states. Already in the 16th century there were many divisions within the Reformed tradition, both geographic and theological, most of which have been handed down within denominations that still exist today. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long history within this tradition, and many younger Reformed churches developed as Protestant Christianity spread from Europe to other parts of the world.

One writer at the 1991 Seoul General Council of the World Association of Reformed Churches (WARC) spoke of the “many cultures” of Reformed Christianity, ranging from orthodox Calvinism to American evangelicalism and to the “witness of peace” churches. Though Reformed tradition can be viewed generally as a set of attitudes toward Scripture interpretation, theological reflection, and life together in church and world, to be Reformed today is not to hold certain identifiable views. It is to be in the conversation among these various voices.

One thing is sure: our Reformed forebears developed scriptural ways of answering—for their time—questions similar to those we are asking today. They asked how the redeemed sinner is to know what kind of responsibility she or he bears in the world. Despite disagreement on other issues, there is surprising continuity in Reformed thinking concerning the nature of human responsibility to God’s promises.

Here are some of the milestones in the history of Reformed thought on social responsibility:

- a. Calvin’s understanding of sanctification and his “third use of the law” concept,
- b. His view of public office as a form of ministry,
- c. “Covenant of works” theology, rooted in the “federal theology” of Heinrich Bullinger,
- d. Influences on the political philosophy of John Locke (1623–1704),
- e. “Common grace” in the thinking of Abraham Kuyper and Richard Mouw,
- f. Reformed liberation theologies such as the work of James H. Cone and Justo Gonzalez.

In the last forty years, liberation theologians have raised important questions for Reformed thinking on social responsibility. Their method begins with human experience and brings insights from that experience to the task of thinking about God and about human responsibility. For example, Catholic theologian Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz reports on the struggle of Latina women to be recognized as fully responsible moral agents. Their struggle for liberation begins with naming, confronting, and overcoming the barriers to exercising responsibility. Isasi-Diaz calls for greater accountability from those with power in social, political, and economic systems, while liberating the Latina/o community to engage in changing the quality of their lives. For more discussion, see

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PC(USA) booklets on subjects such as mujerista theology, #7270001003; feminist theology, #7270000002; womanist theology, #7270001002; and Asian American women's theology, #7283906002.

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches has welcomed insights from liberation theology, particularly in Ottawa (1982), in Debrecen, Hungary (1997), and in Accra, Ghana (2004). The Reformed tradition today represents established social and economic powers less than it did in Calvin's time and throughout much of its history. From a position closer to the margins, the Reformed churches may begin to learn solidarity with those whose lives have been devastated by the economic and military choices of others.

In short, both the "responsible society" ethic and the "fight injustice" ethic are needed in the world today. Reformed churches must hear the call to bring down unjust global economic structures, even while striving for the order of a responsible society.

G. *Reflecting God's Image Through Moral Discourse*

Both Scripture and our Reformed tradition teach us that acceptance of blessing and enactment of responsibility are central to living a human life before God.

One way to figure out how to be responsible is to share our ideas and insights together, while also studying the facts of a particular problem. By gathering, speaking honestly about our ideas and experiences, and respecting each other in dialogue, we reflect God's image.

Thus starting a community of moral discourse helps to fulfill those two uniquely human tasks—bearing God's image and having "dominion." Together in a nonjudgmental group we can ask:

- How do blessing and responsibility shape our own personal conduct?
- What do we stand for as a denomination, and how should we express it?
- How can we participate in building social structures in which all may live responsibly as citizens?

We can explore answers through study and prayer, talking honestly together. (One conclusion is not necessarily to be expected in this conversation.)

1. *Ingredients for Successful Moral Discourse*

Let us now look at three aspects of the conversation in an intentional community of moral discourse.

- *Gathering the facts* of whatever particular situation you are examining. In addition to finding information, statistics, and history, ask, "How does this situation look to persons who are silenced or marginalized by social structures or by our typical ways of thinking?" Seek out such persons, whether within your congregation, on the other side of town, or on another continent, listening to them with patience and humility, questioning your assumptions, and acknowledging your own standpoint (the particular set of ethnic, gender, age, educational, economic and other circumstances that frame your perspective).

- *Being open to God's Holy Spirit* as you consider information being gathered. When you begin to define the broad situation, the Spirit may lay on your hearts a particular course of action that could make a difference. On the other hand, God's Spirit may simply bless you by healing divisions and giving you greater understanding of your neighbors through this process of moral discourse.

- *Identifying the source of your group's moral passion.* Where in Scripture, liturgy, or theology do you hear the call to responsibility for the well-being of others? Perhaps you will choose the command to love in Luke 10:27, or you may choose to expand it by defining your neighbor to include future generations or all living creatures on the planet. Lines from a favorite hymn may express your motivating principles. Your group may decide to list several relevant principles that surface and demand your attention, even if they seem to conflict.

As your conversation continues, you may from time to time gather additional information, redefine the principles that motivate you, or again seek the direction of the Holy Spirit. There are many resources for guidance in forming a community of moral discourse. For example, see *The Church as Moral Community* by Lewis Mudge (1998) and other resources listed at the end of this document.

2. *Growing as a Community*

A church that commits to developing as a community of moral discourse will notice growth in the following areas.

a. *Positioning*

Initially the congregation will consider its social location within the larger community. What is its make-up by age, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, and other criteria? Based on this composition, what insights can it bring to city councils, to community

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organizing, or to the PC(USA)? Whether the church is poor or privileged, it has gifts to use so that the prayer “Thy will be done on earth” may be fulfilled. On the other hand, what does this congregation need to learn? A congregation with social power will need to listen to those on the margins.

Theologically, the classic Reformed position of church in society is as follows: we do not see ourselves as somehow above the problems of our world, nor do we see ourselves as outside agents bringing in a revolutionary solution. Neither do we live as a radically separate alternative community, though we can learn from Christians positioned in other ways. Instead, we strive to be close to the centers of creativity and vision from which transformative forces within society are likely to arise. By accepting the call to be involved in civil society through schools, unions, local government, service clubs, nonprofit organizations, etc., members of a congregation can both listen and serve.

b. *Continuous Analysis*

Jesus taught us to consider our actions toward those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, or in prison—“the least of these” who are members of the human family. A community of moral discourse will seek to understand what is happening to persons who live on the margins, including members of its own congregation such as seniors, unemployed, and persons with disabilities. Rather than learning about poverty or racism or prisons in statistical terms only, we will listen to individuals themselves, seeking to become conscious of how systematic social disadvantage is actually experienced, both in the global south and in our own neighborhoods.

Participating in a community organization already doing service is a good way to learn, whether it be a literacy campaign or a group working with children to give them alternatives to gang affiliation. If the church rents space for a soup kitchen or meetings of a nonprofit group such as Alcoholics Anonymous, members could get involved and learn. Others could meet with community leaders, peace activists, or local professors to learn more about structural oppression and how to avoid participating in it. With practice, analysis of things we take for granted will become a habit.

c. *Committed Engagement*

Once we see and hear these things better, we can be moved to act more meaningfully and profoundly. Our moral discourse should be not only informative but also self-implicating. We begin to see how our own lives are tied up with conditions that degrade life’s meaning and value for so many others.

d. *Carrying the Story*

Informed and engaged, members of a congregation can together become bearers of moral narratives needed in a fallen world. We can “tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love,” both in words and in our actions.

Each congregation and denomination, as well as the church in general, tells and retells stories about itself that serve to reinforce the perception that it is doing good in the world, resisting evil, and reflecting the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, we must question our own self-understandings and constituting stories. Only by grace can any congregation be, without self-deception, a social space of genuine moral questioning in the world.

Not by human power alone but in Jesus we can become agents of social change and reconciliation. When we begin to engage in moral discourse, we become the story itself, the good news of God’s presence in a fallen world.

To sum up this report on living a human life before God, we offer an example of a statement of first principles that could be useful to a congregation forming a new community of moral discourse. It is designed to speak to our position early in the 21st century.

An ethic of covenantal responsibility to God’s blessing, as affirmed by the Gospel:

Because our Creator has placed us on this green earth, bearing God’s likeness, we are called to be agents of blessing. Because that One has come to us in the person of Jesus, we are set free from fear and sin. Because we are created and awakened in community by the Spirit, we bear each other’s burdens as members of one body. We carry this message: God is with us and will not abandon us. We follow God into the future, and we act faithfully when we live within God’s covenant.

Item 11-08

[The assembly approved Item 11-08. See pp. 39, 42.]

On a National Moratorium on the Imposition of the Death Penalty—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta respectfully urges the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

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1. Affirm the positions of the 171st (1959), 177th (1965), and the 189th (1977) General Assemblies of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the 106th General Assembly (1966) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and the 197th General Assembly (1985) and 212th General Assembly (2000) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on capital punishment, and declare its continuing opposition to capital punishment.

2. Call for an immediate moratorium on all executions in all jurisdictions that impose capital punishment.

3. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate the call for an immediate moratorium and the PC(USA) continuing opposition to capital punishment to the President of the United States, Congressional representatives, as well as the governors and legislators of the thirty-six states with persons incarcerated and awaiting execution.

Rationale

This is the tenth anniversary of the last resolution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding capital punishment. As Christians, and as citizens of the United States of America, we believe that one of the greatest tragedies that can occur is the execution of an innocent person by the state; yet we know that this has occurred repeatedly throughout history. Numerous authoritative sources recognize that the death penalty has been imposed in a racially discriminatory manner. Additionally, no state yet has met standards developed by the American Bar Association for appointment, performance, and compensation of counsel for indigent prisoners.

We recognize that the death penalty is a moral issue that demands paramount discernment by legislative and judicial bodies. Between 1973 and November 20, 2009, 139 people have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence, fifty-five since 2000. (Staff Report, House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, October 1993, with updates from Death Penalty Information Center.) From 1973–99, there were 3.1 exonerations per year on average, nationally. From 2000–2007, the average increased to five exonerations per year, nationally. It is then a reasonable assumption that such errors will continue to be made by juries and judges in future death penalty cases. Such errors are not morally defensible.

The legal system, as presently structured, cannot provide any assurance that innocent persons may not be subjected to the death penalty. In recent years, prisoner appeals have actually been curtailed, increasing the risk of the execution of innocent people. "... In 1996, new legislation drastically limited federal court review of death penalty appeals and gutted public funding of legal aid services for death row prisoners ..." (*Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 477).

Further, human judgment is flawed and influenced by human sinfulness. For example, in 1990, the United States General Accounting Office reported a pattern of evidence indicating racial disparities in charging, sentencing, and imposition of the death penalty:

In 82 percent of their studies, race of the victim was found to influence the likelihood of being charged with capital murder or receiving a death sentence, i.e. *those who murdered whites were found to be more likely to be sentenced to death than those who murdered blacks*. This finding was remarkably consistent across data sets, states, data collection methods, and analytic techniques. The finding held for high, medium, and low quality studies. (U.S. General Accounting Office, Report GGD-90-57, "Death Penalty Sentencing: Research Indicates Pattern of Racial Disparities," February 26, 1990, p. 5, emphasis added.)

A comprehensive study of the death penalty in North Carolina found that the odds of receiving a death sentence rose by 3.5 times among those defendants whose victims were white (Prof. Jack Boger and Dr. Isaac Unah, University of North Carolina, 2001). A study in California found that those who killed whites were over three times more likely to be sentenced to death than those who killed blacks and over four times more likely than those who killed Latinos (Pierce and Radelet, *Santa Clara Law Review*, 2005). Among the 1206 people who have been executed in the United States since 1977, 259 have been executed for interracial murders. Of these fifteen involved white defendants and black victims and 244 involved black defendants and white victims (Death Penalty Information Center, "Facts about the Death Penalty," updated May 14, 2010).

Our legal system does not currently assure those accused of crimes of full economic justice. The right to effective counsel is recognized as one of our most fundamental rights, and one of our most important protections against wrongful convictions. About 90 percent of those persons facing capital charges cannot afford their own attorney.

As Christians, we recognize God as sovereign in all spheres of human life, including the political sphere. We declare that God's law: "Thou shall not kill," is still good law. We follow a Lord who taught us to go beyond "an eye for an eye." We believe that human individuals and institutions are sinful and make mistakes. However, as humans we lack any power to correct our errors if we wrongly execute.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 11-08 be approved.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) concurs with the Rationale of Item 11-08, which points out the long-standing position of the PC(USA) in opposing capital punishment when other effective means of assuring public safety are available to a society—such as life imprisonment. And while the church’s decision was not made, and should not be made, on the grounds of economic efficiency, various studies have shown that prosecuting a capital punishment case is actually more costly in financial terms than is life imprisonment.¹

In addition, Item 11-08’s rationale also raises up a variety of concerns the church has expressed about the quality of justice possible in capital punishment cases given the documented impacts on the criminal justice processes of economic inequality and disparities in the treatment of racial/ethnic minorities. ACSWP further advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that the church’s mission of justice and compassion to a wounded world calls it to challenge the social and economic forces in our society that give rise to communities isolated from economic opportunity, unable to provide high quality public education or family sustaining jobs, often racially segregated, and with few public or private resources necessary to nurture a sense of community and trust. Today, no less than fifty years ago, the church continues to hold that “... capital punishment cannot be condoned by an interpretation of the Bible based upon the revelation of God’s love in Jesus Christ...” (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1959, Part I, p. 384) and is “... an expression of vengeance which contradicts the justice of God on the cross...” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1978, p. 200) (reaffirmed position in *Minutes*, 1985, Part I, p. 84).

Endnote

1. See research articles at the Web site for Amnesty International/America at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/death-penalty/death-penalty-facts/death-penalty-cost/page.do?id=1101084>.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns concurs with this Item 11-08.

Rationale

There is indeed strong evidence that the death penalty has been applied in a racist manner in the past and an equally strong possibility that the same will be true in the future. The only way to ensure this is not the case is by declaring an immediate moratorium on all executions in all jurisdictions that impose capital punishment.

Item 11-09

The assembly approved Item 11-09 with amendment. See pp. 39, 42.]

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

In order to ensure significant change in the area of Cultural Proficiency (CP), and to continue consultations between the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the executive officers of the six corporate entities related to the General Assembly (GA)—General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), formerly known as General Assembly Council (GAC); Office the General Assembly (OGA); Presbyterian Board of Pensions (BOP); Presbyterian Foundation (FDN); Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP), Inc; and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)—the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following actions:

- 1. Continue to support the work of the Climate for Change Task Force as it examines and moves toward formulating final recommendations for the 220th General Assembly (2012) for the church’s Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity, Cultural Proficiency, and minority vendor policies.**
- 2. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to revise the cultural proficiency assessment tool, with consultation from human resource directors of each entity and from the associate for Organizational Diversity, Education, and Recruitment (formerly the associate for Cultural Proficiency).**
- 3. Direct that the “Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies” include the preparation, review, and evaluation of a written, six-year plan for the implementation of cultural proficiency or comparable approach to organizational change with each of the six entities of the General Assembly.**

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- a. The ACREC will write the portion of the Agency Review Manual dealing with the assessment and review of cultural proficiency or a comparable approach of the six agencies.
- b. The six-year plan pertaining to cultural proficiency or a comparable approach and its implementation will be reviewed and monitored by ACREC on an ongoing basis, with statistical results and updates from each agency reviewed by ACREC biennially.
- c. At the first meeting of each of the agency review committees, a member of ACREC will be invited to brief the committee on the importance of “Creating a Climate for Change” and cultural proficiency. In addition, each agency review committee will consult with ACREC, through the participation of an ACREC member, regarding the six-year plan for cultural proficiency for each agency under review. Greater participation by ACREC on the agency review committee will be permitted if needed or requested.

4. Request that the six entities of the General Assembly work with the associate for Organizational Diversity, Education, and Recruitment in developing their six-year plan, to help implement cultural proficiency policy at all levels, and to develop training and cultural-sensitivity programs. This six-year plan should include:

- a. a commitment to *Book of Order*, G-4.0403:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its merging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as different marital conditions (married, single, widowed, or divorced) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church.

- b. a stated policy for increasing diversity, which should be developed in consultation with the Cultural Proficiency Task Force to ensure consistency with the task force’s final recommendations;
- c. measurable targets and goals that integrate cultural proficiency policy[, training and cultural sensitivity programs] in areas of education for purposes of mobility and advancement, performance, recruitment, hiring, mentoring, and retention;
- d. production of biennial reports giving employment profile (salaries, occupations, separations, new hires, promotions, in terms of race, ethnicity, gender[, and disabilities]).

5. Encourage the entities to support and utilize the National Persons of Color Network database, to strengthen and make it effective.

6. Direct all entities to keep annual statistics demonstrating compliance with the church’s Minority Vendor Policy.

7. Direct each entity must demonstrate affirmative efforts to increase racial ethnic and female employee representation in the senior management categories. When filling vacancies at this level, there must be a racial ethnic person and a female among the final candidates. If they are not among the final candidates, the entity must explain why they were not considered.

Rationale

I. Introduction and Overview

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC(USA)) stands committed to its call to “be responsive to diversity in both the church and the world,” and as such “will display a rich variety of form, practice, language, program, nurture, and service to suit culture and need” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0401). Diversity and inclusiveness are critical to the mission of the denomination and deemed essential as to how the church as a whole, and its agencies, carries out its work.

The denomination’s form of government outlines that the PC(USA) “give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0403). Ultimately, the hope is that the church’s intentional actions will elicit effective multiracial and multicultural ministry.

Cultural proficiency (CP), which provides standards to assess healthy and nonproductive policies, practices, and behaviors, is one of the key ways in which the denomination’s General Assembly (GA) expects its agencies to carry out the church’s overall mandate. Cultural proficiency acknowledges that change does not happen overnight, that people and organizations move on a continuum from highly exclusive and oppressive organizations and behaviors to highly inclusive organizations and behaviors.

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It is built on a foundation that aligns the principles of inclusivity in diversity with the core values and mission of the organization. Cultural proficiency also acknowledges that organizations are resistant to change, and that the causes of resistance must be taken into account and addressed openly in order to bring about cultural transformation within an organization.

The ACREC report, *Creating a Climate for Change within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004), directed the six corporate entities related to the General Assembly to utilize the tools of cultural proficiency, or other comparable processes, to develop and sustain healthy organizational cultures that support diverse workforces. The benchmark of obtaining 20 percent racial ethnic employment was established in the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action that was approved by the General Assembly in 1985. The other major benchmark is the Minority Vendor Policy. Approved in 1984, it established that church agencies purchase at least 10 percent of goods and services from minority-owned businesses.

The ACREC's subsequent report, approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), built upon those themes in an effort to continue achieving cultural proficiency goals, including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of a diverse workforce; the nurturing and sustaining of the gifts and strengths of diversity; and a constructive response to the challenges of diversity. Included in this report was a call for

- the six entities to prepare a written plan for the continuing implementation of cultural proficiency or comparable approach to organizational change;
- the ACREC to develop a report format and timeline for regular, reoccurring consultations with the entities;
- the creation of a Climate for Change Task Force that would, among other things, update the denomination's Affirmative Action (AA)/Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) policies to be in line with cultural proficiency.

In the two years since the 2008 report was approved, ACREC has conducted the required agency consultations in order to analyze whether cultural proficiency mandates directed by the General Assembly have been met. The committee's findings are outlined below.

The ACREC was recently asked by OGA to consider integrating ACREC's cultural proficiency review process within the overall agency review that is conducted by the General Assembly every six years. The ACREC was advised that it could write the section for the Standards for Review of the General Assembly Agencies pertaining to the implementation and assessment of cultural proficiency and that the ACREC would continue to review and monitor the implementation of cultural proficiency. The ACREC believes that this opportunity elevates the importance of cultural proficiency and will help institutionalize cultural proficiency throughout the church.

II. Summary of Findings

While much work has been done to advance the aims of cultural proficiency, there remains a failure to institutionalize cultural proficiency and its tenants into the fabric of the six General Assembly entities.

Cultural proficiency in some of the six entities did not appear to be a priority, and there was an uneven use of the standardized assessment tool created by ACREC. There are a number of factors that may have caused these results including change in leadership and staff, economic downturn, difficulties with recruitment and retention, limited training, small organizational structures, and preference for other systems already in place.

As such, ACREC has offered several recommendations to assist the denomination in moving toward long-term change. Chief among the recommendations is a proposal for each entity to develop a six-year plan for continued implementation of cultural proficiency or a comparable approach to organization. The development of such a plan will act as an outline for how cultural proficiency will be infused over time into the fabric of each entity.

The creation of individual plans will enable each entity to formulate a structure suitable to its size and unique circumstances, while also recognizing the importance of cultural proficiency in fulfilling the aims and mission of the denomination. As the entities continue consultations with ACREC on the rollout of their plans, ways to share resources and strategies across the entities will evolve.

The development of best practices, standardized minority vendor policies, and training modules used across departments and offices are just some of the positive outcomes that could result. The hope, too, is that the accomplishment of measureable goals will result in greater racial ethnic representation in senior management, identified as top-tier executives by each entity, more effective recruitment and retention methods, and the development of healthy organizational environments that support diverse workforces.

III. Agency Highlights and Areas of Growth

A subcommittee of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns spent three days—May 18, 2009, and June 23–24, 2009—in consultations with the executive leadership and human resource directors of the six corporate entities of the General Assembly in order to gain an awareness of the organizations' current work around the issue of cultural proficiency and the implementation of those policies. In May, consultations were held at the Board of Pensions' headquarters in Philadelphia. The June consultations were held with the Presbyterian and Investment Loan Program, Inc., (PILP), Office of the General Assembly (OGA), Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) (formerly known as the General Assembly Council), and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (FDN). These meetings took place at the PC(USA) national office in Louisville, Kentucky, and the Foundation office in Jeffersonville, Indiana. The meetings were conducted in an atmosphere of open dialogue and active listening. Below is a brief summary of the information obtained during consultations and written submissions by each entity.

A. *General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC)*

1. *Cultural Proficiency*

The GAMC, through its associate for Cultural Proficiency (now known as the associate for Organizational Diversity, Education and Recruitment (AODER)), and in partnership with other General Assembly entities, has launched the National Persons of Color Recruiting Network to develop a recruiting network and an active database of racial ethnic candidates for leadership positions within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The ACREC applauds this development and sees this as a strategic step in identifying viable racial ethnic candidates for leadership positions.

The GAMC also established a cultural advisory team, which works with the associate for Cultural Proficiency (ACP) (not AODER) on ways to improve implementation of the cultural proficiency program. The GAMC also has added cultural proficiency as a performance standard that must be assessed for all employees.

A new employee handbook is forthcoming and cultural proficiency will be incorporated. Employee training sessions being revamped also will include cultural proficiency. In the past, GAMC required employees to attend a slate of trainings, including sessions on diversity, antiracism, cultural proficiency, sexual harassment, and ethics. This occurred at times on staff educational training days. The GAMC recognizes that it needs to provide more training and has indicated that these programs will be reinstated.

2. *Employment Profile*

As of Dec. 31, 2008, GAMC had 408 employees, of whom 29 percent were racial ethnic and 72 percent were female. In the senior management category, there are eleven employees, of whom 64 percent were female and 9 percent racial ethnic. This is a lower percentage of racial ethnic representation since the last review cycle because two additional white employees were hired. During the June consultation, GAMC reported that it was greatly affected by the downturn in the economy since December 2008 and "significant adjustments" were made to reduce the budget. Those adjustments resulted in eliminating positions through reductions in force, vacant positions that were not filled, and voluntary separations. The number of employees was reduced by 100 less than the 408 employees reported in December 2008. As of January 2010, there is a vacancy in one of the deputy executive director positions.

The ACREC strongly encourages GAMC to include a racial ethnic candidate among its final pool of candidates for this position and for any other vacancy that may occur in senior management.

3. *Minority Vendor Policy*

The GAMC, through its purchasing agent, used minority vendors for 14.93 percent of its purchases of goods and services in 2008. As of June 2009, GAMC reported it was reviewing bids by six companies, four of which were minority vendors, to provide travel services. Efforts are constantly made to network with potential minority vendors worldwide, especially using professional networking sites on the Web.

The ACREC notes and applauds the addition of two new categories for data collection—the disabled and Middle Eastern vendors. The ACREC also commends the efforts of GAMC staff to successfully reach and exceed the 10 percent minority vending policy goal for the past two reporting cycles. The GAMC also purchases goods and services for other entities such as the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP). It would be very helpful if, in future reports on minority vendor services, GAMC would delineate the services provided for those entities.

B. *Office of the General Assembly (OGA)*

1. *Cultural Proficiency*

The OGA's efforts to promote cultural proficiency include adding cultural proficiency organizational values to the OGA personnel manual. The OGA also noted it is working to make its Web page multilingual in Spanish, Korean, and English.

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The page would be written by people fluent in those languages. During the June consultation, OGA reported hiring an Asian American male to coordinate its Web page. The OGA is aggressive in using various avenues to attract racial ethnic candidates. The OGA also is working closely with the GAMC and the other entities on the development of the National Persons of Color Recruiting Network. Other efforts by OGA include their annual leadership training program, a tuition reimbursement program, the establishment of a communications staff team, and a creative process in searching for candidates to fill vacancies. The ACREC applauds these programs, recognizing that they would have greater impact if they are institutionalized. The OGA also recognized the need to provide more cultural proficiency and racial sensitivity training.

2. *Employment Profile*

As of Dec. 31, 2008, OGA had 77 employees, 23 percent were racial ethnic and 74 percent were women. Of OGA's ten senior managers, 20 percent were racial ethnic and 50 percent women. During the June 2009 consultations, OGA reported that because of the downturn in the economy and recent downsizing, it had since lost six female employees, three of whom were racial ethnic persons. Only three of those positions will be replaced or filled. The OGA's normal turnover is described as very low. When there is a vacancy, OGA reported that it is difficult to recruit racial ethnic candidates: Louisville is not viewed as a culturally diverse city, and there is a stigma associated with working at the PC(USA) national offices in light of ongoing downsizing.

3. *Minority Vendor Policy*

The OGA did not produce any statistics on use of minority vendors because it uses the purchasing services offered by the General Assembly Mission Council. The OGA did report, however, that when it engages hotels for church activities, the hotels must agree to a nondiscrimination provision in OGA contracts.

C. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc (PILP)*

1. *Cultural Proficiency*

The PILP indicated it participates in all-staff meetings and trainings, and that it takes part in relevant denomination-wide conferences and celebrations such as the annual multicultural conference. The PILP's Asian American employee, who serves as a development specialist, has been instrumental in helping the agency better understand and be more sensitive to cultural practices of PILP's Asian churches, particularly those in the Korean community. The PILP's board of directors also was lifted up as an area of strong diversity, highlighting their overnight meeting in July as a specific time when wisdom is shared from various contexts.

2. *Employment Profile*

The PILP is continually challenged in the area of workforce diversity, citing extremely low turnover to its small staff of fourteen, as of Dec. 31, 2008. The PILP has not achieved the 20 percent employment goal of racial ethnic persons: 14 percent were racial ethnic and 71 percent were female. The PILP's senior management staff is three in number and consists of three white males. The PILP has one potential retirement in the management team that may occur in December 2010. Recognizing the lack of diversity at the executive level, PILP plans to recruit a racial ethnic person if possible. The PILP also may expand employment in the marketing area. The PILP is working with the other General Assembly entities on the National Persons of Color Recruiting Network. The downturn in the economy did not result in any layoffs. In fact, PILP has had a "bumper year" because churches are coming to PILP for loans as banks aren't loaning money to churches. More training in cultural proficiency and racial sensitivity is needed.

3. *Minority Vendor Policy*

The PILP had very little to report in terms of its use of minority vendors, and indicated that the overwhelming majority of its purchases are done through the GAMC. The PILP's human resources and accounting services also are contracted through the GAMC.

D. *Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)*

1. *Cultural Proficiency*

The PPC reinstated its Robert W. Bohl Racial Ethnic Internship, a ten-week program that provides a racial ethnic seminary student with an opportunity to explore religious publishing as a possible ministry option. The PPC also points heavily to its cache of books published and the diverse authors behind them as an indication of its work around cultural proficiency. In 2008, the PPC began work on a new hymnal for the denomination and has been intentional about including racial ethnic diversity throughout the process. Fifteen people serve on the hymnal committee, including three racial ethnic persons. The committee also will have racial ethnic advisory and world music advisory teams. The PPC offers a tuition reimbursement

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program. The PPC attended meetings in 2007 and 2009 to help develop a National Persons of Color Recruitment Network. Employees of PPC are “eligible” to attend workshops and meetings on cultural proficiency offered by other PC(USA) agencies and staff. The PPC acknowledged that it needs to do more on cultural awareness.

During consultations in June 2009, PPC reported that 20 percent of works acquired by PPC in 2009 are from racial ethnic authors, up from 7 percent in 2007. The PPC also is developing a list of needs for Hispanic congregations and considering how to produce those resources. The PPC reported that it was also considering providing resources for pastors of Korean churches.

The ACREC applauds PPC’s reinstatement of its internship program and its decision to publish a greater number of racial ethnic and women writers. In order to bring about cultural transformation within an organization, however, more is needed. For example, more cultural proficiency and racial sensitivity/cultural awareness training is needed among PPC’s employees.

2. *Employment Profile*

As of Dec. 31, 2008, PPC reported thirty-three employees, 15 percent of whom were racial ethnic and 46 percent of whom were women. Senior management, which consists of five employees, is 20 percent racial ethnic and 20 percent female. The PPC indicated there had been consolidation in its ranks since its last report, and that one racial ethnic person had been hired and another had taken on a more professional role. The PPC recently reported that as of December 2009, it had hired a Hispanic woman and a Korean woman to serve as customer service representatives.

3. *Minority Vendor Policy*

The PPC has a separate vendor policy. Because it does not currently keep statistics, no data is available.

E. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Board of Pensions (BOP)*

1. *Cultural Proficiency*

Among the highlights particularly relevant to ACREC and its assessment of BOP’s record on cultural proficiency were:

- The establishment of an on-site Learning Center opened in January 2008. The center has as its three pillars leadership development, learning resources, and staff development.
- The hiring of a director for organizational development. The director’s purpose is to partner with senior leadership to create a “positive culture, effective leadership, employee engagement and team effectiveness.”
- The continued availability when enrollment is sufficient of an on-site educational program for employees, and tuition assistance for those wishing to attend school off-site. In 2008, the BOP spent \$52,489 on tuition reimbursement, 52 percent of which went to racial ethnic employees. Fifty-six percent of those who received tuition reimbursement were racial ethnic employees.

2. *Employment Profile*

The BOP reported that racial ethnic employees comprised 34 percent and women comprised 65 percent of the BOP’s workforce of 192 employees in 2008, meeting the 20 percent goal of racial ethnic employees. Of its twelve senior managers reported, only 8 percent of the employees were racial ethnic.

The BOP leadership pointed out that efforts were being made to recruit younger talent, and that leadership and training programs were helping to identify staff with the potential to be promoted. It also was noted that in higher-grade, professional staff positions, recruitment of racial ethnic persons becomes more difficult against the backdrop of higher-wage, for-profit corporations, who are interested in recruiting these same persons.

The BOP has developed a succession management program designed to ensure, among other things, the “planned, orderly development and preparation of highly qualified and talented staff to be candidates for key leadership positions.” Coupled with this effort was an online leadership assessments for all members of the BOP leadership group conducted in the spring of 2008. Individual development plans were created from this assessment process.

3. *Minority Vendor Policy*

The Board of Pensions reported, as it has in previous years, that it does not maintain statistical data on its vendors.

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F. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (FDN)*

1. *Cultural Proficiency*

The FDN has a full range of training for its employees, including areas of leadership, professional development, and sexual harassment. Collaborative Learning Week, which will continue, is a time set aside “to identify means of collaboration while creating opportunities for relationship building and training through a better understanding of employee roles within the Foundation.” In September 2008, the FDN also hosted the National Persons of Color Recruiting Network meeting. Tuition reimbursement for employees also was highlighted, and in 2008 data showed that 60 percent of those who took part in the program were racial ethnic employees.

2. *Employment Profile*

December 2008 figures showed 91 employees, of which 21 percent were racial ethnic persons, and 62.6 percent female. Of the nine senior managers, 11.1 percent of the employees were racial ethnic. The percentage of racial ethnic persons in senior management has gone up from 9 percent from the previously cycle. Employees in this category decreased from eleven to nine while the number of racial ethnic employees stayed the same. There were five promotions, including one racial ethnic who advanced to a management position. As a result of the 2008 economic downturn, the overall number of employees decreased to seventy-six by the end of the first quarter of 2009 due to workforce cuts (e.g., through early retirement incentive packages, involuntary reductions in staff, and unfilled vacant positions).

The FDN has fourteen development staff scattered all over the United States, and there always is a struggle to pull minority candidates into those positions. The FDN does try to identify racial ethnic persons with development experience as openings occur, but it can be challenging when the candidate also has to be Presbyterian.

3. *Minority Vendor Policy*

Foundation officials say they have included in their “Culture for Excellence” vendor management program explicit consideration of racial ethnic and minority representation. The Foundation acknowledged it does not meet the 10 percent benchmark for minority vendor utilization, but continues to be proactive in obtaining this goal.

The ACREC recognizes that the FDN has commendable programs, but more training is needed in the area of cultural proficiency. Greater representation of racial ethnic persons also is needed in the senior management positions.

IV. Conclusion

While recognizing there has been some progress by the six entities in working toward cultural proficiency, not much has changed from the last assessment period. The ACREC lauds various programs implemented by the entities. Of note are the on-site learning center and the succession management program established by the BOP, the cultural proficiency training and education programs (which should be mandatory) previously implemented by GAMC, and the innovative programs established by OGA. It is hoped that all of the entities will examine these programs and determine if they can use them in their respective organizations in bringing about cultural proficiency.

Despite the fact that most of the entities have achieved the goal of 20 percent employment of racial ethnic persons, many of these employees are in the lower pay scale categories. Representation in senior management level positions remains low. Intentional efforts are needed to ensure that racial ethnic persons and women are being seriously considered and subsequently hired for these positions. Making sure that the final candidate pool includes at least one racial ethnic person and one woman demonstrates the intentionality in creating change. More importantly, cultural proficiency policies and programs need to be institutionalized, so that changes in leadership or staff do not affect implementation of these policies.

For this assessment cycle, ACREC used a new assessment tool to capture information involving measurable goals, target dates for accomplishing these goals, and plans for the future. The ACREC recognizes that there may be a better way to obtain the desired information and is therefore asking each entity’s human resource director or representatives from that office along with the associate for Organizational Diversity, Education, and Recruitment, to collaborate with ACREC to revise the assessment tool. The ACREC also suggests that new categories of data collection be added, such as employment of Middle Eastern persons or new immigrants, to adjust to our ever-changing world.

Very few entities provided information about plans for the future. By requiring the entities to submit a six-year plan, it is anticipated they will develop their own plan with measurable goals for each year that would be monitored by ACREC. In their attempts to develop and sustain healthy organizational environments that support diverse workforces, it is further hoped that the entities will use the resources available at PC(USA) including the ACP and the evolving National Persons of Color Recruiting Network database.

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Further, the entities need to provide data regarding the use of minority vendors. For those entities that rely upon GAMC to provide these services, both the entity and the GAMC should be able to provide this information.

Finally, integrating the cultural proficiency assessment within the larger assessment by the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) is a move toward institutionalizing the church's commitment to "greater inclusiveness" and "full participation and access to representation in the decision making" by the diverse membership of our church.

APPENDIX A: STATISTICAL DATA

The following agency employment statistics for the six corporate entities related to the General Assembly are provided. The charts represent occupational categories and salary ranges for each entity between January 1, 2008–December 31, 2008.

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BOARD OF PENSIONS
EMPLOYMENT DATA BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES
As of 12/31/08

	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES											
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/ Latino		Natv Am/Alaska Ntv		White		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Senior Mgmt. Staff* #		1							7	4	7	5
%		8							58	34	58	42
Officials/Managers #	2	7		3		1		1	10	18	12	30
%	5	17		7		2		2	24	43	29	71
Professionals #	1	4	3	2	1				19	15	24	21
%	2.5	9	7	4	2.5				42	33	54	46
Technicians #		1							8		8	1
%		11							89		89	11
Sales Workers #												
%												
Office & Clerical #	5	26	2	1	1	3			8	38	16	68
%	6	31	2	1	1	4			10	45	19	81
Craft Wkrs (skilled) #												
%												
Operatives #												
%												
Laborers #												
%												
Service Workers #												
%												
Total Employees #	8	39	5	6	2	4		1	52	75	67	125
%	4	20	3	3	1	2		1	27	39	35	65

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PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION													
EMPLOYMENT DATA BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY													
As of 12/31/08													
	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES												
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/Latino		Natv Am/Alaska Ntv		White		TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Senior Mgmt. Staff* #	1									5	3	6	3
%	11.1%									55.6%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%
Officials/Managers #	1	1								4	6	5	7
%	8.3%	8.3%								33.3%	50.0%	41.7%	58.3%
Professionals #	1	3								11	16	12	19
%	3.2%	9.7%								35.5%	51.6%	38.7%	61.3%
Technicians #													
%													
Sales Workers #	1					1				7	7	8	8
%	6.3%					6.3%				43.8%	43.8%	50.0%	50.0%
Office & Clerical #		10		1		1				3	8	3	20
%		43.5%		4.3%		4.3%				13.0%	34.8%	13.0%	87.0%
Craft Wkrs (Skilled) #													
%													
Operatives #													
%													
Laborers #													
%													
Service Workers #													
%													
Total Employees #	4	14		1		2				30	40	34	57
%	4.0%	15.4%		1.1%		2.2%				33.0%	44.0%	37.4%	62.6%

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GAC	GAC Occupational Categories As of December 2008													
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/Latino		Nativ Am/ Alaska Ntv		White		TWO		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Senior Mgmt. Staff*</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	0	0	4	7
%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	64%	0%	0%	36%	64%
<i>Officials/Managers</i>	0	6	3	0	0	3	0	0	23	20	0	0	26	29
%	0%	11%	5%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	42%	36%	0%	0%	47%	53%
<i>Professionals</i>	4	15	4	5	3	12	0	2	45	69	1	2	57	105
%	2%	9%	2%	3%	2%	7%	0%	1%	28%	43%	1%	1%	35%	65%
<i>Technicians</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Sales Workers</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Office & Clerical</i>	4	29	0	6	2	11	0	0	14	89	0	0	20	135
%	3%	19%	0%	4%	1%	7%	0%	0%	9%	57%	0%	0%	13%	87%
<i>Craft Wkrs (skilled)</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Operatives</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	1
%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	67%	33%
<i>Laborers/ Helpers</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0
%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	67%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Service Workers</i>	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	14
%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	71%	0%	0%	0%	21%	0%	7%	0%	100%
<i>Total Employees</i>	9	50	7	11	6	36	0	2	92	191	1	3	115	293
%	2%	12%	2%	3%	1%	9%	0%	0%	23%	47%	0%	1%	28%	72%

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
EMPLOYMENT DATA BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES
As of 12/31/08

	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES											
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/ Latino		Natv Am/Alaska Ntv		White		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Senior Mgmt. Staff* #		1				1			5	3	5	5
%												
Officials/Managers #		3	1	2	1				5	19	7	25
%												
Professionals #									2	4	2	4
%												
Technicians #	1								2	2	3	2
%												
Sales Workers #												
%												
Office & Clerical #	1	5		2					1	15	2	22
%												
Craft Wkrs (skilled) #												
%												
Operatives #												
%												
Laborers #												
%												
Service Workers #									1		1	
%												
Total Employees #	2	9	1	4	1	1			16	43	20	57
%	2.4%	13%	1.2%	5%	1.2%	1.2%			20.5%	55.5%	26%	74%

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) INVESTMENT AND LOAN PROGRAM
EMPLOYMENT DATA BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES
As of 12/31/08

	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES											
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/ Latino		Natv Am/Alaska Ntv		White		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Senior Mgmt. Staff* #									3			
%									21%			
Officials/Managers #										1		
%										7%		
Professionals #				1					1	2		
%				7%					7%	14%		
Technicians #												
%												
Sales Workers #										1		
%										7%		
Office & Clerical #		1								4		
%		7%								28%		
Craft Wkrs (skilled) #												
%												
Operatives #												
%												
Laborers #												
%												
Service Workers #												
%												
Total Employees #												
%												

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PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING CORPORATION

Agency Employment Statistics

Jan. 1, 2008 – Dec. 31, 2008

	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES											
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/ Latino		Natv Am/Alaska Ntv		White		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Senior Mgmt. Staff* #	1								3	1	4	1
%	.029								.09	.028	.11	.028
Officials/Managers #												
%												
Professionals #	1								5	8	5	8
%	.029								.14	.23	.14	.23
Technicians #		1							2	4	2	5
%		.028							.057	.11	.057	.14
Sales Workers #									2		2	
%									.057		.057	
Office & Clerical #	1		1						2	2	4	2
%	.028		.028						.057	.028	.11	.028
Craft Wkrs (skilled) #												
%												
Operatives #												
%												
Laborers #												
%												
Service Workers #												
%												
Total Employees #	3	1	1						14	15	17	16
%	.085	.028	.028						.40	.43	.48	.46

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BOARD OF PENSIONS
EMPLOYMENT DATA BY SALARY RANGE
As of 12/31/08

	SALARY RANGES											
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/ Latino		Natv Am/Alaska Ntv		White		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
\$15,000 - \$25,000 #										1 PT		1 PT
%										100		100
\$25,001 - \$35,000 #		4							4		4	4
%		50							50		50	50
\$35,001 - \$45,000 #	5	20	2	1	1	2			3	20	11	43
%	9	37	3.5	2	2	3.5			6	37	20.5	79.5
\$45,001 - \$55,000 #		8	1			1			5	19	6	28
%		23.5	3			3			14.5	56	17.5	82.5
\$55,001 - \$65,000 #	2	1		2					3	8	5	11
%	12.5	6		12.5					19	50	31.5	68.5
\$65,001 - \$75,000 #	1	2		1		1		1	4	9	5	14
%	5	11		5		5		5	21	48	26	74
\$75,001 - \$85,000 #			2	1					3	3	5	4
%			22	11					33	33	55	44
\$85,001 - \$95,000 #		1		1	1				8	3	9	5
%		7		7	7				57	22	64	36
\$95,001 - \$115,000 #		2							10	4	10	6
%		12.5							62.5	25	62.5	37.5
\$115,000 + #		1							12	8	12	9
%		5							57	38	57	43
Total Employees #	8	39	5	6	2	4		1	52	75	67	125
%	4	20	3	3	1	2		1	27	39	35	65

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE ISSUES—B:
THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD

PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION

EMPLOYMENT DATA BY SALARY RANGE

As of 12/31/08

	SALARY RANGES											
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/Latino		Natv Am/Alaska Ntv		White		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
\$15,000 - \$25,000 #						1				1		2
%						50.0%				50.0%		100.0%
\$25,001 - \$35,000 #										1		1
%										100.0%		100.0%
\$35,001 - \$45,000 #		11		1		1			5	12	5	25
%		36.7%		3.3%		3.3%			16.7%	40.0%	16.7%	83.3%
\$45,001 - \$55,000 #	1	3								4	1	7
%	12.5%	37.5%								50.0%	12.5%	87.5%
\$55,001 - \$65,000 #	1								1	2	2	2
%	25.0%								25.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
\$65,001 - \$75,000 #									4	6	4	6
%									40.0%	60.0%	40.0%	60.0%
\$75,001 - \$85,000 #	1								4	5	5	5
%	10.0%								40.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
\$85,001 - \$95,000 #									5	4	5	4
%									55.6%	44.4%	55.6%	44.4%
\$95,001 - \$115,000 #	1								3	2	4	2
%	16.7%								50.0%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%
\$115,000 + #									8	3	8	3
%									72.7%	27.3%	72.7%	27.3%
Total Employees #	4	14		1		2			30	40	34	57
%	4.4%	15.4%		1.1%		2.2%			33.0%	44.0%	37.4%	62.6%

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE ISSUES—B:
THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION COUNCIL (GAMC)

PC(USA) Employment Data by Salary Range

As of 12/31/08

GAMC	SALARY RANGES													
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/Latino		Natv Am/ Alaska Ntv		White		TWO		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15,000-25,000	1	1	0	0	0	10	0	0	4	5	0	1	5	17
%	5%	5%	0%	0%	0%	45%	0%	0%	18%	23%	0%	5%	23%	77%
25,001-35,000	3	16	0	5	3	11	0	0	11	62	1	0	18	94
%	3%	14%	0%	4%	3%	10%	0%	0%	10%	55%	1%	0%	16%	84%
35,001-45,000	0	19	0	2	0	9	0	0	14	50	1	0	15	80
%	0%	20%	0%	2%	0%	9%	0%	0%	15%	53%	1%	0%	16%	84%
45,001-55,000	0	3	0	1	2	4	0	0	16	37	0	0	18	45
%	0%	5%	0%	2%	3%	6%	0%	0%	25%	59%	0%	0%	29%	71%
55,001-65,000	1	8	5	3	2	1	0	1	18	18	0	2	26	33
%	2%	14%	8%	5%	3%	2%	0%	2%	31%	31%	0%	3%	44%	56%
65,001-75,000	1	3	2	1	1	2	0	1	29	18	1	0	34	25
%	2%	5%	3%	2%	2%	3%	0%	2%	49%	31%	2%	0%	58%	42%
75,001-85,000	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	3	0	0	8	4
%	17%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	25%	0%	0%	67%	33%
85,001-95,000	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	5	3
%	0%	13%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	25%	0%	0%	63%	38%
95,001-115,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	5	5
%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	50%	50%
115,000+	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	0	0	4	6
%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	30%	60%	0%	0%	40%	60%
Total Employees	9	52	8	12	8	37	0	2	110	206	3	3	138	312
%	2%	12%	2%	3%	2%	8%	0%	0%	24%	46%	1%	1%	31%	69%

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE ISSUES—B:
THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
EMPLOYMENT DATA BY SALARY RANGE
As of 12/31/08

	SALARY RANGES												
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/ Latino		Natv Am/Alaska Ntv		White		TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
\$15,000 - \$25,000 #										2 p/t	1 p/t	2 p/t	1 p/t
%													
\$25,001 - \$35,000 #	1	3		1						1	6	2	10
%													
\$35,001 - \$45,000 #	1	3									13	1	16
%													
\$45,001 - \$55,000 #		1								1	6	1	7
%													
\$55,001 - \$65,000 #		2	1	1	1	2				1	3	3	8
%													
\$65,001 - \$75,000 #		1		1						1	5	1	7
%													
\$75,001 - \$85,000 #						1				1	3	1	4
%													
\$85,001 - \$95,000 #		1								2		2	1
%													
\$95,001 - \$115,000 #										2		2	
%													
\$115,000 + #										1		1	
%													
Total Employees #	2	11	1	3	1	3				12	37	16	54
%	2.9%	15.7%	1.3%	4.3%	1.3%	4.3%				17.2%	53%	23%	77%

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE ISSUES—B:
THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) INVESTMENT AND LOAN PROGRAM
EMPLOYMENT DATA BY SALARY RANGE**

As of 12/31/08

	SALARY RANGES											
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/ Latino		Natv Am/Alaska Ntv		White		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
\$15,000 - \$25,000 #												
%												
\$25,001 - \$35,000 #		1								5		
%		7%								36%		
\$35,001 - \$45,000 #										1		
%										7%		
\$45,001 - \$55,000 #												
%												
\$55,001 - \$65,000 #				1						2		
%				7%						14%		
\$65,001 - \$75,000 #										1		
%										7%		
\$75,001 - \$85,000 #												
%												
\$85,001 - \$95,000 #										1		
%										7%		
\$95,001 - \$115,000 #										1		
%										7%		
\$115,000 + #										1		
%										7%		
Total Employees #		1		1						4	8	
%		7%		7%						28%	57%	

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE ISSUES—B:
THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD

PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING CORPORATION

Agency Employment Statistics

Jan. 1, 2008 – Dec. 31, 2008

	SALARY RANGES											
	African American		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic/ Latino		Nativ Am/Alaska Nativ		White		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
\$15,000 - \$25,000 #									1		1	
%									.028		.028	
\$25,001 - \$35,000 #	1	2	1						2	5	4	6
%	.028	.057	.028						.057	.14	.11	.171
\$35,001 - \$45,000 #	1								1	4	2	3
%	.028								.028	.11	.057	.085
\$45,001 - \$55,000 #									2	3	2	3
%									.057	.085	.057	.085
\$55,001 - \$65,000 #	1								3	1	4	1
%	.028								.085	.028	.11	.028
\$65,001 - \$75,000 #									1	1	1	1
%									.028	.028	.028	.028
\$75,001 - \$85,000 #									3	1	3	1
%									.085	.028	.085	.028
\$85,001 - \$95,000 #												
%												
\$95,001 - \$115,000 #									1		1	
%									.028		.028	
\$115,000 + #									1		1	
%									.028		.028	
Total Employees #	3	2	1						15	13	19	14
%	.085	.057	.028						.428	.371	.543	.40

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE ISSUES—B:
THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Item 11-09 deals with a review of efforts regarding cultural proficiency and creating a climate for change in the PC(USA).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with Item 11-09.

Rationale

Recommendation 7 in *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies*, the report of the Women of Color Consultation Task Force of the 218th General Assembly (2008), urged all entities in the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to be mindful of the critical importance of utilizing culturally proficient communication tools and strategies and to be intentional in working to communicate with the whole church to convey the vision of being diverse and inclusive with equity. The ACWC requests that Communications and Funds Development (CFD), in partnership with the Office of Cultural Proficiency equip OGA and GAMC staff with culturally proficient communication tools.

The Women of Color Consultation Task Force, approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), focused a major portion of its recommendations on cultural proficiency and working toward a more inclusive church. Knowing that cultural proficiency development is a long-term, ongoing process, review of existing efforts would result in developing additional skills and moving closer to the goal of becoming a fully inclusive church.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 11-09

Comment on Item 11-09—From the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Recommendation 3

Item 11-09 from the Advocacy Committee on Racial-Ethic Concerns (ACREC) would, in Recommendation 3, direct each of the six corporate entities, including the Board of Pensions (“the Board”), to “prepare a written, four-year plan for continued implementation of cultural proficiency or comparable approach to organizational change that will be monitored by ACREC” (Item 11-09).

The Board advises amending Recommendation 3 by adding the following sentence to clarify the use of alternative models whose principles and programs are similar to cultural proficiency: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and in italic.]

“3. Direct the six corporate entities to prepare a written, four-year plan for continued implementation of cultural proficiency or comparable approach to organizational change that will be monitored by ACREC. [*Entities with successful, alternative programs that have been found to be comparable and acceptable by the ACREC are encouraged to continue their efforts to support the principles of cultural proficiency.*]”

Rationale

The Board has been and continues to be committed to a diverse workplace where staff of all backgrounds can feel comfortable, grow professionally and personally, and be effective in serving the church.

The Board has always been and will continue to be supportive of the principles of cultural proficiency, although our operating model has been a successful alternative. As a result of prior meetings with ACREC, the Board:

- incorporated the principles into its Board and Human Resources Mission Statements, Values, and Personnel Policies and Procedures;
- created a Learning Center which provides equal opportunity for professional and personal development to all employees at all levels;
- has mentoring, talent development and tuition reimbursement programs, and support of external workshops, seminars, and memberships in professional organizations; all of which enjoy broad participation from its diverse population;
- performs an anonymous employee opinion survey; the results of which continue to point out that the staff feel that the Board has done a very good job at being sensitive to cultural and diversity issues in the workplace;
- has employee demographics that indicate a strong representation by both females and minorities in its work population; and

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THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD

- has an annual compliance education calendar that includes diversity training.

In discussing its approach with respective church committees, their responses have been favorable to the Board's efforts to model the values of cultural proficiency.

Recommendation 6:

The Advocacy Committee on Racial-Ethnic Concerns would, in Recommendation 6, direct each of the six corporate entities, including the Board of Pensions ("the Board"), to "keep annual statistics demonstrating compliance with the church's Minority Vendor Policy."

In previous responses to this request, the Board has and continues to cite its interest in selecting and working with minority vendors, although it is unable to identify and keep statistics regarding the minority status of the many local, regional, and national vendors with which it does business.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 11-09

Comment on Item 11-09—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) agrees with the intent of Item 11-09, noting its similarity to Item 03-24. The GACOR respectfully refers the General Assembly to its comment and amendments offered to Item 03-24.

The GACOR wishes to direct the attention of the General Assembly to a parallel action before the assembly that affects the review standards: Item 03-24, from the Committee of the Office of the General Assembly.

The methods suggested in Item 11-09 with regard to the cultural proficiency review are sound and may suggest a model for dealing with the GACOR consultation process regarding each entity's implementation plan and action steps in response to their constitutional responsibilities and "A Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action."

Item 11-10

[The assembly approved Item 11-10 with amendment. See pp. 39, 42–43.]

[As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) becomes an increasingly diverse and culturally rich membership,] [T][t]he Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to appoint a committee of ~~nine~~ eleven persons to study the Nature of the Church for the 21st Century. [The intent of this study shall be to seek to increase understanding of the church from a Reformed and Presbyterian perspective and assist current and new members in forming faithful plans for our common future.]

The committee would be staffed by representative from the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and include representation from

- Theology, Worship, Education (TWE)
- The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)
- The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)
- The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC)
- The Office of the General Assembly (OGA)
- ~~Four~~ Six persons at-large

The committee would be charged with bringing a report and making the appropriate recommendations to the 220th General Assembly (2012), and, if appropriate, preparing ~~[a study guide]~~ [practical resources] for individual and congregational use.

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$21,730; (2011) \$34,895; (2012) \$13,665 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Rationale

The 201st General Assembly (1989) formed a special committee to study "The Nature of the Church and the Practice of Governance," which reported to the 205th General Assembly (1993) (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 95, 355ff). That committee found, ten years

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after reunion, that the church suffered from a lack of identity and had no clear and comprehensive strategy for the future of the denomination. Particularly noted were diverse biblical and theological interpretations and life experiences leading to different understandings of where the mission priorities of the church should be. The committee's study indicated that while the church held stated values for racial, ethnic, and theological diversity and inclusiveness, the church had chosen to serve those values by requiring participation on committees and in governing bodies, rather than committing to learning the diverse cultural, racial, and theological values included in the body, so to incorporate these diverse perspectives into our operative understanding of the church, and to plan for the future.

Today, the situation mirrors much of what the special committee found in 1993, except that in many ways the diversity of opinion has led to increased polarization and a more serious lack of communal identity. This has occurred in a time when demographic projections move us to look deeply at where the PC(USA) is in our membership, evangelism, and stewardship strategies, as the world changes around us. Goals we have set for ourselves on increasing racial ethnic and new immigrant membership by 2010 will not be achieved. Further, no serious study has been undertaken of the nature of the church since 1993, in a time when the Form of Government is undergoing serious consideration for revision.

Now, in a new century, with efforts to integrate an increasingly diverse group of Presbyterians into the church and its leadership, the time for a new study has come. Our hope is that this study will help to increase understanding of the church from a Reformed and Presbyterian perspective and assist current and new members in forming faithful plans for our common future.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

Item 11-10 deals with forming a special committee to study the nature of the church for the twenty-first century.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns concurs with Item 11-10 with the following comment:

Consideration for representation in the makeup of this committee from the Women of Color Joint Working Group should be considered.

Rationale

The Women of Color Joint Working Group, formed in 2009 to monitor the recommendations from the Women of Color Consultation report, intentionally focuses on the intersectionality of race and gender. The participation of a member of the Joint Working Group will ensure at least some representation of the voices of women of color in the church for the twenty-first century.

Item 11-11

[The assembly approved Item 11-11 with amendment. See pp. 39, 40, 43.]

Commissioners' Resolution. Regarding a Call to Stand with Immigrant Presbyterians in Their Hour of Need.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) directs the PC(USA) to

1. Refrain from holding national meetings [at hotels or non-PC(USA) conference centers] in those states where travel by immigrant Presbyterians or Presbyterians of color or Hispanic ancestry might subject them to harassment due to legislation similar to Arizona Law SB 1070/HB2162.

[a. If individual congregations and camp & conference facilities deem it necessary, the PC(USA) and its staff will offer nonfinancial support for the creation of accompaniment programs to support persons of color who feel that they are at risk when attending church-sponsored worship or programs.]

[b. If such laws are passed in states where the PC(USA) camp & conference centers are located, the 219th General Assembly (2010) encourages those centers to develop 'sanctuary' responses that would create safe places for all participants, allowing the denomination to continue to support its own conference centers, and encourages the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program of the General Assembly Mission Council to offer support to partners across the denomination as they develop a process to train volunteers to document abuses and collect data on those abuses to share with the broader church.]

2. [Direct the Office of Immigration to] [D][d]evelop resources that educate Presbyterians about the history of [immigrant policies, the beneficial aspects of immigration in the United States as well as] official anti-immigration conduct [in the

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~~United States~~, ~~[including, but not limited to]~~ [such as] the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that was not repealed until 1943; the forced migration of persons of Mexican descent from California between 1929 and 1939, 60 percent of whom were U.S. citizens; and the forced relocation of Japanese Americans to detention camps during World War II.

3. [Direct the Office of Immigration to] ~~[D]~~[d]evelop resources that educate Presbyterians about the origins of this most recent legislation, with a special focus on those states that are considering enactment of copycat legislation.

4. Instruct the Washington Office to advocate vigorously for comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship and recognizes the critical role that immigrants play in the health of the U.S. economy as well as border stabilization.

5. Empower the Immigration Office of the PC(USA) to ~~[legally]~~ [provide a legal] resource [to] PC(USA) congregations in states experiencing the introduction of SB 1070 copycat legislation.

[6. Directs the Stated Clerk to ask the National Council of Churches to request the churches of North America to join our sister churches in Europe in a common day of prayer to commemorate those migrants who have died on their journey.]

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$2,000; (2011) \$4,000; (2012) \$4,000 (OGA-Per Capita)]

Rationale

The newly enacted Arizona law, known as SB 1070/HB 2162, neither secures the southern border of the United States nor advances the goal of comprehensive immigration reform but unfairly targets an entire class of people as potential violators of immigration law.

Credible reports have already begun to surface about SB 1070/HB2162 being implemented despite it not being scheduled to go into effect until July 29, 2010.

Many Presbyterian faith communities in Arizona include immigrant families whose family integrity is threatened by this newly enacted law.

As of June 23, 2010, seventeen states are in the process of enacting copycat legislation.

Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 was originally drafted by persons associated with the Immigration Reform Law Institute, the legal arm of Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), an organization designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, based on its association with white nationalist organizations.

Trina Zelle, Presbytery of Grand Canyon

Nancy Troy, Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-11-0—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 11-11 with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ~~[directs the PC(USA) to]~~ [shall]:

“1. Refrain from holding national [and synodical] meetings in those states where travel by immigrant Presbyterians or Presbyterians of color or Hispanic ancestry might subject them to harassment due to legislation similar to Arizona Law SB 1070/HB2162.

“2. ~~[Develop]~~ [Direct the Office of Immigration to develop] resources that educate Presbyterians about the history of official anti-immigrant conduct in the United States, including but not limited to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that was not repealed until 1943; the forced migration of persons of Mexican descent from California between 1929 and 1939, 60 percent of whom were U.S. citizens; and the forced relocation of Japanese Americans to detention camps during World War II.

“3. ~~[Develop]~~ [Direct the Office of Immigration to develop] resources that educate Presbyterians about the origins of this most recent legislation, with a special focus on those states that are considering enactment of ~~[copycat]~~ [similar] legislation.

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“4. Instruct the Washington Office to advocate vigorously for comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship and recognizes the critical role that immigrants play in the health of the U.S. economy as well as border stabilization.

“5. [~~Empower~~] [Affirm and support] the Immigration Office of the PC(USA) to legally resource PC(USA) congregations in states experiencing the introduction of SB 1070 copycat legislation.”

Rationale

This resolution is consistent with policies on immigration and immigration reform approved by previous General Assemblies. It also reflects the concerns raised by the Human Rights report before this assembly highlighting systemic problems with current immigration detention programs throughout the United States of America.

Furthermore, the call for national and synodical agencies of the PC(USA) to refrain from holding meetings in states where travel by immigrant Presbyterians of color or Hispanic ancestry might subject them to harassment is compatible with criteria developed by past General Assemblies for redressing corporate practices that work at cross purposes to the church’s social witness.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The ACREC advises that Item 11-11 be approved.

Rationale

The ACREC believes that passage of legislation like Arizona SB1070/HB2162 fosters racism and gives foundation and rationale for racist acts in our society. It exposes people to threats and risks based on their physical appearance. It increases the risk of family separations. The passage of this law has had negative impact on congregational ministries in Arizona: many people who have been active ministry participants have gone into hiding because of fear of being targeted by the police. Finally, ACREC sees this legislation as a response to the wrong question—how can we curb illegal immigration—when a better question would be, “why is the rate of this immigration so high”? Arizona SB1070 does not address other relevant justice issues such as the drug trade, where the U.S. market depends on product from south of our border, nor the economic inequity between many residents of the U.S. and many residents of countries outside the U.S.

Arizona SB1070/HB2162 was passed in order to engender action on the national level. In approving Item 11-11, the 219th General Assembly (2010) can empower and equip Presbyterians to join in developing a more equitable and just immigration policy.

The 217th General Assembly (2006) approved a policy statement, entitled “Advocacy and Welcome for all Immigrants.” The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved an additional policy statement, entitled “Detention, Enforcement, and Human Trafficking.” Both of these policy statements encourage Presbyterians to work against legislation like Arizona’s new law. Additionally, approximately twenty states, encouraged by the passage of SB1070/HB2162 in Arizona, are now considering comparable legislation. The ACREC believes this increases the urgent need for Presbyterians to act now.

11-NB

[The assembly approved Item 11-NB with comment.]

Item 11 New Bus. Recommendations Regarding Deep Water Horizon Oil Disaster.

In response to the Deep Water Horizon Oil disaster, the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues—B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World respectfully recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) take the following actions:

1. Direct the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to send condolences to each of the families of the workers who lost their lives from the Deep Water Horizon oil rig explosion.

2. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to work in partnership with local impacted communities, and to initiate and support an ecumenical, long-term response to the Deep Water Horizon oil disaster. This response may include

a. developing sustainable subsistence food supplies;

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THE EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE WORLD

- b. **developing a peer-to-peer counseling program;**
- c. **equipping community members with the knowledge and technology to monitor water, air, and soil quality and water currents;**
- d. **cross-country monitoring of the effects on migratory birds that fly through the Gulf Coast during their migration;**
- e. **supporting the creation of sustainable green jobs for those who have lost their livelihoods due to the oil disaster; and**
- f. **supporting an ecumenical, locally based series of summits to discuss issues of dislocation, relocation, and resettlement as a result of communities becoming uninhabitable due to toxins in the environment.**

3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to make a one-time, special fundraising appeal to support the long-term recovery of communities impacted by the Deep Water Horizon oil disaster.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to write a letter to the chief executive officer of BP, urging BP to ensure the safety of all workers, including oil industry workers and oil cleanup workers, through training, equipping, and monitoring of safety guidelines in compliance with OSHA.

5. Direct the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI) to communicate with oil and natural gas companies engaged in offshore exploration, drilling, and production urging them to conduct a thorough review of their operations to make certain that they are in compliance with their own health, safety, and environmental standards and all governmental regulatory requirements so that the general public can be assured that similar disasters will be prevented.

6. Direct the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., to:

a. Communicate with Congress and the Executive Branch the need to reconstitute a robust program of oversight and compliance to ensure that health, safety, and environmental standards are followed to protect workers, communities, and the environment.

b. Urge Congress and the Executive Branch to hold BP and other responsible parties morally and financially accountable for this disaster and for the socioeconomic and environmental recovery.

Comment: It is impossible to express adequately the outrage felt by Presbyterians and others at the enduring tragedy unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico region today. While the long-term socioeconomic and spiritual effects of the Deep Water Horizon oil disaster are yet to be determined, urgent action by the PC(USA) is our Christian responsibility.

Item 12-01

[The assembly disapproved Item 12-01. See p. 45.]

On Affirming the Biblical Teaching on the Topic of Marriage—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to “joyfully affirm the historic, biblical, and Christological teaching of the Church on the topic of marriage as a gift from God to bless humankind. As God created man and woman, so does God call some men and women to live together as husband and wife. God’s very order and design defines the institution of marriage.”

Rationale

The intent of the overture is reflected by its language. The institution of marriage was given by God to humanity. It is given by God as a gift to some men and women who are called to marriage while others are called to remain single and celibate. Marriage as given by God is defined by God’s word in Scripture, by God’s word lived out in the history of the PC(USA), and principally by God’s word made flesh in Jesus Christ.

All three of these witnesses agree that in marriage “a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.” Because of this, although civil marriage as defined by the state from time to time and place may differ from the institution of marriage as given by God, we believe God’s people are called to joyfully affirm and live out their trust in God and the truth that God defines for us.

Concurrence to Item 12-01 from the Presbytery of San Joaquin.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-01

Advice on Item 12-01—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) on Items 12-01, 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-05, 12-06, 12-07, 12-08, 12-09, 12-10, 12-11 below:

If the assembly wishes to accomplish the intent of Item 12-01, the Advisory on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to answer it with an action that takes into account the concerns identified in the Rationale below.

Rationale

Overview of Business before the 219th General Assembly (2010) on the Definition of Marriage

1. *Introduction on Marriage Items*

These eleven items of business come to the 219th General Assembly (2010) seeking some modification or interpretation of marriage, as defined in W-4.9000. These overtures range in effect from proposed amendments that would change the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples, to overtures asking for a reaffirmation of the definition of marriage as it currently exists, to a group of overtures seeking an authoritative interpretation of W-4.9000 to allow ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Lay Pastors to officiate at ceremonies for couples who have obtained a civil marriage license and would allow sessions to permit the use of church property for such ceremonies.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 218th General Assembly (2008) saying the following:

The understanding of Christian marriage is set forth in W-4.9001:

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

This definition of marriage identifies three distinct contexts in which God’s gift of marriage is received, each of which lays a claim on the church to provide a faithful response. First, “marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family.” Second, “Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man.” Third, “For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship.” These three sentences require interpretation: Does the second sentence (civil contract) describe a subset of the first (gift to all humankind), or is it a description of how the gift is conferred? Does the second sentence (civil contract) control and subsume the third (Christian marriage)?

These are questions that apply directly to the polity issues presented by the overture, and which divide the church as to its understanding of what constitutes a faithful witness to the world. If God’s gift of marriage is only conferred through a civil contract, then the church’s practice (and therefore its witness) regarding marriage would be limited by the definitions set by civil authority. While the church can always define marriage more narrowly

than the state, and restrict marriage in the church by enforcing its own limits and conditions, if the gift of marriage to the church were independent of the state and not fully subsumed by the civil contract definition, then it would have a basis for performing marriages as acts of prophetic and compassionate witness against civil definitions it deemed too narrow.

The social witness policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have consistently advocated for the end to discrimination in the civil arena on the basis of sexual orientation. This commitment to equality under the law has prompted our support of civil unions for homosexual couples that would afford them protections and rights by the state equal to those afforded heterosexual couples under marriage. The church has permitted the blessing of same-sex unions as an act of pastoral care to its members and as an act of witness, justice, and compassion to the wider community.

However, the church, on the basis of its historic interpretation of the standards of its faith, has drawn a distinction between same-sex unions, which it has permitted within the church, and homosexual marriage, which it has not. This distinction was affirmed in our polity by the decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in the case of *Benton, et al. v. Presbytery of Hudson River*, (Remedial Case 212-11, *Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 586). This decision relied on a 1991 authoritative interpretation of W-4.9001, which reads (in part):

... since a Christian marriage performed in accordance with the Directory for Worship can only involve a covenant between a woman and a man, it would not be proper for a minister of the Word and Sacrament to perform a same sex union ceremony that the minister determines to be the same as a marriage ceremony. (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, pp. 55, 57, 395)

Benton then drew an important distinction between same-sex unions and marriages:

A determinative distinction between a permissible same-sex ceremony and a marriage ceremony is that the latter confers a new status whereas the former blesses an existing relationship. The Book of Order makes this theological distinction concerning marriage in W-4.9004: "In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the woman and the man are now joined in marriage." This and similar pronouncements declaring a new status are to be reserved for services of marriage. (loc. cit.)

In this regard, then, the social witness of the church for equality under the law has not extended to its own liturgical practice and theological understanding of Christian marriage.

Both the Preface to the Directory for Worship and W-1.4001 make clear the connection between the church's faith and its practice, so that forms of worship are informed biblically, theologically, and ecumenically, and the practice of worship respects both the tradition of the church and the pastoral needs of the community. In this light, changes to the language, forms, or definition of marriage should be informed by theological fidelity, ecumenical consultation, and pastoral sensitivity. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 253–254)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that questions about W-4.9000 and its relationship to same-sex couples have been addressed to the General Assembly since 1991. Increasing societal acceptance of same-sex couples, laws enacted by some states allowing marriage by same-sex couples, and our own denomination's struggles over ordination standards have all contributed to the increase of items before the General Assembly seeking change, definition, or interpretation. The church's concern for the pastoral care of its members also contributes to the frequency and urgency of these questions. The appointment of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage is an indicator of the urgency of these matters.

The Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) brings a useful perspective to the discussion of the overtures before the assembly on this topic. Although the Report of the Special Committee is not within the purview of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and makes no recommendations with Constitutional implications, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the Report of the Special Committee may be very helpful as an overview of the issues.

"The Old Testament assumes an ancient Semitic understanding of marriage as the basis for the family, the fundamental unit of Hebrew society. Marriage provides four benefits to humanity:

- The birth and nurture of children (Gen. 1:28; 9:1; 15:1–6; 16:1–16; 21:1–7, and 29:1–30:24);
- Companionship, mutual support, and affection (Gen. 2:18–24 and 1 Sam. 1:1–28);
- Economic partnership, providing financial support for the family (Prov. 31:10–31 and the book of Ruth); and
- A political tool to form alliances between nations and advance political ambitions (1 Sam. 18:17–27; 19:11–17; 25:44; 2 Sam. 3:13–15; 6:16–23; and 1 Kings 11:1–4)" (Item 12-12, Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage, Section II.A.).

The report also traces historic understandings from *The Book of Confessions*. For instance, our current language defining marriage as "... a civil contract between a woman and a man. ..." (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001) reflects language from the Westminster Confession, but noting that the particular problem which was being addressed was polygamy, not same-sex relationships. [(Item 12-12, Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage, Section II.C.2.).]

The Westminster Confession of Faith addressed the excesses that abounded in England between 1640 and 1660, attacking polygamy and spousal desertion to consort with another, both advanced on religious grounds. The Westminster Confession's original provision on marriage indicated that polygamy was an issue of concern for the Westminster divines: "Marriage is to be between one Man and one Woman: neither is it lawful for any Man to have more than one Wife, nor for any Woman to have more than one Husband; at the same time." The confession then outlined the purposes of marriage: "... ordained for the mutual help of Husband and Wife, for the increase of man-kind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy

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seed and, for preventing of uncleanness (*The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.131).” (Item 12-12, Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage, Section II.C.2.).

In addition to the Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage, there are ten items of business regarding the definition of marriage or the church’s response to it before the 219th General Assembly (2010). These items may be easily grouped by the intent or effect of the overtures and fall within the following categories:

a. Take no constitutional action. The adoption of the Report of the Special Committee with its recommendations would make no change to the current constitutional standards.

b. Strengthen and limit current Directory for Worship language. Items 12-01, 12-05 and 12-11 ask the General Assembly to reaffirm the meaning of “marriage” as it is now found in the Directory for Worship.

c. Provide pastoral discretion and responsibility. Items 12-06, 12-08 and 12-09 propose an authoritative interpretation of paragraphs in W-4.9000 which would allow ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Lay Pastors, when authorized to perform marriages, to use pastoral discretion in deciding whether to officiate at ceremonies for couples who have obtained a civil marriage license; and would allow sessions to permit the use of church property for such ceremonies.

d. Amend the *Book of Order*. Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-07 propose amending four paragraphs in the Directory for Worship which define or describe marriage: W-4.9001, W-4.9002, W-4.9004, and W-4.9006. Two more overtures, Items 12-04 and 12-10, seek the same or similar changes to the group above, but also include an amendment to D-14.0202, stipulating that the “two people” in a marriage cannot be required to testify against each other. The amendment to the Rules of Discipline in this manner may be considered with or without amendment to the Directory for Worship.

Each of these groups, and the individual overtures within them are discussed in detail in the pages that follow. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the General Assembly to consider each of these items of business within the context of all of them and the complex background from which they arise.

2. *Strengthening and Limiting Current Language of W-4.9001*

Three of the overtures which concern the church’s understanding of marriage do not seek amendment of the Directory of Worship at W-4.9001 but explicitly request that the General Assembly “affirm” or “reaffirm” approval of one of three closely similar interpretations of that paragraph so as to define marriage as including only heterosexual couples legally wed.

Item 12-01, Item 12-05, and Item 12-11 reference the first sentence of W-4.9001 which speaks of marriage as a gift from God to humankind. They also indicate that the provision’s third sentence controls the weight of meaning of the previous two sentences, so that marriage as a gift from God to all humankind and marriage as a civil contract are aspects of marriage subordinate to the understanding that “[f]or Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship.” (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001)

All three overtures acknowledge and affirm only heterosexual marriage, the sole form of legal marriage in all fifty states until 2004, and they do not provide that the state has a continuing authority to define marriage. An interpretation of W-4.9001 according to Item 12-01 would say that “... God’s very order and design defines the institution of marriage.” Item 12-05 interprets as not being “... within the will of God ...” those same-sex unions legally established where the civil authority has amended its marriage and partnership laws to include same-sex couples, and it places in that category all sexual unions of any sort which are outside the bonds of legal heterosexual marriage, including those protected by civil statute. None of the three overtures explicitly addresses the point raised by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution in 2008, that “... if the gift of marriage to the church were independent of the state and not fully subsumed by the civil contract definition, then it would have a basis for performing marriages as acts of prophetic and compassionate witness against civil definitions it deemed too narrow” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 253). In fact, each can be read as requesting interpretation of W-4.9001 as witness against civil definitions deemed too broad.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the concept of celibacy does not appear in the current *Book of Order*. To introduce by an authoritative interpretation the concept of celibacy in order to constitutionally interpret “marriage” as presented in W-4.9001 would effectively be to amend that paragraph without bringing the proposed amendment before the presbyteries for their approval or disapproval.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that if it believes that the shared intent of the requests in Item 12-01, Item 12-05, and Item 12-11 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to respond under G-13.0103p, and bear public witness that Christian marriage can only be between one man and one woman and that no sexual relationship except heterosexual marriage is within the will of God.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-01 (Overture 010) would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 12-05

See advice on Item 12-01, Part 2 of ACC Overview on Marriage.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the concept of celibacy does not appear in the current *Book of Order*. To introduce by an authoritative interpretation the concept of celibacy in order to constitutionally interpret “marriage” as presented in W-4.9001 would effectively be to amend that paragraph without bringing the proposed amendment before the presbyteries for their approval or disapproval.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that if it believes that the shared intent of the requests in Item 12-01, Item 12-05, and Item 12-11 is appropriate to respond under G-13.0103p, and bear public witness that Christian marriage can only be between one man and one woman and that no sexual relationship except heterosexual marriage is within the will of God.

Item 12-11

See advice on Item 12-01, Part 2 of ACC Overview on Marriage.

Item 12-11 would introduce into the interpretation of W-4.9001 the concept of celibacy as a personal calling. It pairs a call from God to “... some men and women to live together as husband and wife” with God’s call to others “to live a life of celibacy,” so as to more clearly describe or define “marriage” in terms of what it is and also in contrast to what it is not. Item 12-11 implicitly emphasizes the importance of the discernment of a person’s call to either marriage or celibacy, but without incorporating into that discernment a specific role for the community of faith that would finally validate that personal call by means of a marriage ceremony. It also raises such questions for the church’s constitutional ordering of its pastoral care and discipline as “What is the meaning of ‘to live together as husband and wife?’” “Are ‘all others’ or perhaps only ‘some others’ called to celibacy?” and “Does this interpretation of W-4.9001 referring to God’s call to marriage imply that Christians are not to divorce?”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the concept of celibacy does not appear in the current *Book of Order*. To introduce by an authoritative interpretation the concept of celibacy in order to constitutionally interpret “marriage” as presented in W-4.9001 would effectively be to amend that paragraph without bringing the proposed amendment before the presbyteries for their approval or disapproval.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly that if it believes that the shared intent of the requests in Item 12-01, Item 12-05, and Item 12-11 is appropriate, to respond under G-13.0103p, and bear public witness that Christian marriage can only be between one man and one woman and that no sexual relationship except heterosexual marriage is within the will of God.

3. *Provide Pastoral Discretion and Responsibility*

Item 12-06

The third group of business before the General Assembly seeks authoritative interpretations of W-4.9000 that would allow ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Lay Pastors, when authorized to perform marriages, to use pastoral discretion in deciding whether to officiate at ceremonies for couples who have obtained a civil marriage license; and allow sessions to permit the use of church property for such ceremonies. These are Item 12-06, Item 12-08, and Item 12-09.

The church has defined marriage, first, as “... a civil contract between a woman and a man” (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001). In 1991, the General Assembly adopted an authoritative interpretation that said, “... since a Christian marriage performed in accordance with the Directory for Worship can only involve a covenant between a woman and a man, it would not be proper for a minister of the Word and Sacrament to perform a same sex union ceremony that the minister determines to be the same as a marriage ceremony” (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 395).

At the same time, the social witness policies of the church have urged an end to discrimination against same-sex couples. Thus, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution noted in 2008 “The social witness policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have consistently advocated for the end to discrimination in the civil arena on the basis of sexual orientation. This commitment to equality under the law has prompted our support of civil unions for homosexual couples that would afford them protections and rights by the state equal to those afforded heterosexual couples under marriage. The church has permitted the blessing of same-sex unions as an act of pastoral care to its members and as an act of witness, justice, and compassion to the wider community...” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 253)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution noted in 2008. “Changing civil understandings of marriage raise new questions of how pastors are to lead the church in exercising pastoral care to its members and compassionate witness and outreach to its neighbors...” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 254). There is no question that the church is called to provide pastoral care to all individuals. The Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage indicates that at least five states now declare relationships between same sex couples to constitute marriages. This change complicates the pastoral care options in at least those five states.

The enactment of laws which make it possible for same sex couples to enter into a civil contract raises the question then whether the key to the performance of marriage ceremonies, authorized by sessions, to be held in a church, and conducted by ministers or Commissioned Lay Pastors, is the civil contract or the gender of the parties. The traditional distinctions held by the PC(USA) are no longer as clear.

Benton, et al. v Presbytery of Hudson River; Presbytery of the Redwoods v Jane Adams Spahr, and the previously mentioned 1991 authoritative interpretation rested on the following distinctions:

- ceremonies for same sex couples could not use liturgies for Christian marriage or liturgies for the recognition of civil marriage;
- ministers or CLPs were not allowed to perform a ceremony that they consider or represent to be the same as a marriage ceremony; nor is a session allowed to permit their facilities to be used for any such ceremony; and
- pastoral care for same sex couples may be provided in the form of worship services that “... [celebrate] a loving, caring, and committed relationship...” (*Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 588) such as civil unions for same sex couples, but such couples must be advised that such a service does not constitute a marriage and may not be held out as such.

Each of the overtures seeking an authoritative interpretation has some inconsistency with previous constitutional interpretation. All of them are premised on a rationale that the language in the description of marriage is “simply descriptive.” Item 12-09 posits that since there is no mandatory language (“shall,” “is to be,” or “are to be”) in sentences describing a couple as a man and a woman, it is not mandated that the couple be a man and a woman. It is clear, however, that previous authoritative interpretations do not consider the language “simply descriptive” and are based on very literal interpretation of the phrase “between a woman and a man.” In addition, Item 12-09 proposes an authoritative interpretation which does not interpret any specific provision of the *Book of Order*.

If the General Assembly desires to make clear that ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Lay Pastors who are authorized to conduct services of Christian marriage may conduct such ceremonies for same sex couples who have obtained a civil marriage license; and that Sessions may permit the use of church property for such services, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that, of the three overtures presented, the language of Item 12-06 is most compatible with provisions of the Constitution.

Item 12-08

See advice at Item 12-06.

Item 12-09

See advice at Item 12-06.

4. *Amend the Book of Order*

Item 12-02 On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage, from the Presbytery of Hudson River

Item 12-02 would amend four paragraphs in the Directory for Worship; W-4.9001, W-4.9002, W-4.9004, W-4.9006, which would redefine or redescribe marriage or Christian marriage. This overture takes essentially the same approach as Items 12-03 and 12-07, differing only in word choices, primarily in the use of “two people” or “couple” to replace the current language of “a man and a woman” and in the widely varying rationales. In addition, Item 12-04 and Item 12-10 join the group above, but add an amendment to D-14.0202, stipulating that a “married person” cannot be compelled to testify against his or her spouse.

Among Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, and 12-10, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes Item 12-04 best represents all issues addressed in the other four overtures. Thus, if the General Assembly desires to achieve the rationale offered by these five overtures, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice for Item 12-04 should be considered.

Item 12-03 On Amending W-4.9000, Regarding Marriage, from the Presbytery of Hudson River

Item 12-03 would amend four paragraphs in the Directory for Worship; W-4.9001, 1-4.9002, W-4.9004, W-4.9006, which would redefine or redescribe marriage or Christian marriage. This overture takes essentially the same approach as Items 12-02 and 12-07, differing only in word choices (primarily the use of “two people” or “couple” to replace the current language of “a man and a woman”) and in the widely varying rationales. In addition, Item 12-04 and Item 12-10 join the group above but with an additional amendment to D-14.0202 that stipulates that the “married persons” cannot be compelled to testify against each other. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the word “couple” in the proposed amendments in Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, and 12-10 be changed to “two people” to allow the intent of the wording to be clearly translated into other languages. Among Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, and 12-10, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes Item 12-04 best represents all issues addressed in the other four overtures. Thus, if the General Assembly desires to achieve the rationale recited by these five overtures, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice for Item 12-04 should be considered.

Item 12-04 On Amending the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Discipline to Support Equal Protection and Foster Greater Inclusiveness—from the Presbytery of Boston.

Item 12-04 would amend four paragraphs in the Directory for Worship—W-4.9001, W-4.9002, W-4.9004, W-4.9006—which would redefine or redescribe Christian marriage. It would also amend D-14.0202, which stipulates that a “married person” cannot be compelled to testify against his or her spouse. This overture takes essentially the same approach as Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-07, and 12-10 differing only in word choice, primarily in the use of “two people” or “couple” to replace the current language of “a man and a woman” and in the widely varying rationales. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the word “couple” in the proposed amendments Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, 12-10 be changed to “two people” to allow the intent of the wording to be clearly translated into other languages.

Regardless of any action in amending W-4.9001, W-4.9002, W-4.9004, and W-4.9006, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) adopt the part of Item 12-04 that seeks to amend D-14.0202 by stipulating that a “married person” cannot be compelled to testify against his or her spouse. The proposed new language “married person” in D-14.0202 does not alter the intent of the Rules of Discipline or affect the marriage definition in W-4.9001, W-4.9002, W-4.9004, and W-4.9006. Thus, it should be treated as a separate action from the overtures amending W-4.9001, W-4.9002, W-4.9004, and W-4.9006. Currently same-gender marriage is legal in five states in the United States, and those people who are legally married in those five states should have equal protection in the Rules of Discipline as heterosexually married persons as long as the marriage is recognized by state law.

Item 12-07 On Amending W-4.9000 to Uphold Session and Pastoral Discretion in Their Responsibility for the Covenant of Marriage—from the Presbytery of East Iowa.

This overture takes essentially the same approach as Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, and 12-10, differing only in word choice, primarily in the use of “two people” or “couple” to replace the current language of “a man and a woman” and in the widely varied rationales. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the word “couple” in the proposed amendments from Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07 and 12-10 be changed to “two people” to allow the intent of the wording to be clearly translated into other languages. If the General Assembly desires to achieve the rationale offered by this overture, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice for Item 12-04 would accomplish that intent.

Item 12-10 On Amending W-4.9000 and D-14. 0202 Regarding Marriage—from the Presbytery of National Capital.

Item 12-10 would also amend four paragraphs in the Directory for Worship; W-4.9001, W-4.9002, W-4.9004, W-4.9006, which would redefine or redescribe Christian marriage, and would amend D-14.0202, stipulating that a “married person” cannot be compelled to testify against his or her spouse. This overture takes essentially the same approach as Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04 and 12-07 differing only in word choice, primarily in the use of “two people” or “couple” to replace the current language of “a man and a woman,” and in the widely varying rationales.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the word “couple” in the amendments proposed by Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07 and 12-10 be changed to “two people” to allow the intent of the wording to be clearly translated into other languages.

If the General Assembly desires to achieve the rationale offered by this overture, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice for Item 12-04 would accomplish that intent.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Items 12-01, 12-05, and 12-11 would each overture the 219th General Assembly (2010) to reaffirm that marriage is a gift from God designed to be between a man and a woman. In addition, Items 12-05 and 12-11 overture the 219th General Assembly (2010) to reaffirm a standard of sexual behavior that limits sexual activity to married relationships.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 12-01, and Items 12-05 and 12-11 be disapproved.

Rationale

Items 12-01, 12-05, and 12-11 share an interpretation of W-4.9001 in which the statement that marriage is God’s gift to all humankind and for the wellbeing of the entire human family is further and more narrowly circumscribed by the subsequent sentences stating that marriage is a civil contract and a covenant between a man and a woman.

Items 12-11 and 12-05 go further, asking the General Assembly to declare that all appropriate sexual behavior should exist only within the institution of heterosexual marriage, and those not married are to be celibate. Item 12-05 overtures the General Assembly to declare that any sexual relationships outside the bounds of marriage are sinful, “not within the will of God,” and disapproved by the church.

While the church understands and proclaims that marriage between a woman and a man is a basic and good form of family, it has also recognized, especially in recent decades, that other forms of family life also demonstrate and nurture God’s intentions for family life: nurturing children, deepening love, providing material support, caring for the young and the sick and the aged, and creating a context for growth in faith. There is recognition that creating a family by marriage is not simply a way to regulate sexual behavior. It is much more than that, as it establishes a deeply good form of family, but not the only form of good family. As the church stated in the policy *Transforming Families*:

We envision a church and society that welcomes and nurtures all persons, regardless of their family circumstances. Both single persons and married persons should be respected and honored, in the community and in the family of God. We look toward a society in which all members of the family are valued equally, with special attention to children and others who are more vulnerable. The church rejects attitudes or practices that value some more highly than others—based on gender, age, class, ability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or any outward condition. (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 757)

Without abandoning the deep value with which the church holds marriage, the church has also recognized that there are conditions in today’s complex world that may cause good people to cohabit: for example, elderly couples who must consider the effect of marriage on Social Security or pension benefits and young people who strive for a level of financial and educational achievement before marriage (see entire policy *Transforming Families*, *Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 724–795). The actual realities of life may make the imposition of rigid rules without exceptions seem lacking in compassion.

For similar reasons, the church has made a commitment to support equal civil rights for same-sex couples. Equality under the law is one principle. But, in addition, the church recognizes the importance of these protections and rights to the capacity of such families to do what good families do. Similarly, the church has understood that same-sex couples, and homosexual persons, have the same need and desire for the pastoral care of the church. Thus, it offers the blessing of the church on same-sex unions and committed itself to the wellbeing of children in same-sex unions as it has to all children (*Transforming Families*, *Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 56, 775–776).

While unintended, Items 12-01, 12-05, and 12-11 may convey to many people a harsh spirit that belies the compassion, pastoral care, and discernment with which the church actually shares its faith and practices.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 12-07.

Item 12-02

[The assembly answered Item 12-02 by the action taken on Item 12-12. See pp. 45, 46.]

On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage—From the Presbytery of Baltimore.

The Presbytery of Baltimore overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Amend W-4.9000 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-4.9001

“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a ~~civil contract~~ *covenant between a woman and a man two people and according to the laws of the state also constitutes a civil contract.* For Christians marriage is a covenant through which ~~a man and a woman~~ *two people* are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by ~~a woman and a man to each other~~ *between two people*, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

“W-4.9002

“a. In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the ~~man and the woman~~ *two people* concerning ...

[The rest of W-4.9002–9003 remains the same.]

“W-4.9004

“The service begins with the scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The ~~man and the woman~~ *two people* shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the ~~woman and the man~~ *two people* are now joined in marriage. ...

[The rest of W-4.9004–9005 remains the same.]

“W-4.9006

“A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage *or civil union* and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of vows by the ~~husband and wife~~ *couple*, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the ~~woman and man~~ *two people* are already ~~married to one another~~ *united* according to the laws of the state.”

Rationale

I. Marriage: Sharing God’s Gift Equitably in the Church:

Rationale for an Act of Pastoral Ministry

The Directory for Worship defines marriage as “... a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family” (W-4.9001). A gift conferred by God can only be denied by God the giver of the gift.

God’s gift of marriage within the Church is an act of pastoral care by “... which Christians offer [support to] one another in daily living and at times of need and of crisis in personal and communal life. ...” (W-6.1003). Pastoral care is a ministry of the whole Church. But it is especially incumbent upon elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament, as a duty and responsibility which they are bound to perform by Christ’s law of love, that they share the gift of pastoral care equitably with all people within the Church (W-6.1003, W-6.3002, G-6.0304, G-6.0402, G-6.0202).

Currently in our churches and communities, same gender couples are living together in loving, committed, monogamous relationships. They are raising children, caring for aging parents, and making positive contributions to their communities. These couples include new and long-time members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Their relationships are equivalent to a marriage in every way but formal recognition by the church and by most states in which they live, though some states are recognizing their relationships as marriages or civil unions.

By changing the definition of marriage in the Directory for Worship we would recognize committed, lifelong relationships that are already being lived out by our members. We would honor and support the love and commitment they practice in their lives every day. We would bear witness to the love of God as it is expressed between these couples and as we offer that love to them on behalf of the church.

In addition, as the legal recognition of same-gender relationships goes through transitions throughout the country, PC(USA) clergy and sessions are faced with complex decisions regarding ecclesiastical authority and property use. Ministers of the Word and Sacrament currently can face ecclesiastical charges if they follow the mandate of their office to provide pastoral care equitably in the church and thus perform marriage ceremonies or civil unions that may be legal in their state. Ruling elders who follow the mandate of their office to extend the pastoral ministry of the church to all members face a similar liability by authorizing the use of church property for such marriages. Same-gender couples who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can come to their minister and request that minister to perform their marriage as an agent of the state, only to be denied that important time of pastoral care and ministry because of church law. Broadening the language to offer marriage to any two people removes the religious barriers faced by ministers, sessions, church members, and other Christians while continuing to honor the laws of each state. Changing the language in this way emphasizes that the Directory for Worship defines marriage within the bounds of our denomination and does not determine what is legal or illegal in civil law.

For the good of loving, monogamous same-gender couples in our church and for the community and for the greater ministry of our clergy, sessions, and churches, we propose these changes to the Directory for Worship.

II. Biblical and Theological Rationale

A search of marriage in the Scripture reveals a broad spectrum of historical marriage practice, some of which we consider foreign today, including: Solomon's many wives and concubines (1 Kings 11:3), levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5–6 and Matt. 22:23–32), wives sharing female servants with their husband to increase progeny (Gen. 29–30), divorce and remarriage as equal to adultery (Mark 10:12), and women being commanded to remain silent in church and only ask their husbands for instruction at home (1 Cor. 14:33–36).

We believe the central passage about marriage in the Bible is also the central passage of the Bible as a whole, though it does not mention the word “marriage.” It is Matt. 22:37–38: “He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” In addition, we are reminded of the centrality of love in all our decisions in 1 John 4:16b: “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.” Other meaningful and relevant passages about love that apply to marriage are John 13:34: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” and Romans 12:10: “love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.” Then Paul reminds us in Galatians 3:28 that in Christ so many of the boundary lines we draw between one another are erased. “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

With passages like these firmly in our hearts and minds, we work to interpret the whole message of Scripture through the lens of Christ. We strive to discern the love, grace, and salvation of God as revealed in the historical and social context in which the Scriptures were written. Then we ask how we may live out that love, grace, and salvation in our own historical and social context.

This mode of biblical interpretation is at the heart of our Reformed tradition. It is an essential of Reformed faith that the seat of ultimate authority in the church, inclusive of the church's understanding of the witness of Scripture and the Confessions, is Jesus Christ.

“... Obedience to Jesus Christ alone identifies the one universal church and supplies the continuity of its tradition. ...” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.03).

“... the church, in obedience to Jesus Christ, is open to the reform of its standards of doctrine as well as of governance. ...” (*Book of Order*, G-2.0200).

“... When controversy arises about the right understanding of any passage or sentence of Scripture, or for the reformation of any abuse within the Kirk of God, we ought not so much to ask what [men] have said or done before us, as what the Holy Ghost uniformly speaks within the body of the Scriptures and what Christ Jesus himself did and commanded. ...” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Scots Confession, 3.18; see also The Second Helvetic Confession, 5.010 and The Confession of 1967, 9.29–9.30).

Some of the more helpful passages that speak specifically of marriage remind us that the purpose of marriage in a Christian context is that two people support each other as disciples of Jesus Christ. Paul warns of the entanglements of marriage for life as a disciple as well as the benefits it provides for those who do not have the gift of celibacy (1 Cor. 7). Jesus uses

strong rhetoric to warn against the way marriage may pull us away from our devotion to God: “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes and even life itself, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). But, when marriage does empower two people to live lives of service, self-sacrifice, simplicity, and sharing God’s love in Christ, then the marriage is fulfilling the spirit of Christ as proclaimed in Scripture. It is our conviction and experience that loving, monogamous, homosexual relationships enable gay and lesbian people to find support and empowerment to live as more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

But, perhaps the most meaningful word related to marriage in the Bible is from Galatians 6:2: “Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” In addition to being a definition of servanthood and discipleship, this could be read as a definition of marriage. In our churches today there are Christian men and women bearing one another’s burdens in the context of lifelong, loving, monogamous homosexual relationships. They are raising children, caring for parents, contributing to their neighborhoods, communities, and churches. We find no biblical warrant for denying them full access to “... a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family” (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001). Again we assert that a gift conferred by God can only be denied by God the giver of the gift.

The communal story of the early Church clearly demonstrates that the Church led by God’s grace in Jesus Christ grasped new understandings of the expansiveness of the distribution of God’s gifts to all humankind and changed its beliefs and actions accordingly. Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26, 27, 35, 38) and Peter’s visions in which God taught him that nothing God created was common or unclean (Acts 10:15, 19, 20a, 23b, 28, 29a, 47) show that the Church was pressed to change its entire perspective on how God worked in the world and was challenged to dismantle understandings that had been accepted for centuries, e.g., that Jews have nothing to do with unclean gentiles.

The proper pastoral response to the neighbor in need (Lk. 10:25–37) is to break through any social, legal, or religious taboos that cause us to see another human being in need as less than ourselves and unworthy of God’s gifts freely given. The rule of love (Deut. 6:5; Lk. 10:27, 37b) will not permit us to withhold the performance of the duties of pastoral care on the basis of our judging another person common or unclean.

In the Church today, loving committed same-gender couples who hear the good news of God’s grace in Jesus Christ that enables them to give themselves in covenant to one another are saying, “Look, here is our love. What is to prevent us from receiving God’s gift of marriage—God’s gift to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family?”

The proposed changes to the Directory for Worship regarding marriage ensure that God’s gift of marriage shall be shared equitably in the church in fulfillment of the church’s pastoral ministry and its communal story as the Body of Christ.

Concurrence to Item 12-02 from the Presbytery of New York City.

Concurrence to Item 12-02 from the Presbytery of Albany (with Additional Rationale).

Currently in our churches and communities, same-gender couples are living together in loving, committed, monogamous relationships. They are raising children, caring for aging parents, and making positive contributions to their communities. These couples include new and long-time members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Their relationships are equivalent to a marriage in every way but formal recognition by the church and by most states in which they live, though some states are recognizing their relationships as marriages or civil unions.

By changing the definition of marriage in the Directory for Worship, we would recognize committed, lifelong relationships that are already being lived out by our members. We would honor and support the love and commitment they practice in their lives every day. We would bear witness to the love of God as it is expressed between these couples and as we offer that love to them on behalf of the church.

In addition, as the legal recognition of same-gender relationships goes through transitions throughout the country, PC(USA) clergy and sessions are faced with complex decisions regarding ecclesiastical authority and property use. Ministers of Word and Sacrament currently can face ecclesiastical charges if they perform marriage ceremonies or civil unions that may be legal in their state. Same-gender couples who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can come to their minister and request that minister to perform their marriage as an agent of the state, only to be denied that important time of pastoral care and ministry because of church law.

Broadening the language to offer marriage to any two people removes the religious barriers faced by ministers, sessions, church members, and other Christians while continuing to honor the laws of each state. Changing the language in this way emphasizes that the Directory for Worship defines marriage within the bounds of our denomination and does not determine what is legal or illegal in civil law.

For the good of loving, monogamous same-gender couples in our church and for the community and for the greater ministry of our clergy, sessions, and churches, we propose these changes to the Directory for Worship.

Concurrence to Item 12-02 from the Presbytery of the Redwoods (with Additional Rationale).

[Rationale is similar to the first section of the rationale from the Presbytery of Albany]

Currently in our churches and communities, same-gender couples are living together in loving, committed, monogamous relationships. They are raising children, caring for aging parents, and making positive contributions to their communities. These couples include new and long-time members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Their relationships are equivalent to a marriage in every way but formal recognition by the church and by most states in which they live, though some states are recognizing their relationships as marriages or civil unions.

By changing the definition of marriage in the Directory for Worship, we would recognize committed, lifelong relationships that are already being lived out by our members. We would honor and support the love and commitment they practice in their lives every day. We would bear witness to the love of God as it is expressed between these couples and as we offer that love to them on behalf of the church.

In addition, as the legal recognition of same-gender relationships goes through transitions throughout the country, PC(USA) clergy and sessions are faced with complex decisions regarding ecclesiastical authority and property use. Ministers of Word and Sacrament currently can face ecclesiastical charges if they perform marriage ceremonies or civil unions that may be legal in their state. Same-gender couples who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can come to their minister and request that minister to perform their marriage as an agent of the state, only to be denied that important time of pastoral care and ministry because of church law. Broadening the language to offer marriage to any two people removes the religious barriers faced by ministers, sessions, church members, and other Christians while continuing to honor the laws of each state. Changing the language in this way emphasizes that the Directory for Worship defines marriage within the bounds of our denomination and does not determine what is legal or illegal in civil law. This overture recognizes that the civil, legal definition of marriage is in transition within and among the states. This overture honors the dignity of all same-gender couples and their families throughout the PC(USA).

For the good of loving, monogamous, same-gender couples in our church and for the community and for the greater ministry of our clergy, sessions, and churches, we propose these changes to the Directory for Worship.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-02

Advice on Item 12-02—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, and 12-10 present similar issues. The ACC response to these issues can be found in the Overview posted at Item 12-01. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) would like to achieve the intent of these five items, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that its intent can be best accomplished by approval of Item 12-04.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-02 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has grouped Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07 and 12-10 together. These items overture the 219th General Assembly (2010) to send to the presbyteries a proposed amendment to the *Book of Order*, W-4.9001, W-4.9002, W-4.9004, and W-4.9006, that would replace references to women and men with gender neutral language. Item 12-07 would also delete reference to marriage as a civil contract.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy counsels the assembly to consider the following:

The 208th General Assembly (1996) approved the following: “Affirming the Presbyterian church’s historic definition of marriage as a civil contract between a man and a woman, yet recognizing that committed same-sex partners seek equal civil liberties in a contractual relationship with all the civil rights of married couples, we urge the Office of the Stated Clerk to explore the feasibility of entering friend-of-the-court briefs and supporting legislation in favor of giving civil rights to same-sex partners” (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p.122). This quotation represents the significant and long-standing commitment of the PC(USA) to equal civil rights for same-sex couples.

In 2004, the 216th General Assembly (2004) adopted the policy *Transforming Families* to address the many changes and challenges facing individuals and families as they strive to form and sustain families. In its historical analysis, the policy points out that Scripture contains “... several forms of marital and family relationships, none of which is a precise equivalent

of contemporary marriage and family life” (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 750). It notes that the development of monogamous marriage took place over time in Hebrew (and other) societies. And it points out that “... the Reformed tradition embraced marriage as a good for all in society, Christian or not” (*Ibid.*). As the *Book of Order* states, “Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well being of the entire human family” (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001).

Transforming Families goes on to state that while the marital-biological family is a basic form of family, it is “... neither exhaustive nor exclusive ...” as a family form, and “... it does not fully exemplify God’s ordering of interpersonal life” (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 751, C.2.). Moreover, the policy recognizes that the forms and purposes of families have evolved as God’s ordering of equal gender relationships has become clearer. In these ways, the church has acknowledged that forms of marriage and family are products of historical and cultural development. Today we would find some of these previous forms and some of the interpersonal relationships that they embodied falling short of our understanding of God’s will for humankind and human well being.

Having said this, this policy did not address specifically the question of same-sex marriage and family. It assumed without comment the previous policies of the church that called for civil rights for same-sex families that are equal to those of married heterosexual families, but that did not explicitly include same-sex couples in the church’s understanding of marriage.

The policy ends with a vision of a church and society that “... welcomes and nurtures all persons regardless of their family circumstances” and a church that rejects “... attitudes or practices that value some more highly than others—based on gender, age, class, ability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or any outward condition...” (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 757).

The intent of Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, and 12-10 is to embody in the church itself an equal recognition of same-sex faithful and committed relationships as included in the gift of marriage God intends for humankind. These items would create in the church the same equality for same-sex committed relationships as the church has repeatedly advocated in civil society.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 12-07.

Item 12-03

[The assembly answered Item 12-03 by the action taken on Item 12-12. See pp. 45, 46.]

On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall W-4.9000 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-4.9001

“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a ~~civil contract~~ *covenant between a woman and a man two people (“the couple”)* and according to the laws of the state also constitutes a civil contract. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which ~~a man and a woman~~ *the couple* are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by ~~a woman and a man to each other~~ *the couple*, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

“W-4.9002

“a. In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the ~~man and the woman~~ *the couple* concerning

[The rest of W-4.9002–.9003 remains the same.]

“W-4.9004

“The service begins with the scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The ~~man and the woman~~ *couple* shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the ~~woman and the man~~ *couple* are now joined in marriage.

[The rest of W-4.9004–.9005 remains the same.]

“W-4.9006

“A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage *or civil union* and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of vows by the ~~husband and wife~~ *couple*, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the ~~woman and man~~ *couple* are already ~~married to one another~~ *united* according to the laws of the state.”

Rationale

Marriage is beyond gender. It refers to the commitment of two people to live beside each other with a love expressed as tenderness and justice. It refers to the deep promise to live together through the thick and thin of their journey together through the years. It refers to the mystery in which the love of God meets, is joined to and made manifest in the love of two people whose hearts are a home place to each other. The notion of marriage is demeaned by any lesser definition. Recognizing this, some states are already ahead of the church in moving the legal definition of marriage beyond gender.

Changing the definition of marriage in the Directory of Worship would allow the church and its officers the option of also recognizing the lifelong, same-gender commitments that many of our members are now choosing to make. It would make it possible for the church to celebrate the love of God as it is embodied in their love for each other. In a state that already permits same-gender marriages or civil union, ministers and ruling elders would be relieved of the fear of ecclesiastical charges and would be able to respond equitably and pastorally to marriage requests by all, not just some, members of their congregations and to do so without fear of charges being filed in ecclesiastical court. Changing the Directory of Worship in this way would move the church away from fear and reprisal and closer to its own teaching on the hospitality of God and the welcome and care which that implies.

The proposed change allows us to step more fully in line with the Bible and *The Book of Confessions* and to be the church that both our Scripture and our Constitution have continually imagined, a church open to changes that support love of God and one another (Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–37). We join those in the early church by stepping into line behind people like Philip, who, in his encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch, was moved to overturn his previously narrow perceptions and prejudices and make the circle of God’s family much wider than his previous religious upbringing had allowed him to imagine (Acts 8:26–38) and Peter, who was given a vision that the lines he had previously drawn between clean and unclean were too narrow and had to be abandoned to embody God’s loving way (Acts 10:9–22). And we join those who, throughout the history of our denomination, have recognized the need to move away from previous barriers in the direction of love and care.

... In [God’s] reconciling love, [God] overcomes the barriers between brothers [and sisters] and breaks down every form of discrimination ... The church is called to bring all men [and women] to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, *marriage, family*, church, and the exercise of political rights. ... Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize their fellowmen, however subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess. (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9:44, emphasis added)

The proposed changes would grant all loving couples the right to have their marriages performed in our congregations, strengthening all our communities and families, gay and straight, since they allow us to recognize the love of two hearts declaring themselves to be a home to each other, before God, with gratitude.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-03

Advice on Item 12-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, and 12-10 present similar issues. A discussion of these issues can be found in the ACC Overview posted at Item 12-01. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) would like to achieve the intent of these five items, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that its intent can be best accomplished by approval of Item 12-04.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: approval of Item 12-03 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has grouped Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07 and 12-10 together. Please view the advice offered by the ACSWP on them at Item 12-02.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 12-07.

Item 12-04

[The assembly answered Item 12-04 by the action taken on Item 12-12. See pp. 45, 46.]

On Amending the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Discipline to Support Equal Protection and Foster Greater Inclusiveness—From the Presbytery of Boston.

The Presbytery of Boston respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall W-4.9001 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between ~~a woman and a man~~ *two people*. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which ~~a man and a woman~~ *two people* are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made ~~by a woman and a man to each other~~ *between two people*, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.”

2. Shall W-4.9002 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the ~~man and the woman~~ *couple to be married* concerning ... [The remainder of this section remains the same.]”

3. Shall W-4.9004 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The ~~man and the woman~~ *couple to be married* shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the ~~woman and the man~~ *two people* are now joined in marriage. [The remainder of this paragraph remains the same.]”

4. Shall W-4.9006 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage *or civil union* and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of vows by the ~~husband and wife~~ *couple*, and the public declaration by the minister

reflect the fact that the ~~woman and man~~ *two people* are already ~~married to one another~~ *united* according to the laws of the state.”

5. Shall D-14.0202 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“A ~~husband or wife~~ *married person*, otherwise competent to testify, may be a witness for or against ~~the other~~ *his or her spouse*, but neither shall be compelled to testify against the other.”

Rationale

By the time the General Assembly meets, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will have allowed same-gender couples to marry for more than six years. Many of these couples are members of PC(USA) churches and come to the church to celebrate the gift of marriage in worship. Some of our pastors, when they receive such a request, will decline, as it would run counter to their conscience to officiate. Others, however, are put in an untenable position, caught between their sense of pastoral responsibility and the threat of prosecution. The proposed changes respond to and reflect this changed reality.

Equal Rights

The 218th General Assembly (2008) voted overwhelmingly (516 to 151) to “request the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Council, and other representatives of the PC(USA) to urge state legislatures and the federal government to apply the principle of equal protection to same-gender couples and their children.”¹ In the same vote they determined to “support congregations, sessions, and ministers of Word and Sacrament who are seeking to extend pastoral care as well as outreach and evangelism to same-gender couples and their nontraditional families who are more and more our neighbors on our streets and our fellow members in our pews.” In states where the equal protection principle includes marriage for same-gender couples, it would run counter to the direction mandated by the 218th General Assembly (2008) if the state were to provide more protection than the church is willing to extend to its own members.

Pastoral Aspects

In a state where same-gender marriage is recognized under the law, it is pastorally unconscionable to apply exclusionary principles to certain members of the congregation by declining to perform their marriage. In practical terms, what this means is that pastors in those congregations have to make the choice between failing in their pastoral responsibilities and running the risk of prosecution by the church. Such prosecutions have placed a formidable financial and spiritual burden on presbyteries already, threatening the peace and unity of the church.

Historical Relation Between Church and State

Dating back to John Calvin, the church and the state have shared responsibility for marriages, and the church has recognized the state’s right to define the legal parameters of marriage. The state determines who is eligible to be married in broad categories, while the church has always maintained the right to determine the wisdom of a particular marriage (W-4.9002b). It would break a tradition of nearly five hundred years if the church would at this time decide to recognize some, but not all, marriages sanctioned by the state. The church would effectively deny the state’s right to set those legal parameters.

Additional Rationale from the Presbytery of Baltimore

We wholeheartedly concur with and affirm the rationale that was provided by the Presbytery of Baltimore in Item 12-02.

Endnote

1. *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p.258: Item 04-13, Friday, June 27, 2008

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-04

Advice on Item 12-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, and 12-10 present similar issues. The ACC response to these issues can be found in the Overview posted at Item 12-01. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) would like to achieve the intent of these five items, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that its intent can be best accomplished by approval of Item 12-04.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-04 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has grouped Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07 and 12-10 together. Please view the advice offered by the ACSWP on them at Item 12-02.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Item 12-05

[The assembly disapproved Item 12-05. See p. 45.]

On Marriage—From the Presbytery of Prospect Hill.

The Presbytery of Prospect Hill, recognizing that sexual sin is so serious and the teaching of Christian marriage so important in our time, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. Affirm that marriage between a man and a woman is “a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family” (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001).
2. Declare, therefore, that no sexual union outside the bonds of marriage, such as in co-habitation, adulterous affairs, domestic partnerships, or same-sex unions, is within the will of God or approved by this body.
3. Urge congregations to provide loving and consistent teaching in this area and to call erring members and leaders to repentance.
4. Direct our national and international offices to uphold and urge this historic understanding of marriage in their communications with both church and society.

Rationale

For the church’s witness to have integrity and effect in our culture, we must examine our own teaching and living, reforming our lives to become consistent with God’s intentions for us. Although some in society seek to redefine marriage, marriage is a relationship instituted and defined by God and we are not free to change it. We believe that God’s revealed intent must be the basis for our life and witness. Our culture needs the consistent witness of the church in order to resist pressures that would distort the meaning of marriage.

The following examples show God’s revealed intent for and affirmation of the marriage union, as well as God’s disapproval of a sexual relationship outside the bonds of marriage between a man and a woman:

Genesis 1:26, 27: “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Genesis 2:20–24: “... but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.’ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

Exodus 20:14: “You shall not commit adultery.”

Lev. 18:22: “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.”

Matt. 19:4–6: “... ‘Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?” So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’”

Romans 1:26–27: “For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.”

Eph. 5:31–32: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.”

Hebrews 13:4: “Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.”

1 Cor. 6:9–11: “Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers— none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

1 Cor. 6:18–20: “Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own. For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.”

The PC(USA) constitutional position affirms marriage while disallowing sexual relationships outside the marriage of a man and a woman.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has several passages in its Constitution expressing its understanding of marriage.

The Westminster Confession of Faith: “Marriage is a union between one man and one woman, designed of God to last so long as they both shall live” (*The Book of Confessions*, 6.133).

The Directory for Worship (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001): “Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.”

The Larger Catechism interprets the Seventh Commandment as forbidding “adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections ... and all other provocations to, or acts of, uncleanness either in ourselves or others” (*The Book of Confessions*, 7.249)

The *Book of Order* stated more succinctly, among “the historic confessional standards of the church,” the “requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness” (*Book of Order*, G-6.0106b).

In 1978 the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted a policy statement on “The Church and Homosexuality.” According to that policy statement, “We conclude that homosexuality is not God’s wish for humanity. ... Even where the homosexual orientation has not been consciously sought or chosen, it is neither a gift from God or a state nor a condition like race; it is a result of our living in a fallen world.” Reviewing biblical passages related to sexuality, the statement found: “... that homosexuality is a contradiction of God’s wise and beautiful pattern for human sexual relationships revealed in Scripture and affirmed in God’s ongoing will for our life in the Spirit of Christ. It is a confusion of sexual roles that mirrors the tragic inversion in which men and women worship the creature instead of the Creator.”

The PC(USA) has at various times and in a variety of documents and policies declared its position on marriage and sexual relationships outside marriage. However, on some occasions the message from our church to the culture has been unclear. In this time of sexual confusion, so prevalent in our society and in the church, including occasions in which some in the church seek to challenge the teaching, it is proper for our General Assembly to reassert itself succinctly on this matter as a means of clarifying its teaching and making it indisputable that such teaching applies to our own time.

Concurrence to Item 12-05 from the Presbytery of Redstone.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-05

Advice on Item 12-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that its Overview of the issues raised in this and other overtures may be found at Item 12-01. If the General Assembly believes that the shared intent of the requests in Item 12-01, Item 12-05, and Item 12-11 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the

219th General Assembly (2010) to respond under G-13.0103p, and bear public witness that Christian marriage can only be between one man and one woman and that no sexual relationship except heterosexual marriage is within the will of God.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-05 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has grouped Items 12-01, 12-05, and 12-11 together. Its complete advice and counsel and *Rationale* are at Item 12-01.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 12-05 (and Items 12-01 and 12-11) be disapproved.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 12-07.

Item 12-06

[The assembly answered Item 12-06 by the action taken on Item 12-12. See pp. 45, 46.]

On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000—From the Presbytery of Albany.

The Presbytery of Albany overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide the following authoritative interpretation of W-4.9000:

“Ministers of Word and Sacrament and commissioned lay pastors authorized to conduct services of Christian marriage may exercise pastoral discretion when asked to officiate at ceremonies for couples who have obtained a civil marriage license, and sessions may permit the use of church property for such services. Ministers of Word and Sacrament and commissioned lay pastors may refuse to conduct such services, and sessions may refuse to permit the use of church property for such purposes.”

Rationale

In long-standing Christian tradition, civil authority has played a primary role in the regulation of marriage. Reformed Christians view marriage not as a sacrament mediated by the church but as a blessing that the couple seeks on a contract they are entering under auspices of the state. This blessing is a moment of great joy in the church and in the lives of those on whom it is conferred, but Christian marriage does not change the status of the couple. Marriages that are not blessed by the church are nevertheless recognized in Presbyterian churches, and, as the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage has pointed out in its preliminary report, civil approval is required before a Christian service of marriage can be performed: “Presbyterian marriages are required to fulfill the requirements of legal marriage.”

Because of the integral connection between civil and Christian marriage, the church must contend with the fact that states are now passing legislation or operating under judicial rulings that make legal marriage equality an option for same-gender couples. Long-committed, same-gender couples (including Presbyterians whose civil unions may have been blessed by their Presbyterian pastors in their Presbyterian congregations) are choosing to take on the additional commitments and responsibilities of marriage. In these situations, pastors and sessions find themselves facing urgent pastoral decisions about how to provide the same ministry to them that is offered to other members. The issue comes to a head in the decision about whether ministers of Word and Sacrament will officiate at marriage ceremonies of legally-licensed couples and whether the session will permit the use of church property for such ceremonies.

The issue is critical because worship is the central context of pastoral care for Christians:

“The worship of God in the Christian community is the foundation and context for the ministry of pastoral care as well as for the ministry of nurture in the faith” (*Book of Order*, W-6.4000).

“All Christians are called to care for one another in daily living, sharing joys and sorrows, supporting in times of stress and need, offering mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. This care is primarily offered as the community of faith worships together. ...” (*Book of Order*, W-6.3002).

“The church recognizes transitions which bring joy and sorrow in human life:

- “a. children are born, grow up, become independent, find their aging parents becoming dependent upon them;
- “b. people begin work, change jobs, retire;
- “c. households are established, move to new locations, gain and lose members;
- “d. people are empowered, restored, make new commitments.

“The ministries of pastoral care support people in recognizing, accepting, and celebrating these and other such times of adjustment, assisting them in working toward a new role in life and affirming their identity through transition” (*Book of Order*, W-6.3010).

Pastors and sessions need the General Assembly’s assurance of their freedom and discretion to provide the pastoral care that their members require. This freedom is based on the same principle as W-4.9002b, which provides that pastors are free, as their judgment dictates, not to officiate at marriages their members and others are contracting. In the absence of mandatory language in the *Book of Order* that would prohibit a service of Christian marriage for any couple that is legally permitted to marry, the assembly should give such assurance in the form of the proposed authoritative interpretation. The authoritative interpretation will prevent deep grief to church members who might otherwise be denied the pastoral care of the church; it will protect pastors and sessions from judicial challenge for exercising their pastoral responsibilities; in the spirit of mutual forbearance widely urged in recent years by General Assemblies and their task forces, it will promote the peace, unity, and purity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Concurrence to Item 12-06 from the Presbytery of Chicago (with Additional Rationale)

Gay and lesbian Christians are members of our families and congregations, no different from all members of the Body of Christ in being full participants in the Christian community by God’s grace. The church is called to provide wholehearted support that fosters the well-being of all families.

Gay and lesbian persons in committed same-gender partnerships stand in the same relation to God as all other persons. Therefore, the church should extend to them the same pastoral care it offers to other couples and families, helping them to work out their discipleship in the context of their relationships, not apart from them.

The church blesses heterosexual marriages contracted under civil law because for centuries marriage partners have testified that their bond is a means of grace. When same-gender partners testify that their committed relationships have the same benefit, they should receive the same blessing.

While the *Book of Order* currently provides that marriage, in the Presbyterian context, is “a civil contract between a woman and a man” (W-4.9001) that is no longer factually correct in a number of regions of the United States and Canada and is changing on an almost annual basis. Currently civil marriage between same-sex couples is legal in Iowa, Connecticut, Vermont, and Massachusetts. In New Hampshire, same-sex marriages will be legalized beginning January 1, 2010.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament currently serve in a dual capacity when they perform marriage ceremonies in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): as agents of the state and as agents of the church. As agents of the state, clergy serve as the officer who administers oaths and promises that create the civil contract of marriage and then certifies that those oaths and promises have been undertaken. As agents of the church, clergy are agents of uniting the civil marriage contract with the biblical concept of Covenants with and before God.

On a number of occasions, the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been interpreted to prohibit same-sex marriage ceremonies from being conducted in Presbyterian churches and by Presbyterian clergy. See, e.g. the questions addressed by the General Assembly in 1991 (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 395), and General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission decisions in *Remedial Case 212-11, Benton, et al. v. Presbytery of Hudson River* (*Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 586) and *Disciplinary Case 218-12, Spahr v. Pby of Redwoods*).

Spahr specifically holds that “... officers of the PC(USA) authorized to perform marriages shall not state, imply, or represent that a same sex ceremony is a marriage.” Nevertheless, at no time has the church interpreted its Constitution to prohibit the blessing or other memorialization of same-sex civil marriages that have already been formalized through the civil marriage process. Therefore, the proposed authoritative interpretation does not run afoul of any current General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) or General Assembly interpretations of the Constitution.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-06

Advice on Item 12-06—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 12-06 presents issues that the assembly should consider. These can be found in the ACC Overview posted at Item 12-01. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) believes that the intent of Item 12-06 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the overture is clear and consistent with the stated intent.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-06 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the ACSWP has considered Items 12-06, 12-08 and 12-09 together. These items overture the 219th General Assembly (2010) to issue an authoritative interpretation of W-4.9000 allowing pastors in states that have legalized same-sex marriage to exercise pastoral discretion when asked to officiate at such weddings.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) counsels the following considerations:

The social witness policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have consistently called for equal civil rights for homosexual persons, including the same rights for same-sex couples as are enjoyed by heterosexual married couples. Thus, the church has supported civil unions as one means of achieving this equality. Within its own membership, the church has offered pastoral care to same-sex couples by blessing these unions in a service of worship. However, it has maintained a distinction between marriage that conferred a new status on the couple, marriage, and the blessing of a civil union that existed prior to the blessing.

Because, in fact, civil unions have not guaranteed same-sex couples equal civil rights, the demand for civil marriage for same-sex couples has continued. The legalization of same-sex marriage in five states now blurs the distinction the church has maintained. Church members in same-sex committed relationships turn to their churches and pastors to receive the same gift of marriage that the church has said “God gives to all humankind” (W-4.9001). Items 12-06, 12-08, and 12-09 support the church’s commitment to civil equality and nondiscrimination. They emphasize the new importance of expressing and extending that equality into the church’s worship and pastoral care in those states that have legislated marital equality. None of these items would compel pastors to officiate at same-sex marriages. And none of these items would apply to states that have not legalized same-sex marriage.

Items 12-06, 12-08, and 12-09 challenge the church to permit, but not require, an extension of the church’s current level of pastoral response to include the service of Christian Marriage for same-sex couples where the state has so defined marriage. Should the General Assembly choose to permit this discretion, The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) concurs with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s recommendation that the language of Item 12-06 is preferred.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 12-07.

Item 12-07

[The assembly answered Item 12-07 by the action taken on Item 12-12. See pp. 45, 46.]

On Amending W-4.9000 to Uphold Session and Pastoral Discretion in Their Responsibility for the Covenant of Marriage—From the Presbytery of East Iowa.

The Presbytery of East Iowa respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

1. Amend W-4.9001 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. ~~Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man.~~ For Christians marriage is a covenant through which ~~a man and a woman~~ *two people* are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by ~~a woman and a man~~ *the couple* to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.”

2. Amend W-4.9002a as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the ~~man and the woman~~ *couple* concerning ...”

3. Amend W-4.9004 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The ~~man and the woman~~ *couple* shall declare ~~their~~ *the* intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. ... In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the ~~woman and the man~~ *two* are now joined in marriage. ...”

4. Amend W-4.9006 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of the vows ~~by the husband and wife~~, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the ~~woman and man~~ *are couple* is already married to one another according to the laws of the state.”

Rationale

In the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, covenants between persons of faith are commonplace and blessed by God. The prophets and Jesus Christ our Lord affirmed that justice, mercy, and faith constitute our core as people of faith. As people of faith, in covenant relationship as proclaimed in Scripture and affirmed by our church’s Constitution, we affirm that all persons are created in the image of God and called to partake fully in the covenantal relationships that God has provided for all persons.

The practice of pastoral care honors our core covenantal responsibility to care for one another. The *Book of Order* declares that pastoral care is an imperative responsibility for the whole church; and has recognized that worship is an important context for the exercise of pastoral care: “All Christians are called to care for one another in daily living, sharing joys and sorrows, supporting in times of stress and need, offering mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. This care is primarily offered as the community of faith worships together. ...” (W-6.3002).

Pastoral care is specifically mentioned as being important for Christians during major life events such as loss and death, healing the effects of broken relationships, and life transitions:

The church recognizes transitions which bring joy and sorrow in human life:

- a. children are born, grow up ...
- b. people begin work, change jobs, ...
- c. households are established, ...
- d. people are empowered, restored, make new commitments.

The ministries of pastoral care support people in recognizing, accepting, and celebrating these and other such times of adjustment, assisting them in working toward a new role in life and affirming their identity through transition. [W-6.3010]

To exclude an entire population of the church, namely same-gender couples, from the privilege of Christian marriage denies these persons the pastoral care they desire for fulfilling their service to God. While it has always been the case that persons authorized to conduct services of Christian marriage may not be required to marry a couple against their conscience and better judgment (*Book of Order*, W-4.9002b), to bind the conscience of ministers and commissioned lay pastors by forbidding them to conduct a legal marriage that they have prayerfully considered would be an unjustified interference in the exercise of pastoral care. Excluding same-gender couples from the privilege of Christian marriage where it is legally authorized undermines the peace, unity, and purity of the church. Section W-4.9000 was written and adopted before any state created the

possibility of marriage between two persons of the same gender. The call of the prophets and the Word of God summon us to declare the holiness of the gift of marriage for all faithful couples, regardless of gender.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-07

Advice on Item 12-07—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, and 12-10 present similar issues. These can be found in the Overview posted at Item 12-01. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) would like to achieve the intent of these five items, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that its intent can be best accomplished by approval of Item 12-04.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-07 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has grouped Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07 and 12-10 together. Please view the advice offered by the ACSWP on them at Item 12-02.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

The practice of excluding people who are gay and lesbian from marriage has its roots in the persistence of patriarchal standards for the lives of women and men. The notion that men and maleness is superior dictates that men and women behave in particular ways that abide by the rules their sex dictates. For this reason, same-gender loving women and men are perceived as a direct threat to the norms that patriarchy lays out, as they, in their loving, challenge the models of prescribed masculinity and femininity that patriarchy determines. Gay men are a threat as they are perceived as “too feminine,” and lesbian women are perceived as “too masculine.”

In withholding the right to marry from same-gender loving people, the church is upholding this patriarchal standard for humanity. As a group committed to standing against patriarchy and its effects within the world and the church, ACWC advocates that same-gender loving women and men be allowed to participate in the commitment of marriage. The ACWC draws particular attention to the vulnerability of lesbian women in this exclusion, as these particular members of the body of Christ find themselves excluded and marginalized both for their gender identity and sexual orientation.

Item 12-08

[The assembly answered Item 12-08 by the action taken on Item 12-12. See pp. 45, 46.]

On Approving an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Uphold Session and Pastoral Discretion in Their Responsibility and Accountability for Worship—From the Presbytery of Des Moines.

The Presbytery of Des Moines respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve the following authoritative interpretation of W-4. 9000 of the *Book of Order*:

“Persons authorized to conduct services of Christian marriage in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may exercise pastoral discretion when asked to officiate at ceremonies for couples who have obtained a civil marriage license, and sessions may permit the use of church property for such services. Ministers of Word and Sacrament and commissioned lay pastors have the right to refuse to officiate at any marriage that they deem unwise or that would violate their conscience (W-4.9002b).”

Rationale

It is the joy and responsibility of pastors to provide pastoral care to members of their congregations; and the church has recognized that worship is an important context for the exercise of pastoral care:

12 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CIVIL UNION AND MARRIAGE ISSUES

All Christians are called to care for one another in daily living, sharing joys and sorrows, supporting in times of stress and need, offering mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. This care is primarily offered as the community of faith worships together. ... (*Book of Order*, W-6.3002)

... The ministries of pastoral care support people in recognizing, accepting, and celebrating ... times of adjustment, assisting them in working toward a new role in life and affirming their identity through transition. (*Book of Order*, W-6.3010)

The worship of God in the Christian community is the foundation and context for the ministry of pastoral care as well as for the ministry of nurture in the faith. (*Book of Order*, W-6.4000)

While it has always been the case that persons authorized to conduct services of Christian marriage may not be required to marry a couple against their conscience and better judgment (*Book of Order*, W-4.9002b), to bind the conscience of ministers and commissioned lay pastors by forbidding them to conduct a legal marriage that they have prayerfully considered would be an unjustified interference in the exercise of pastoral care. Forcing pastors to violate their own consciences out of fear of judicial action causes grief to pastors, couples, and congregations, and undermines the peace, unity, and purity of the church.

Section W-4.9000 was written and adopted before any state created the possibility of marriage between two persons of the same gender. There is no mandatory language in the *Book of Order* that would prohibit a service of Christian marriage for persons who are legally permitted to marry. The Directory for Worship specifically states, "In addition to the terms defined in the Preface to the *Book of Order*, this directory also uses language about worship which is simply descriptive" (*Book of Order*, Preface, Directory for Worship, b). The proposed authoritative interpretation would affirm the descriptive nature of references to "a woman and a man" in The Directory for Worship.

Concurrence to Item 12-08 from the Presbytery of East Iowa.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-08

Advice on Item 12-08—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 12-08 presents issues that the assembly should consider. These can be found in the Overview posted at Item 12-01. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) believes that the intent of Item 12-08 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that it can be best accomplished by the approval of Item 12-06.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-08 (Overture 066) would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the ACSWP has considered Items 12-06, 12-08, and 12-09 together. Please view its advice on them at Item 12-06.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC's rationale for Item 12-07.

Item 12-09

[The assembly answered Item 12-09 by the action taken on Item 12-12. See p. 45, 46.]

On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation Regarding Marriage—From the Presbytery of Heartland.

The Presbytery of Heartland overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to issue the following authoritative interpretation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Constitution:

"Since several states have recognized that marriage is a fundamental right for all persons, and since the definition of marriage in the Directory for Worship can be interpreted as descriptive and therefore does not mandate that a marriage contract

must be only between a man and a woman, the 219th General Assembly (2010) declares that in the states which authorize same-gender marriage, pastors may officiate at such marriages in the context of Christian worship.”

Rationale

Constitutional Language

The preface to the *Book of Order* defines the wording of mandatory language as sentences that contain “shall,” “is to be,” or “are to be.” The Preface to the Directory for Worship (clause b) states that the Directory also “uses language about worship which is simply descriptive.” Accordingly, there is no mandatory language in the definition of Christian marriage found in W-4.9001. There is mandatory language in other parts of W-4.9000 (W-4.9002, W-4.9003, W-4.9004), but in all instances the mandatory language that is used refers to the actions to be performed, not to the couple.

It is therefore reasonable to interpret W-4.9001’s definition of Christian marriage as descriptive and not as a statement that mandates the exclusion of same-gender couples from Christian marriage.

Recognizing that Presbyterians differ in their interpretation of W-4.9001, we are asking the General Assembly to affirm this as a legitimate interpretation, though not necessarily the only valid one. It must be remembered that pastors will continue to have the right to refuse to officiate at any marriage they deem unwise or which goes against their conscience (W-4.9002b).

Equal Rights

The 218th General Assembly (2008) voted overwhelmingly (516 to 151) to “request the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Council, and other representatives of the PC(USA) to urge state legislatures and the federal government to apply the principle of equal protection to same-gender couples and their children” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 259, Item 04-13; <http://www.pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=1601>). In the same vote they determined to “support congregations, sessions, and ministers of Word and Sacrament who are seeking to extend pastoral care as well as outreach and evangelism to same-gender couples and their nontraditional families who are more and more our neighbors on our streets and our fellow members in our pews” (*Ibid.*). In states where the equal protection principle includes marriage for same-gender couples, it would run counter to the direction mandated by the 218th General Assembly (2008) if the state were to provide more protection than the church is willing to extend to its own members.

Pastoral Aspects

In a state where same-gender marriage is recognized under the law, it is pastorally unconscionable to apply exclusionary principles to certain members of the congregation by declining to perform their marriage. In practical terms, what this means is that pastors in those congregations have to make the choice between failing in their pastoral responsibilities and running the risk of prosecution by the church. Such prosecutions have placed a formidable financial and spiritual burden on presbyteries already, threatening the peace and unity of the church.

Historical Relation between Church and State

Dating back to John Calvin, the church and the state have shared responsibility for marriages, and the church has recognized the state’s right to define the legal parameters of marriage. The state determines who is eligible to be married in broad categories, while the church has always maintained the right to determine the wisdom of a particular marriage (W-4.9002b). It would break a tradition of nearly five hundred years if the church would at this time decide to recognize some, but not all, marriages sanctioned by the state. The church would effectively deny the state’s right to set those legal parameters.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-09

Advice on Item 12-09—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 12-09 presents issues that the assembly should consider. These can be found in the Overview posted at Item 12-01. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) believes that the intent of Item 12-09 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that it can be best accomplished by the approval of Item 12-06.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-09 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-09—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the ACSWP has considered Items 12-06, 12-08, and 12-09 together. Please view its advice on them at Item 12-06.

Item 12-10

[The assembly answered Item 12-10 by the action taken on Item 12-12. See pp. 45, 46.]

On Amending W-4.9000 and D-14.0202 Regarding Marriage—From the Presbytery of National Capital.

The Presbytery of National Capital respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall *Book of Order* provisions W-4.9001–.9006 and D-14.0200 be amended so that all references to marriage between a man and woman change to marriage between “*two people*” or “*couple*” as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strikethrough; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

In W-4.9001:

“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between ~~a woman and a man~~ *two people*. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which ~~a man and a woman~~ *two people* are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by ~~a woman and a man~~ *two people* to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

“a. In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the ~~man and the woman~~ *couple to be married* concerning ...

[W-4.9004]“The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The ~~man and the woman~~ *couple to be married* shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness...

[W-4.9006]“A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of vows by the ~~husband and wife~~ *couple*, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the ~~woman and the man~~ *two people* are already married to one another according to the laws of the state.”

In D-14.0202:

“A ~~husband or wife~~ *married person*, otherwise competent to testify, may be a witness for or against ~~the other~~ *his or her spouse*, but neither shall be compelled to testify against the other.”

Rationale

God is love, and love is God’s gift for everyone. In the story of creation, God declares that it is not good for human beings to be alone. In marriage, two people discover the depth of God’s gift of one another. God has given us the capacity to love one another. The ability of two people to enter into relationships, form families, and care for them is an expression of God’s gift. It is holy and good. This gift is not limited to heterosexual couples and the blessing of the church should not be limited either.

Moreover, civil law in numerous states allows for the civil marriage of same sex couples. Many of these couples are members of our congregations and are coming to the church to celebrate the gift of marriage in services of worship. These proposed changes to the Directory for Worship and Rules of Discipline reflect this reality.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-10

Advice on Item 12-10—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07 and 12-10 present similar issues. ACC background and discussion of these items can be found in the ACC overview posted at Item 12-01. If the 219th General Assembly (2010) would like to achieve the intent of these five items, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that its intent can be best accomplished by adoption of Item 12-04.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-10 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-10—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has grouped Items 12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07 and 12-10 together. Please view the advice offered by the ACSWP on them at Item 12-02.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 12-07.

Item 12-11

[The assembly disapproved Item 12-11. See pp. 45, 46.]

On Reaffirming the Historic Teaching of the Church on the Topic of Marriage—From the Presbytery of Central Washington.

The Presbytery of Central Washington overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to joyfully reaffirm the historic, biblical, and Christological teaching of the church on the topic of marriage as a gift from God to bless humankind. As God created man and woman, so does God call some men and women to live together as husband and wife, while others are called to live a life of celibacy. God’s very order and design defines the institution of marriage.

Rationale

We at the Presbytery of Central Washington join our brothers and sisters at First Presbyterian of Kingwood, Texas, and New Covenant Presbytery in adding our voice to their overture to the 219th General Assembly (2010), with the following addition: “As God created man and woman, so does God call some men and women to live together as husband and wife, and calls others into celibacy.”

We believe we understand the heart of the overture made by Presbytery of New Covenant and don’t take exception to their intent. We do wish to make clarification with respect to the wording to include God’s call on the lives of some into celibacy. We all have a vocational calling—some to marriage—others to celibacy. We don’t wish to leave any room for misinterpretation at the General Assembly level. We perceive that those with a different perspective may wrongly interpret wording used in the New Covenant overture to read that only some are called into a marriage between a man and a woman. This may leave room for some to conclude that others are called into different unions other than marriage between a man and woman.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 12-11

Advice on Item 12-11—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that its Overview of the issues raised in this and other overtures may be found at Item 12-01. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that if it believes that the shared intent of the requests in Item 12-01, Item 12-05, and Item 12-11 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to respond under G-13.0103p, and bear public witness that Christian marriage can only be between one man and one woman and that no sexual relationship except heterosexual marriage is within the will of God.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 12-11 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-11—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

For clarity, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has grouped Items 12-01, 12-05, and 12-11 together. Its complete advice and counsel and *Rationale* are at Item 12-01.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 12-11 (and Items 12-01 and 12-05) be disapproved.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 12-07.

Item 12-12

[The assembly approved Item 12-12 with amendment. See pp. 44–45.]

The Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

[Note: See also Item 12-13, Minority Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).]

1. The Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010):

a. commend the committee’s report [and the minority report from the committee] to sessions and presbyteries, and urge them to engage in study of the issues presented in the report; and

b. commend to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) the covenant “Those Whom God Has Joined Together, Let No One Separate” (see at V.C. below) as a guide by which we broken and hurting people, seeking to be faithful, might come together to discuss issues about which we disagree.

2. The Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010):

a. affirm the church’s call to extend Christ’s compassion to all; and

b. encourage presbyteries and sessions to be diligent in their exercise of care in all the transitions of life, confessing our common brokenness and our unique individual expressions of that brokenness (W-6.3009, W-6.3010).

3. The Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010):

a. encourage all presbyteries and sessions to provide resources consonant with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding use of church facilities administered by said governing bodies for marriages and blessing ceremonies; and

b. encourage all presbyteries to provide resources consonant with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding clergy participation in marriages and/or same-sex union ceremonies. Such resources should include guidance on fulfilling the requirements for solemnizing of marriages within the civil jurisdiction or jurisdictions within which the presbytery is located.

4. The Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Office of Theology Worship and Education, and the Office of the General Assembly’s Department of Constitutional Services, to provide updated guidelines and resources addressing the difference between a ceremony of Christian marriage and a same-sex union ceremony.

5. The Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010):

a. encourage all sessions to engage in study of issues of biblical interpretation using the General Assembly papers, “Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture” and “Biblical Authority and Interpretation”;

b. direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Office of Theology Worship and Education, to develop and distribute a study guide for use with the General Assembly papers, “Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture” and “Biblical Authority and Interpretation” that will help sessions engage in issues of civil unions and Christian marriage in light of the principles contained within those papers; and

c. commend to sessions the use of additional resources related to biblical interpretation, specifically the video segment *Biblical Authority and Interpretation*, with its accompanying study guide, that was developed by the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Rationale

These recommendations and report are in response to the following referral: *2008 Referral: Item 04-13. On Equal Rights for Families of Same-Gender Partners, Recommendation 2. Direct the Moderator to Appoint a Special Committee, Representing the Broad Diversity and Theological Balance of the PC(USA) to Study History of Laws Governing Marriage and Civil Union, How Theology and Practice of Marriage Have Developed in Reformed and Broader Christian Tradition, Relationship Between Civil Union and Christian Marriage, Effects of Current Laws on Same-Gender Partners and Their Children, and Place of Covenanted Same-Gender Partnerships in Christian Community—From the Presbytery of Denver (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 258–60).*

I. Introduction

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. (Eph.2:19–22)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is wrestling with the issue of same-gender marriage. Responding to this struggle, the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) directed the Moderator

... to appoint a special committee, representing the broad diversity and theological balance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to study the following, ... including any policy recommendations growing out of the study:

- a. The history of the laws governing marriage and civil union, including current policy debates.
- b. How the theology and practice of marriage have developed in the Reformed and broader Christian tradition.
- c. The relationship between civil union and Christian marriage.
- d. The effects of current laws on same-gender partners and their children.
- e. The place of covenanted same-gender partnerships in the Christian community. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 259)

As members of Christ’s church, we differ profoundly; but can we see that those who disagree with us are seeking to love one another with God’s grace, advance the gospel in all its far-reaching inclusiveness, and promote greater faithfulness to the Triune God under the authority of Scripture and guided by the confessions? Though we reach very different conclusions, we can rejoice that our church is willing to wrestle together prayerfully with the question: How do we extend the grace of God to all, calling all persons to repentance, transformation, and discipleship—regardless of sexual orientation—so that all will experience God’s gracious intention for humanity?

In many ways, life in the body of Christ is not unlike a marriage: In the course of our life together, we have good days and bad days, good times and challenging times, great joy and wrenching pain. We talk, we laugh, we cry. We agree and disagree. Occasionally, we get angry and are tempted to walk away. But like Christian marriage, in the body of Christ we know that the One who holds us together is more important than the arguments that threaten to tear us apart. That One is Jesus Christ, who said, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn. 13:34–35). **Included in the mandate of this special committee was a directive that the PC(USA) constitutional definition of Christian marriage not be changed. In our confessions, marriage is consistently defined as a lifelong covenant between God, a man and a woman, and the community of faith.**

II. Biblical and Historical Summary

The one sufficient revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, to whom the Holy Spirit bears unique and authoritative witness through the Holy Scriptures, which are received and obeyed as the word of God written. ...¹

In matters of faith and practice, the church turns to Scripture to hear the testimony of the Holy Spirit, acknowledging that it comes to us in human words, conditioned by the times in which they were written, times different from our own. Guided by literary and historical understanding, we study Scripture, so that we might follow the Word of God incarnate in our changing world.

In our study, considerable differences became apparent in understanding what the words of the Bible and the confessions say. Our committee's differences reflect similar differences within the denomination. The General Assembly has approved documents that detail the different ways Presbyterians approach Scripture.²

A. *Old Testament*

The Old Testament assumes an ancient Semitic understanding of marriage as the basis for the family, the fundamental unit of Hebrew society. Marriage provides four benefits to humanity:

- The birth and nurture of children (Gen. 1:28; 9:1; 15:1–6; 16:1–16; 21:1–7, and 29:1–30:24);
- Companionship, mutual support, and affection (Gen. 2:18–24 and 1 Sam. 1:1–28);
- Economic partnership, providing financial support for the family (Prov. 31:10–31 and the book of Ruth); and
- A political tool to form alliances between nations and advance political ambitions (1 Sam. 18:17–27; 19:11–17; 25:44; 2 Sam. 3:13–15; 6:16–23; and 1 Kings 11:1–4).

The Torah contains many laws regulating marriage and divorce. These include Ex. 20:14, 17; Deut. 5:18, 21; Lev. 18:6–18; 20:10; Num. 5:11–31; Deut. 22:13–21; 24:1–5; and 25:5–10.

Marriage is used often by the prophets as a symbol of God's relationship to Israel. Usually, it represents the exclusive attachment of Israel to God, who is referred to as Israel's husband. The repeated history of the Israelites worshipping gods of the people around them is likened to adultery.³

- Hosea marries a prostitute, symbolizing God's gracious love for Israel as Hosea forgives her.
- God restores God's forsaken wife, Israel (Isa. 54:1–8, 62:1–5).
- Jeremiah speaks to Israel as a young bride (Jer. 2:2), while in 3:6–10 he represents the faithlessness of Israel as adultery.
- Ezekiel depicts Israel's disobedience as the adultery of an unfaithful wife (Ezekiel 16).

Since God is consistently represented as the husband of Israel, the exclusively female images of the unfaithful partner flow from the imagery. With Judah (Gen. 38:26) and David (1 Sam. 12:1–15), Scripture censures male infidelity, as well.

B. *New Testament*

Jesus' public ministry begins at a wedding feast in Cana, where he performs his first miracle (Jn. 2:1–11). Throughout his ministry, Jesus makes significant statements about marriage:

- Jesus addresses a question about a hypothetical widow of seven husbands, indicating that marriage is not part of life in the resurrection (Mt. 22:23–33, as well as Mk. 12:18–27, and Lk. 20:27–40).
- Jesus condemns divorce, restricting it further than provided by Jewish law (Mt. 19:3–9 and Mk. 10:2–12).⁴
- Jesus seems to indicate a preference for celibacy in his comment about eunuchs, while acknowledging this may not be best for everyone (Mt. 19:10–12).
- Jesus uses marriage as an illustration in several parables (Mt. 22:1–14; Mt. 25:1–13; and Lk. 12:35–38).

In the first-century church, marriage was an issue because of the expected imminent coming of the kingdom of God and because the diverse marriage practices in the Greco-Roman culture posed a challenge to good order in the Christian community.

- Paul writes of the divine gift of marriage as an antidote against *porneia*, a Greek term originally meaning “prostitution,” but later broadened to cover a range of sexual misconduct (1 Cor. 7:2–6).⁵
- Paul writes against divorce (1 Cor. 7:7–9, 32–40).
- Paul indicates his preference of celibacy over marriage (1 Cor. 7:7–9, 32–40).
- An analogy is drawn elsewhere between the marriage of husband and wife and the union of Christ with his church (Eph. 5:25–27; Rev. 19:6–8; and Rev. 21:9–10).

Toward the end of the first century, as the expectation of an imminent arrival of God's kingdom faded and the church prepared itself to be a continuing human institution, several trends emerged, as mentioned in 1 Timothy:

- Qualifications for church leaders (ministers) included being married, but only to one wife (3:2).
- Some parties within the church promoted celibacy as an ideal, even as a requirement for faithful Christians, but this was rejected by the orthodox leaders (4:1–6).
- Young widows were encouraged to remarry for economic support, procreation, and to avoid immorality and scandal (5:14).

C. *Historical Summary*

1. *The Early Interplay of Church and State*

The institution of marriage appears not only on the pages of Scripture but also in the ancient world. In ancient Rome, a couple was considered legally married if they agreed that marriage was the intent behind their cohabitation. Because marriage alliances in the ancient world were based on money and power, they could be revoked as quickly as they were invoked if another marital alliance offered more of either.

Early Christians understood themselves as set apart and distinct from the culture around them. In Ephesians and elsewhere, the ideas of mutual submission and love distinguished Christian marriage from the absolute rule of the *paterfamilias*⁶ characteristic of Graeco-Roman marriage.

The early Christian church was an underground and often persecuted movement with little ability to influence official policies in the Roman Empire on matters like marriage. Nevertheless, theologians showed a vital interest in the understanding and practice of marriage in the early Christian community. When Christianity became ~~the official~~ a legal religion of the Roman Empire in 313, laws enacted under Constantine and his successors began to reflect the influence of Christian views about marriage. Augustine expounded upon the three “goods” of marriage—offspring, exclusive fidelity, and the unbreakable bond between husband and wife.

By the mid-fifth century, legal codes enacted after Constantine⁷ included many statutes on marriage:

- Restrictions on divorce and remarriage,
- Prohibition of same-sex marriage, and
- Proscription of clergy to marry, though married men could become clergy.

After the disintegration of the Roman Empire in the West, and for the next several hundred years, marriage was regulated at a local level. The church was involved, but not in a regulatory capacity. Gradually, local customs were combined with biblical interpretations and developed into canon law. Beginning about 800, the church increasingly asserted its authority over marriage.

In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council decreed the absolute prohibition of “clandestine weddings”⁸—the longstanding practice that if two people had privately consented to marry, it was a valid marriage. By so doing, the church claimed jurisdiction over marriage by insisting that all marriages be held in the church building and before a priest.

During the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church developed further canon law governing marriage, including proscriptions against incest, polygamy, bestiality, and sodomy. Provisions were made for the annulment of marriages formed through duress or fraud, as well as those between persons related by blood of family ties; the church also claimed the power to declare valid marriage bonds indissoluble. By the early sixteenth century, the church’s canon law was the predominant law governing marriage in the West.⁹

Thus, on the eve of the Reformation, in the Roman Catholic Church:

- Celibacy was the norm for clerical and monastic life;
- Marriage, although less holy than celibacy, was a sacrament and “means of grace”; and
- The church regulated marriage law.

2. *The Protestant Reformation*

In the sixteenth century, the Protestant Reformers insisted that Scripture alone be the basis of authority in the church, and re-examined marriage and canon law in light of biblical teaching. In Protestant churches:

- Marriage became a Christian vocation and was considered good, but no longer a sacrament, and
- Celibacy was no longer required of clergy.

However, Protestant views on the theology and regulation of marriage differed:

- Martin Luther (1483–1546) promoted the state’s role in the regulation of marriage. For Luther, civil magistrates acted as God’s vice-regents in the governance of marriage. Civil marriage codes replaced canon law, although many of the principles of canon law (consent, publicity, proscription of prohibited relationships) continued in force. Church leaders were expected to counsel civil authorities in the administration of marriage law.
- King Henry VIII (1491–1547) broke with the Roman Catholic Church to obtain a divorce. He placed church authority under the monarchy, thus beginning the English Reformation. Henry regulated the church, and the church retained control of marriage. The family was seen as a “little commonwealth” and the fundamental institution undergirding society.
- John Calvin (1509–1564) brought his legal background to his theology. He stressed marriage as a covenant between individuals, God, and the community. Calvin’s three reasons for marriage were mutual love and support, the birth and nurture of children, and protection from sexual sin. Regulation of marriage in Calvin’s Geneva was shared between church and state.

Some radical reformers extended the principle of “Scripture alone” to justify polygamy using the example of the Patriarchs and Old Testament laws.¹⁰ Others understood Christ’s redemptive act as freeing true believers from sin, so that nothing done in Christian love was sinful. Reformed church leaders distanced themselves from such unorthodox beliefs and unruly behaviors.

The Reformed understanding of and concerns about marriage were made evident throughout the Reformation-era confessions. The Second Helvetic Confession cautioned against making celibacy a mark of spiritual merit and explicitly condemned polygamy.¹¹ The Heidelberg Catechism urged Christians to “live chaste and disciplined lives, whether in holy wedlock or in single life.”¹²

The Westminster Confession of Faith addressed the excesses that abounded in England between 1640 and 1660, attacking polygamy and spousal desertion to consort with another, both advanced on religious grounds. The Westminster Confession’s original provision on marriage indicated that polygamy was an issue of concern for the Westminster divines: “Marriage is to be between one Man and one Woman: neither is it lawfull for any Man to have more than one Wife, nor for any Woman to have more than one Husband; at the same time.” The confession then outlined the purposes of marriage: “...ordained for the mutual help of Husband and Wife, for the increase of man-kinde with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed and, for preventing of uncleannesse.”¹³

3. *Early America*

Immigrants from Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Roman Catholic traditions brought their own assumptions and practices of marriage to the American colonies, making understandings of marriage complex. Enlightenment thinking introduced a fifth pattern—marriage as a social contract. The Enlightenment was an eighteenth-century philosophical movement that held human reason as applicable to all areas of life, including biblical studies. It stressed ideals of freedom, equality, and individual rights, and found fertile ground in the American colonies. Over time, this emphasis resulted in marriage becoming more focused upon personal happiness and self-fulfillment and being seen increasingly as a bilateral personal contract.

In America, states regulated these personal contracts. Marriages were required to be registered with civil authorities. While courts routinely ruled that public cohabitation was sufficient evidence of a valid marriage, by the latter part of the nineteenth century, states began to nullify such “common-law” marriages. They exerted more control over who was allowed to marry, including the prohibition of bigamy and a subsequent series of federal laws designed to prohibit the practice of polygamy. States prohibited marriages on the basis of a variety of conditions, including alcoholism, drug addiction, prior marriage, or lack of mental capacity. Significant among these prohibitions were interracial relationships during Jim Crow segregation.

4. *Recent Developments in Marriage Law*

As societal attitudes about marriage began to change, so did the government’s assertion of its authority to regulate marriage. The U.S. Supreme Court’s 1967 ruling in *Loving v. Virginia*¹⁴ eradicated state laws prohibiting interracial marriage. The court ruled that Virginia’s prohibition of interracial marriage violated the Fourteenth Amendment:

Marriage is one of the “basic civil rights of man [sic],” fundamental to our very existence and survival.... To deny this fundamental freedom on so unsupported a basis as the racial classifications embodied in these statutes ... is surely to deprive all the State’s citizens of liberty without due process of law.¹⁵

With this ruling, the court granted all adults the right to marry without consideration of race, citing constitutional principles of equal protection and due process in limiting the state’s power to regulate marriage.

With the Supreme Court having declared marriage a fundamental civil right, both church and nation began to struggle with whether the principles voiced in *Loving* extended to persons barred from marriage on the basis of their gender.¹⁶

In 1996, Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), defining marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman for purposes of all federal laws, and including the provision that states in which same-gender marriage is not legal do not have to recognize a same-gender marriage from another state. To date, thirty-seven states have approved their own DOMAs, thirty-one of which have state constitutional amendments defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

Opponents to DOMA have questioned the constitutionality of the act based on the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the Constitution (“Full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state”). This clause generally mandates that states must recognize marriages solemnized in any other.

Concerned with potential court challenges to DOMA, advocates introduced legislation calling for a Federal Marriage Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which would preclude any constitutional challenge to DOMA. The amendment has been introduced unsuccessfully four times in Congress since 2003.

In 2004, Massachusetts became the first state to expand civil marriage to same-gender couples. At the time of this writing, four additional states (New Hampshire, Vermont, Iowa, and Connecticut) and the District of Columbia have done likewise. Several others, including California, New Jersey, Washington, and Oregon, allow civil unions or domestic partnerships that provide same-gender couples some rights and privileges of marriage under state law.

5. *Marriage in the PC(USA)*

Changing societal views on marriage over the last two centuries have affected the church in general and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in particular. In examining Scripture and the cultural assumptions about marriage in biblical times, the church has come to embrace marriage as an equal partnership between husband and wife. In the 1950s, the church also re-examined the issue of divorce in light of the full sweep of Jesus’ teaching and modern experience, and loosened doctrinal restrictions by amending The Westminster Confession of Faith.¹⁷

The Confession of 1967 lifts up “anarchy in sexual relationships” as one of four issues of particular concern in the church at that time. The confession enumerates the positive benefits of marriage¹⁸ as a remedy for the “perennial confusion about the meaning of sex.”

Since the late 1970s, issues related to homosexuality have been debated in the PC(USA) and its predecessor denominations. People of deep faith and commitment are struggling to discern how the church can respond in theological and biblical integrity and love to the changing patterns of marriage and sexual practice in American culture.

6. *Mirroring the Civil Disagreement in the Church*

Since 1991, the PC(USA) has wrestled with the question of same-sex union and Christian marriage. The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) has declared that any same-sex ceremony “considered to be the equivalent of a marriage ceremony... would not be sanctioned under the *Book of Order*.” As such, it has instructed ministers of the Word and Sacrament not to “state, imply, or represent that a same-sex ceremony is a marriage,” and has instructed sessions against the use of church facilities in any same-sex ceremony deemed to be the equivalent of a marriage.¹⁹

In *Benton, et al. v. Presbytery of Hudson River* (2000) the GAPJC did allow for individual ministers and sessions to conduct a same-sex ceremony that “celebrates a loving, caring and committed relationship” that does not “confer a new status” but “blesses an existing relationship.” These services are not to be confused with Christian marriage or civil marriage, “do not constitute a marriage ceremony,” and “should not be construed as an endorsement of homosexual conjugal practice proscribed by the General Assembly.”²⁰

Thus, the GAPJC decision permitted ecclesiastical rites for same-sex couples that allow those couples to receive a public benediction, but do not confer a new status to these couples or their families within the community of faith.

Just as with same-sex unions, some view public rituals of blessing for same-sex couples, without a change of status, as socially indeterminate. Others find it to be a helpful compromise. Finally, others believe that the blessing of same-gender relationships may implicitly, if not explicitly, condone and/or encourage behaviors that they believe to be biblically inappropriate.

7. *Where Other Christian Traditions Currently Stand*

Several Christian denominations and traditions are confronting the issues raised by same-gender marriage.

The three bodies with whom the PC(USA) is in full communion have taken differing positions to date:

- The United Church of Christ (UCC) recognizes same-sex marriage: “We ... affirm that all humans are made in the image and likeness of God, including people of all sexual orientations, and God has bestowed upon each one the gift of hu-

man sexuality. Further, we recognize and affirm that, as created in God’s image and gifted by God with human sexuality, all people have the right to lead lives that express love, justice, mutuality, commitment, consent and pleasure.”²¹

- The Reformed Church in America (RCA) restricts marriage to “the union of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others.” In 1996, the RCA entered into a dialogue with the UCC, “encouraging the UCC to move toward a more biblically faithful understanding of human sexuality and a repeal of all policies condoning homosexual behavior.” While neither denomination changed its views, better understanding resulted from the dialogue. In recent years, the RCA held three years of dialogue after which they affirmed their position on marriage.

- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) affirms “marriage is a covenant of mutual promises, commitment and hope authorized legally by the state and blessed by God. The historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran confessions have recognized marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman...” Currently, the ELCA “lacks consensus” on the matter of “lifelong monogamous same-gender relationships,” and “encourages all people to live out the faith in the local and global community of the baptized with profound respect for the conscience-bound belief of the neighbor.”²² Its churchwide assembly voted in 2009 to “commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships.”²³

The Roman Catholic Church holds to its sacramental view of marriage, continuing to refuse to countenance divorce. “The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized.”²⁴

Standing outside the Western tradition, the Orthodox Church in America maintains its ancient, sacramental understanding of marriage between a man and a woman as a “Holy Mystery.” It is not a juridical contract and is not entered with vows or oaths. It is, in essence, the “baptizing and confirming” of human love in God by Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Orthodox Church recognizes as a Christian sacrament only those marriages entered into by baptized communicant members.²⁵

The Episcopal Church views marriage as a “sacramental rite.” “Holy Matrimony is Christian marriage, in which the woman and man enter into a life-long union, make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows.” There is great ferment and disagreement within the Episcopal Church over the issue of same-gender marriage.²⁶

The United Methodist Church, an offshoot from the Anglican tradition, appears to have adopted an understanding of marriage as a contract. “We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment and shared fidelity between a man and a woman.”²⁷

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, “the world’s first church group with a primary, positive ministry to gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender persons,”²⁸ strongly supports “marriage equality.”

The Southern Baptist Convention teaches: “Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God’s unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.”²⁹

This report has not considered the positions of many other denominations and independent Christian bodies, both in the United States and around the world. Given their wide variety of theological views, cultural contexts, and ways of understanding and interpreting Scripture, similar diversity in their views of marriage, divorce, and same-gender relationships can be expected. As we seek understanding around these issues within the PC(USA), we also strive to maintain communion with our brothers and sisters in the global church, a goal that is made more complex because of that diversity.

III. The Relationship Between Civil Union and Christian Marriage

The PC(USA) *Book of Order* states that “marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage, a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith” (W-4.9001).

[As noted above,] [H][i]ncluded in the mandate of this special committee was a directive that we were not to change the *Book of Order’s* definition of marriage. Because there are distinct differences in the way terms like marriage, civil union, and domestic partnership are understood, and because those terms are interpreted differently in various civil jurisdictions, the chart below outlines our understanding and identifies the way these terms will be used in this study.

	Civil Marriage	Redefined Civil Marriage³⁰	Civil Union/ Domestic Partnership³¹	Christian Marriage in the PC(USA)
Structure	government-licensed contract between a man and a woman	government-licensed contract between two persons	contract between two persons by an individual jurisdiction	covenant before God of a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman
Recognition	all states and federal level	not all states or federal level	not all states or federal level	all states and federal level ³²
Purpose	social institution consisting of a man, a woman, and any children they have	social institution consisting of two people and any children they have	legal arrangement between two people	a gift of God to humankind for the well-being of the entire human family; marriage is the full expression of love between a man and a woman
Institution	commitment, publicly witnessed	commitment, publicly witnessed	commitment, publicly registered	lifelong commitment, publicly witnessed, acknowledged by the community of faith
Rights/Privileges	households recognized as social units	households recognized as social units	reciprocal rights/responsibilities that may or may not approximate marriage	those who are married “live out together before God their lives of [Christian] discipleship” (<i>Book of Order</i> , W-4.9001)
Responsibilities	accountable to each other and government	accountable to each other and government	accountable to each other and government	accountable to each other and government; called to live out discipleship before God

A. *The Difference Between Civil Marriage and Christian Marriage*

Noting the difference between civil marriage and Christian marriage is important to understanding the relationship between civil unions and Christian marriage. Civil marriage, whether or not it is redefined, is a state-licensed *contract* between two consenting adults. Christian marriage is a *covenant* through which “a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship.”³³

Civil marriage occurs through a state-licensed contract granted to parties who meet particular criteria, which may include residency, identification, premarital counseling, evidence that neither party is currently in a civil marriage, medical testing, lack of consanguinity, and age. In most states, difference in gender is a state-required criterion; in some, people of the same sex may be licensed to marry.

Civil marriage determines the delineation of the household and a person’s next-of-kin, primary parental rights and responsibilities, and other benefits granted by states to those in licensed civil marriages (e.g., filing taxes together, joint homeownership). Civil marriage is a necessary, but not sufficient, criterion of Christian marriage in the PC(USA).

In Christian marriage, a couple’s covenant to live out their discipleship together in lifelong commitment must accompany civil marriage. A couple must demonstrate sufficient “Christian understanding” to be able to enter into the covenant of Christian marriage.³⁴ Thus, while every state empowers ministers of the Word and Sacrament to officiate on its behalf in civil marriage, the *Book of Order* instructs them not to conduct any covenant ceremony of Christian marriage that they feel is “unwise.” This covenant is so important that the *Book of Order* provides an opportunity for a civilly married couple to enter into it.³⁵

B. *A Comparison of Civil Union and Marriage*

Marriage, whether civil or Christian, represents more than a mechanism to gain state and/or federal benefits. Both constitute the creation of a social unit, household, source of meaning, and identity.

Institutions like marriage and parenthood are not simply mechanisms to fulfill individual needs and aspirations. They are also thick, multi-layered realities that speak to the needs for meaning and identity within human community.³⁶

Since civil unions do not share a connection to this social dimension of marriage, some think that such unions cannot adequately substitute for marriage, fearing that the socially indeterminate nature of civil unions may even encourage impermanence among such couples.³⁷ Others see it as a helpful compromise in a polarized and polarizing debate.

While there may be significant, small populations for whom a civil union is a useful contract,³⁸ civil unions, as qualitatively different from marriage, cannot fully make peace between those who view homosexual practice differently.

IV. The Effects of Current Laws on Same-Gender Partners and Their Children

*God gave us marriage for the well-being of human society, for the ordering of family life, and for the birth and nurture of children.*³⁹

Scripture and the confessions recognize marriage as creating a basic unit of ordered human society. The family provides a structure for the birth and nurture of children, essential for the continuation of the human race. Marriage is held up as “an expression of hope and confidence in God’s providential care.”⁴⁰

As the body of Christ and as people of God, we have a responsibility for the “shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God” and a responsibility to the culture around us for “the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.”⁴¹ While we hold differing interpretations of Scripture regarding same-gender relationships, we still have an obligation to understand and respond to the social implications of the situation in the society around us for families of same-gender partners.⁴²

Laws are the result of a political process, which is an “allocation of public values,”⁴³ and therefore will always differ according to value outlook. Among those differing perspectives are⁴⁴:

Perspective 1: Laws that fail to give benefits equal to marriage to same-gender couples and their families violate the standards of social justice and equality.⁴⁵ The differences in benefits result in legal, financial, and social hardships that create social justice issues that may affect children. Using the Equal Protection clause of the U.S. Constitution, there should be no difference made between relationships based on gender. From a biblical perspective, it is important to note the different cultural settings between modern and biblical times, especially in the role of the extended family structure in the latter.⁴⁶ From a sociological direction, there is no clear evidence whether children from same-gender parent families are at a developmental disadvantage.⁴⁷

Perspective 2: Same-gender relationships are of low importance in comparison to other more pressing societal issues. While the concerns of those who oppose same-gender marriage may be understandable, when it comes to matters of faith, it is God’s place, not the place of human beings to determine the appropriateness of a relationship.⁴⁸ Under no circumstances should children of same-gender couples be treated any differently under the law because of their parents’ relationship. Same-gender couples and their families should receive fair treatment by society and the church.

Perspective 3: It does not violate social justice or equal protection to offer different benefits to same-gender couples from those offered to a man and a woman who are married. Every relationship or contract does not have to be accorded the same value, protection, or benefit. Marriage between one man and one woman is foundational to the stability of society and is the best possible context for the nurture and flourishing of children. In controlled studies, children separated from one or more biological parent fare less well.⁴⁹ All children should be supported regardless of their family situations; however, public policy should not grant the same favor to relationships in which children are separated from at least one biological parent, such as same-gender partnerships. To promote social stability and justice for children, the law should encourage relationships that are optimal by granting particular benefits to a woman and a man who marry.⁵⁰

Perspective 4: Opposing the acceptance of same-gender marriage rises beyond a sociopolitical argument to an issue of conscience. All sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and a woman is unacceptable. Behavior that is explicitly proscribed by Scripture cannot be encouraged. Providing legal benefits equal to marriage for same-gender couples makes society complicit in encouraging this behavior.⁵¹

A. *Census Figures*

Determining the size of the populations involved is not a straightforward task because information on same-gender partners has not been collected in past decennial census reports. However, information collected on same-gender couples by the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2008 American Community Survey⁵² indicated a total of 564,743 same-gender couple households in this country. Approximately one-fifth (115,421) of those households included children.

For purposes of comparison, the survey showed around thirty-eight million households with children under the age of eighteen. Of those, twenty-six million households were “male-female parent” households, married and unmarried, and twelve million households were single-parent households. So, while the number of same-gender partner households with children under the age of eighteen, 115,421, is statistically small (0.30 percent), the number of households is still significant.

B. *Federal Laws*

Since the federal government has adopted the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and does not currently recognize same-gender relationships, same-gender couples do not enjoy the federal benefits that are afforded to married heterosexual couples. A 1997 Government Accounting Office report found 1,049 federal laws in which “marital status is a factor,” and a 2004 update found 1,138 “federal statutory provisions” in which “marital status is a factor in determining or receiving benefits, rights, and privileges.”⁵³ The extension of some benefits to same-gender partners of federal employees in June 2009 marks one of the few significant federal recognitions of these relationships. Other extensions are being considered.

Areas most significantly affected by federal laws, principally DOMA, are:

- Tax code: Given the complexity of the federal tax code, the benefits, or penalties, of a married filing status depends on a household’s financial situation; still, low- to moderate-income couples who can file as married pay less federal tax than couples that cannot file as married.⁵⁴

The tax code offers other benefits to married couples. For example, the premiums paid for health insurance for a spouse and children are exempt from federal taxes, while premiums paid for a domestic partner are not.

- Social Security and federal retirement benefits: These programs provide benefits to the spouse of a deceased or disabled plan member. Spousal benefits are limited to a spouse of the opposite sex. A domestic partner or same-gender spouse is not eligible for these benefits.

- Immigration: A same-gender spouse of a U.S. citizen is not eligible for legal permanent resident status (“green card”) or work visa based on marital status. If the individual is in the country without current immigration documents, he or she may be subject to deportation. This applies equally to same-gender couples legally married in the U.S. or in another country.

- Recognition of same-gender marriage across state lines: A provision of the federal DOMA declares that states need not recognize other states’ same-gender marriages. While this has withstood several challenges in lower courts,⁵⁵ the U.S. Supreme Court has yet to hear an appeal of these cases.

C. *Varieties of State Laws*

States can be divided into five general configurations.⁵⁶

State configurations						
Legal elements		Constitutional prohibition states (e.g., S.C.)	DOMA states (e.g., Wash.)	Non-DOMA states (e.g., N.M.)	Civil unions/ domestic partnerships states (e.g., Calif.)	Redefined civil marriage states (e.g., Maine)
	Constitutional language	yes	no	no	yes	no
	DOMA	yes	yes	no	no	no
	Restrictive state law	yes	maybe	yes	no	no
	Civil unions/ domestic partnerships	no	maybe	maybe	yes	no
	Recognition of other states’ redefined civil marriages	no	no	no	no	yes

Some of the states that recognize civil unions/domestic partnerships have granted benefits that are arguably equivalent to the benefits granted through marriage.⁵⁷ These benefits fall into several broad categories:

- Parental: Without the recognition of a civil marriage/domestic partnership, many parental rights may be denied to one member of a same-gender couple. These include joint or co-parent adoption and recognition of a child’s relationship to both parents, as well as eligibility for foster parenting. This lack of a recognized relationship can have implications for the ability to direct medical care for a child, custody of a child on the death of the biological parent, eligibility for public housing or subsidy programs, and ability to extend the nonbiological parent’s employer health insurance to the children.

- Partner: The rights and benefits not available to an unmarried partner are even more numerous. They include the lack of health insurance and Medicare benefits, as well as the inability to direct medical care and receive survivor benefits. They extend into many economic and commercial areas that married couples take for granted, including the ability to have joint credit, and to own property with special tax benefits and legal protections for a married couple. A number of legal benefits and processes are also unavailable—protection against being forced to testify against a spouse in court; the ability to structure a dissolution of the relationship through a court-supervised divorce, including child custody and visitation rights; and the right to sue for wrongful death of a partner.

- Tax code: State and local tax codes vary too widely to draw general conclusions about the benefits or penalties of marriage. In general, state tax laws are roughly parallel to federal laws and, more often than not, low- to middle-income married couples receive more favorable treatment than similar unmarried couples. Married couples generally receive more favorable treatment regarding the taxation of income from self-employment, family businesses, and inheritance.
- Health benefits: Current legislative activity is focusing on securing medical coverage for same-gender partners and the nonbiological children of the insured partner.⁵⁸ Family medical leave is also a concern.

D. *Current Research*

While it is possible to describe the differences in the law regarding same-gender relationships, including differences in benefits that might arise between heterosexual marriage and same-gender relationships, it is still difficult to make definitive statements on the sociological effects of these laws on same-gender families and their children. Research on this specific topic encounters some significant challenges.

The journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics offers a comprehensive review of the literature related to the psychosocial aspects of same-gender parents and their children, including the challenges to conducting and evaluating this research.⁵⁹ Factors such as small sample size, children originally born into a heterosexual parental relationship, investigator bias, and community attitudes are still present in some current research.

In addition, the effect of the laws and the developmental differences of children in same-gender parent families are difficult to determine because cultural attitudes are not static. As community attitudes change and same-gender marriage finds greater acceptance, outcomes in current and future studies of children being raised in such families can be expected to differ from earlier studies.⁶⁰ As one article states:

...whether same-sex marriage would prove socially beneficial, socially harmful, or trivial is an empirical question that cannot be settled by any amount of armchair theorizing. There are plausible arguments on all sides of the issue, and as yet there is no evidence sufficient to settle them.⁶¹

V. What Is the Place of Covenanted Same-Gender Partnerships in the Christian Community?

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ... So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. (Eph. 2:13–22)

“We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ,” Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes:

What does this mean? It means, first, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, third, that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity.⁶²

We all come to Christ as sinners, as strangers, whether we are in worship the week we are born or come to know Christ in our youth or old age. But once in Christ, we are inextricably linked to one another—not by affinity, comfort, or culture, but because we belong to Christ. It is Christ who sets a place for us at the table; it is Christ alone who calls.

With Christ’s call comes the forming of Christ’s mind in each believer. In Christ, no matter who we are or what our condition, we come to understand our own and others’ essential humanity, which Christ redeems from the shadows of sin. Because Christ alone knows us, it is through the mind of Christ alone that we truly come to know others.

Christ is the center of our lives, individually and together. Christ calls us to leave behind our lives bound by sin and alienated from self, others, and God, and to enter into fellowship with people we did not and might not have chosen. As Bonhoeffer states, “When Christ calls a man [sic], he bids him come and die.”⁶³ We are not our own. We have been bought with a price.

A. *Our Current Situation*

The Presbytery of Denver’s overture to the 218th General Assembly (2008), which commissioned this study, envisioned an emerging compromise that might cool the conflict over homosexual practice to the point that both sides could disagree in peace without impinging on one another’s liberties of action or conscience. This two-tiered form of recognition of committed relationship (one being civil union or domestic partnership and the other civil marriage, defined as between one man and one woman) has not found hoped-for acceptance. In church and society, the conflict over homosexuality and the definition of marriage has hardened and deepened.

This seemingly insoluble conflict mocks the hopes and prayers of our brothers and sisters who first reported to the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America that:

the church's grappling with the issue of homosexuality has already energized its membership in a remarkable awakening of prayer and theological study. Our study should continue with the aim of reaching harmony in our diverging positions on homosexuality and other critical issues. Our prayer should now be concentrated upon this process of internal reconciliation⁶⁴

History's trajectory during the thirty years since the expression of those hopes and prayers has not been a gradual harmony, but an increasingly strident and rigid disharmony that threatens once more to tear the church asunder. But the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is not our possession; it belongs to Christ.

What is the place of covenanted same-gender partnerships in the Christian community? The members of the PC(USA) cannot agree. We affirm that individuals in same-gender relationships, no differently from any persons in the Christian community, are to be welcomed by the church and—no differently from any other persons in the Christian community—are called to be transformed by the radical and redeeming love of Jesus Christ. Still, some believe acceptance of same-gender partnerships to be tantamount to approving homosexual practice, which they find at odds with Scripture and our confessions. Others have no difficulty accepting same-gender partnerships, pointing to biblical principles of love and justice.

But "when Christ calls a man [sic], he bids him come and die."⁶⁵ The PC(USA) is not ours, and our unity in Christ does not depend on our agreement. We did not choose Christ; Christ has chosen us and appointed us—each and every one—to go and bear fruit that will last in this part of Christ's vineyard. We believe that it is our Christ-given calling to stay in relationship with one another, especially when we disagree.

B. *Resources of Our Tradition*

We are Presbyterians. Our polity, our way of living and working together in faithfulness, relies not on hierarchical human authority to compel or enforce, but upon God's Spirit to form the mind of Christ in each believer. We trust that the Spirit is working—even when we cannot see it clearly—to reshape and reform us according to God's word.

Our historic principles of church order begin with words from The Westminster Confession of Faith:

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men [sic] which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship.⁶⁶

With this radical freedom comes a radical responsibility. We are held accountable to Christ before the God of history for how we act, how we live, how we love. We hold:

that truth is in order to goodness we are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty.⁶⁷

The tension between our freedom and our responsibility has meant that our life together is often marked by disagreement, a sign of how seriously we take the gospel and the consequences of our actions. So, we believe:

that there are truths and forms with respect to which men [sic] of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.⁶⁸

It is to this principle of mutual forbearance that we appeal. Recognizing that Christ is our peace, we must love, support, and trust each other as together we search for Christ's truth. This is how we model what it means to be the body of Christ for each other and for the world.

But if we come to see our brothers and sisters with whom we disagree as our—or worse yet, Christ's—enemies, we have denied the unifying power of Christ's redeeming, reconciling love. We must seek a way to live together as the body of Christ, not through peaceable uniformity, but by exercising mutual tolerance and forbearance in those areas where people of good faith differ. The sacrifice required to do this should be evenly distributed and shared across the whole body until Christ the Head brings clarity, which may not come quickly. And even when clarity does come, we must understand and accept that it will sooner or later be followed by yet another conflict.

C. *Our Covenant*

"Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ. ... The body of Christ is one, and Baptism is the bond of unity in Christ."⁶⁹ Thus, we all have been brought into a covenant relationship with one another, perhaps expressed by a new commitment to an age-old declaration: Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.

Throughout our time of prayerful deliberation—and sometimes difficult disagreement—the members of the PC(USA) Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage have been blessed and challenged by a profound sense of our unity in Christ. Because of that, our time together has been marked by a remarkable degree of mutual respect, commitment to one another, and Christian love. We can only attribute these gifts to the living presence of Christ among us and to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

From the gifts of unity, respect, commitment, and love that we have received, we commend to our brothers and sisters in the PC(USA) the following covenant, particularly when governing bodies meet together to discuss divisive issues.

Those Whom God Has Joined Together, Let No One Separate

We acknowledge and confess that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) displays the marks of the true Church (the gospel is rightly preached and heard, the sacraments are rightly administered, and ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered).⁷⁰ Christ has chosen each one of us here, and has called us to this place. *Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.*

By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the love of God, and in the communion of the Holy Spirit, we covenant together to:

- Honor the truth that Christ has called and God works through each member;
- Listen to one another with openness and respect;
- Support and pray for each other and for one another's ministries;
- Earnestly seek and carefully listen to each person's discernment of God's will found in Scripture;
- Struggle together with perseverance to find God's will for us even when the way is difficult;
- Love one another even when we disagree, and to commit ourselves to the reconciliation of any broken relationships we have with one another;
- Honor who we are as Presbyterians by respecting the fallible discernment of the body, bearing in mind that individual conscience, held captive to the word of God, cannot be thus bound.

D. *Steps Toward Mutual Forbearance*

Exercising the mutual forbearance to which we are called:

1. We agree that Christ calls all persons into fellowship with him, regardless of race, sex, occupation, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or any other worldly condition, and that congregations are to welcome all persons who respond in trust and obedience to God's grace in Jesus Christ and who desire to become part of the membership and mission of Christ's church.⁷¹

2. We confess that we are brothers and sisters bound together in Christ, and that while these conversations are difficult and intense, our disagreements do not negate our unity. Threats of departure or coercive ways of achieving uniformity are ultimately unhelpful and do little more than draw lines and force us to become more deeply entrenched in our positions and prejudices.

3. We recognize that our interpretations of Scripture lead us to different conclusions regarding homosexual behavior and same-gender partnerships. We hold that the Christian life is one of sanctification, and we confess that Scripture holds out a transforming hope of radical change in Jesus Christ that requires us to be dead to sin and alive to all that is good. For some of us, that means same-gender couples should be encouraged to abstain from sexual relations; for others of us, that means that same-gender couples should be encouraged to enter into faithful, covenanted, lifelong partnerships.

4. We agree that Christian marriage is not a "right" conferred upon anyone, but a gift given to us by God to nurture and form human beings into the kind of sacrificial, self-giving love that we see in Jesus Christ.

5. We recognize the organic nature of the Presbyterian church's polity, where responsibility and accountability for ministry and governance is assigned at all levels of the church. Questions of marriage and civil union are already being addressed at congregational and presbytery levels, where the issues have human faces, concrete circumstances, and real consequences. Any successful resolution must begin with individual sessions and presbyteries. In this time of flux, all voices are needed in this conversation.⁷²

6. We acknowledge that current law, in which clergy act as agents of the state, is a source of confusion.⁷³ Some argue that the church should relinquish its state-sanctioned power to marry. Others feel that, even in confusion, it should be retained to further the cause of the gospel.

7. We affirm that the church is called to offer pastoral care to all members of the church family experiencing times of special need and crisis.⁷⁴ Recognizing our common brokenness and our unique individual expressions of that brokenness, we encourage presbyteries and sessions to extend appropriate pastoral care to all experiencing the joys and sorrow of human life in all of its manifestations.⁷⁵

8. We acknowledge the presence of same-gender partners in our communities and congregations. Together, we are members of the body of Christ and joined by the reconciling work of Christ. As the body of Christ, we affirm the call of the

church, in its ministry and mission, to offer to all persons God's gracious provision of redemption and forgiveness, calling all persons into loving obedience to God's will.

VI. Conclusion

A struggle continues in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—a struggle mirrored by the members of our committee.

- We find that our church is united in our gratitude for God's word that is authoritative for us and for the theological heritage that has formed and informed us. Yet our different ways of interpreting the Bible and other foundational texts have left us deeply divided about the conclusions we draw from these sources of guidance. We have honest and sincere disagreements, but also a conviction that we should not caricature or condemn our sisters and brothers with whom we disagree.

- We see great diversity in the laws around this issue, and these laws have changed even as we have embarked on this study. We have reached no consensus on a faithful response to the changing nature of civil marriage.

- We find that there are a significant number of children in same-gender households, and the reported numbers will likely increase in the next U.S. Census. Our responses as a church to the questions raised have real consequences in the lives of these children.

- We find that the compromise suggestion of civil unions/domestic partnerships offers no true solution to the struggle around same-gender partnerships. Civil unions/domestic partnerships provide neither the state-sanctioned benefits nor the societal acceptance that marriage (redefined or not) offers.

A struggle continues in the PC(USA), but important points of unity are also present—unity mirrored by the members of our committee.

- The church is not ours; it belongs to Christ. We are part of the church solely by the grace of God. Thus, it is inappropriate for us to seek to define "the place" for any of our sisters and brothers in Christ within Christ's church. Rather we confess that, apart from anything we have done, Christ has prepared a place for every one of us.

- Every one of us is called to mutual forbearance and mutual accountability in how we practice our lives of faith together.

- We are the body of Christ, called to live into our Christ-reconciled life together, acting in a manner that lives out our covenant, "Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate."

We now offer to the church the work we have done together in two forms—a report and a call to covenant. Far more than commending our work, we entreat the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to affirm the covenant relationship into which Christ calls all of us by praying for and seeking to live into the covenant life that Christ provides for us, a covenant life marked by reconciliation.

In truth, this is only the most current in a long series of disagreements and differences of opinion that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has had to and will have to confront. The nature of our polity predisposes us to debate and struggle with each other, always striving to discern the mind of Christ for our life together. We have weathered these debates before and we will face them again in years to come.

The question before us is not what issue will define us at any given moment, but whether the PC(USA) can confess that our unity in Christ supersedes any other claim or argument that vies for our attention. Our hope and prayer is that this current debate provides an opportunity to reflect upon and renew our relationships in the body of Christ and our call to ministry together.

Whatever actions the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) takes, we commend to you this covenant as a way to remember that it is Christ who calls us, Christ who redeems us, and Christ who reconciles us to one another in covenant faithfulness.

Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.

Members of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage: The Reverend Clayton F. Al-lard; The Reverend Emily J. Anderson; The Reverend Earl Arnold; Elder Luis Antonio De La Rosa; Emily W. Miller, candidate for minister of the Word and Sacrament; Elder Katina Miner (through August 2009); The Reverend Margaret Aymer; Elder Stephen L. Salyards; The Reverend Tracie Mayes Stewart; The Reverend Jim Szeyller (moderator); The Reverend William Teng; Elder Lisa Cooper Van Riper; The Reverend Derrick Weston.

The following committee members have reserved the right to submit a minority report: The Reverend Tracie Mayes Stewart; The Reverend William Teng; Elder Lisa Cooper Van Riper.

Endnotes

1. *The Book of Confessions*, 9.27.
2. “Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture” and “Biblical Authority and Interpretation” are printed together and available from Presbyterian Distribution Service (#70420-98-006) or online at <www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/scripture-use.pdf>.
3. Some of these passages have been misappropriated to excuse spousal abuse. Because of our deep concern with domestic violence, we refer all readers to the excellent treatment of this in “Turn Mourning into Dancing! A Policy Statement on Healing Domestic Violence,” 213th General Assembly (2001) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), <<http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/dancing.pdf>>.
4. This passage is quoted widely in discussions regarding marriage and it should be noted that by Jesus pointing them back to Genesis 1–2, some read this passage as also condemning homosexuality and polygamy.
5. Frederick Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Robert A.J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2001), 436.
6. The *paterfamilias* (“father of the family”) was the male head of a Roman household who held the power of life and death (*patria potestas*) over all members of the household, including slaves. [Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1992), chap. 2.]
7. Matthew Kuefler, “The Marriage Revolution in Late Antiquity: The Theodosian Code and Later Roman Marriage Law,” *Journal of Family History*, 2007.
8. Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 106.
9. John Witte Jr., *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 4.
10. See Deut. 21:15–17.
11. *The Book of Confessions*, The Second Helvetic Confession, 5.245, 5.246.
12. *The Book of Confessions*, The Heidelberg Catechism, 4.108.
13. *The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.131.
14. 388 U.S. 1 (1967).
15. 388 U.S. at 11, citing *Skinner v. Oklahoma*, 316 U.S. 535, 541 (1942), citations omitted.
16. Compare *Baker v. Nelson*, 191 N.W.2d 185 (1971)—rejecting constitutional challenge to same-sex marriage prohibition, and *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, 440 Mass. 309 (2003)—sustaining a constitutional challenge.
17. See *The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.132 and 6.137–139. The original language of Chapter XXIV, paragraphs 5 and 6, is available at <http://www.reformed.org/documents/westminster_conf_of_faith.html>.
18. *The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.47 “...each person has joy in and respect for his (sic) own humanity and that of other persons; a man and woman are enabled to marry, to commit themselves to a mutually shared life, and to respond to each other in sensitive and lifelong concern; parents receive the grace to care for children in love and to nurture their individuality.”
19. Request 91-23, *Minutes*, 203rd General Assembly (1991), Part I, p. 395; *Jane Adams Spahr v. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) through the Presbytery of Redwoods*, <<http://www.pcusa.org/gapjc/decisions/pjc21812withconcurrences.pdf>>, also *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 330ff.
20. <http://www.pcusa.org/gapjc/decisions/pjc21211.pdf>, see also *Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 588.
21. <www.ucc.org/assets/pdfs/in-support-of-equal-marriage-rights-for-all-with-background.pdf>, p. 2–3.
22. “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,” August 19, 2009, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, <<http://www.elca.org/~media/Files/Who%20We%20Are/Office%20of%20the%20Secretary/Assembly/CWA%202009%20Revised%20Social%20Statement%20HSGT%20FINAL%20090309.pdf>>.
23. Resolution 2 at <<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Churchwide-Assembly/Actions/Voting.aspx#MP>>.
24. <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P3V.HTM>.
25. <<http://www.oca.org/OCchapter.asp?SID=2&ID=56>>.
26. <http://gc2009.org/ViewLegislation/view_leg_detail.aspx?id=898&type=Final>.

27. <http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=lwL4KnN1LtH&b=5066287&content_id={1F927523-A422-4005-BA60-517220DB6D1E}¬oc=1>.
28. <<http://www.mcccchurch.org>>.
29. Southern Baptist Convention, “The Baptist Faith and Message,” as amended June 14, 2000, <<http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000asp>>.
30. “Redefined civil marriage” denotes the extension of the rights of marriage to same-sex couples.
31. The terms used and benefits conveyed vary among jurisdictions.
32. PC(USA) marriages are required to fulfill the legal requirements of civil marriage (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001).
33. Here and throughout this report, Christian marriage refers to *Book of Order*, W-4.9001.
34. *Book of Order*, W-4.9002b.
35. *Book of Order*, W-4.9002b.
36. Dan Cere, *The Future of Family Law: Law and the Marriage Crisis in North America*. (New York: Institute for American Values, 2005), 40.
37. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/13/AR2009021303365.html>>, last accessed 15 September 2009.
38. For example, two elderly persons who need to retain separate custodial living arrangements, but who wish to be blessed within the church.
39. *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 842.
40. *Christian Marriage: Supplemental Liturgical Resource 3* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1986), 91.
41. *Book of Order*, G-1.0200.
42. James G. Pawelski, et al, “The Effects of Marriage, Civil Union, and Domestic Partnership Laws on the Health and Well-being of Children,” *Pediatrics* 118, no. 1 (2006), <<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/118/1/349>> (1 July 2006). While a bit older, this article covered this topic in more detail than available to the committee.
43. Walter E. Volkmer, *American Government*, 8th edition (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1998), 4.
44. For a thorough treatment of the spectrum of viewpoints regarding same-gender relationships, see William Stacy Johnson, *A Time to Embrace: Same-Gender Relationships in Religion, Law, and Politics* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmann, 2006), 39–108.
45. Mt. 22:39, Mt. 7:12, Am. 5:24.
46. Ruth 4:13–17, Esth. 2:7.
47. “Transforming Families,” 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), <<http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/transformingfamilies.pdf>>, see also *Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 747ff.
48. Mt. 7:1–5.
49. “Transforming Families,” 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), <<http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/transformingfamilies.pdf>>, see also *Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 747ff.
50. Gen. 1:27–28; 2:23–24, Mk. 10:6–9, Eph. 5:21–6:4.
51. Heb. 13:4, 1 Cor. 6:12–7:17, Eph. 5:1–3.
52. <<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/index.html>>. Narrative by Gates, <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/pdf/ACS2008_Final%282%29.pdf>.
53. <<http://www.gao.gov/archive/1997/og97016.pdf>>; <<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04353r.pdf>>. Not all of these provisions are of equal magnitude. See further <<http://www.marriagedebate.com/pdf/iMAPP.GAO.pdf>>.
54. Stephen T. Black, “Same-Sex Marriage and Taxes,” *BYU Journal of Public Law* 22, no. 327, <<http://www.law2.byu.edu/jpl/Vol22.2/Black.pdf>>. Due to the complexity of the federal tax code, higher income married couples may have different tax burdens and benefits.
55. <<http://www.domawatch.org>>.

56. The current status of a particular state can be found at <http://www.ncsl.org/IssuesResearch/HumanServices/SameSexMarriage/tabid/16430/Default.aspx> or <http://marriage.about.com/cs/marriagelicense/a/samesexcomp.htm>.
57. See Glenn T. Stanton and Bill Maier, *Marriage on Trial* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 20 for the affirmative argument, and Palewski (p. 356) for the negative.
58. Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage* (New York: Broadway Books, 2000), 20.
59. Pawelski, p. 358ff.
60. Pawelski, p. 359.
61. Meezan and Rauch, 2005, “Gay Marriage, Same-sex Parenting, and America’s Children,” *The Future of Children*, vol. 15, no. 2, p. 110. Even the most recent comprehensive summary, the monograph *Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children: Research on the Family Life Cycle* (Abbie Goldberg, American Psychological Association, 2010), recognizes methodological limitations and the need for further research regarding children, youth, and adult children of same-gender couples.
62. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1954), 21.
63. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 7.
64. “The Church and Homosexuality: Policy Statement and Recommendations.” United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, *Minutes*, 1978, Part I, pp. 261–66, p. 58.
65. *Ibid.*
66. (“Men” and “man’s” in this 18th-century quotation should be understood as applying to all persons.) *The Book of Confessions*, 6.109. See also *Book of Order*, G-1.0301.
67. *Book of Order*, G-1.0304.
68. *Book of Order*, G-1.0305.
69. *Book of Order*, W-2.3001, W-2.3005.
70. *The Book of Confessions*, 3.18.
71. United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, *Minutes*, 190th General Assembly (1978), Part I, p. 261ff; and Presbyterian Church in the United States, *Minutes*, 119th General Assembly (1979), Part I, p. 362ff.
72. See particularly *The Book of Confessions*, 9.40.
73. We acknowledge that a conflict may exist between some current civil definitions of marriage and the definition of Christian marriage. However, changing the definition of marriage in the *Book of Order* (W-4.9001) falls outside the mandate of this committee.
74. *Book of Order*, W-6.3005.
75. *Book of Order*, W-6.3010.

JOINT OGA AND GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 12-12

Comment on Item 12-12 from the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council.

The Office of Theology and Worship and the Office of the General Assembly’s Department of Constitutional Services suggest that commissioners may wish to review the following existing resources:

Benton, et al. v Presbytery of Hudson River, Remedial Case 212-11, *Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 586, or online at <http://www.pcusa.org/gapjc/decisions/pjc21211.pdf>.

Spahr v Presbytery of Redwoods Case 218-12, *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 330, or online at <http://www.pcusa.org/gapjc/decisions/pjc21812withconcurrences.pdf>.

Advisory Opinion #7, <http://www.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/ad-op/advisory-opinion07.pdf>.

Book of Order, Directory for Worship, Chapter W-4.9000 (W-4.9001–W-4.9006).

Item 12-13

[The assembly answered Item 12-13 by the action taken on Item 12-12. See p. 45.]

Minority Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

[Note: See also Item 12-12, The Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).]

We the undersigned, a minority of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage, recommend that the 219th General Assembly (2010):

1. Approve the minority report (I. Introduction; II. What is the Place of Covenanted Same-Gender Partnerships in the Christian Community?; and III. Conclusion) and provide the section *Rationale/Commentary* as commentary to, and rationale for the minority report.
2. Commend this report to sessions and presbyteries, urging them to engage in study of the issues presented in this report.
3. Commend to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) the covenant, found at II.G. in this report, as a guide for a broken and hurting people, seeking to be faithful, that they might come together to discuss issues about which they disagree.

The Reverend Tracie Mayes Stewart

The Reverend William C. Teng

Elder Lisa Cooper Van Riper

These recommendations and report are in response to the following referral: *2008 Referral: Item 04-13. On Equal Rights for Families of Same-Gender Partners, Recommendation 2. Direct the Moderator to Appoint a Special Committee, Representing the Broad Diversity and Theological Balance of the PC(USA) to Study History of Laws Governing Marriage and Civil Union, How Theology and Practice of Marriage Have Developed in Reformed and Broader Christian Tradition, Relationship Between Civil Union and Christian Marriage, Effects of Current Laws on Same-Gender Partners and Their Children, and Place of Covenanted Same-Gender Partnerships in Christian Community—From the Presbytery of Denver (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 258–60).*

I. Introduction

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is wrestling with the issue of same-gender marriage. Responding to this struggle, the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) directed the Moderator

... to appoint a special committee, representing the broad diversity and theological balance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to study the following, ... including any policy recommendations growing out of the study:

- a. The history of the laws governing marriage and civil union, including current policy debates;
- b. How the theology and practice of marriage have developed in the Reformed and broader Christian tradition;
- c. The relationship between civil union and Christian marriage;
- d. The effects of current laws on same-gender partners and their children; and
- e. The place of covenanted same-gender partnerships in the Christian community. (*Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 259*)

The members of the special committee reached different conclusions—reflective of the divide in the larger church—over the nature and meaning of Christian marriage and therefore the place of covenanted same-gender partnerships in the Christian community.

It is the intent of this report to represent the church's biblical, historic, and confessional position that, among all varieties of sexual relationships, only marriage between a man and a woman is ordained by God and blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Starting Place

Included in the mandate of this special committee was a directive that the PC(USA) constitutional definition of Christian marriage *not* be changed. In our confessions, marriage is consistently defined as a lifelong covenant between God, a man and a woman, and the community of faith.

The PC(USA) *Book of Order* states:

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith. (W-4.9001)

II. What Is the Place of Covenanted Same-Gender Partnerships in the Christian Community?

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. (Eph.2:19–22)

When Christ calls a man [sic], he bids him come and die.¹

A. *Our Current Disconnect*

The Presbytery of Denver's overture to the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is part of the larger struggle that our denomination has had over homosexual practice for the past three decades.

The 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. issued a report on homosexual practice that found the following: (1) "homosexuality is a contradiction of God's wise and beautiful pattern for human sexual relationships revealed in Scripture ..."; (2) "unrepentant homosexual practice does not accord with the requirements for ordination"; (3) "Persons who manifest homosexual behavior must be treated with the profound respect and pastoral tenderness due all people of God" as they "strive toward God's revealed will in this area of their lives and make use of all the resources of grace"; (4) "There is no legal, social, or moral justification for denying homosexual persons access to the basic requirements of human existence" (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, pp. 261–66) The authoritative interpretation on ordination (point 2 above) was set aside by the 218th General Assembly (2008) (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 373).

This same 1978 report asserted that

the church's grappling with the issue of homosexuality has already energized its membership in a remarkable reawakening of prayer and theological study. Our study should continue with the aim of reaching harmony in our diverging positions on homosexuality and other critical issues. Our prayer should now be concentrated upon this process of internal reconciliation.... (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, pp. 261–66)

History's trajectory, looking at the thirty years that separate us from those hopes and prayers, has not been a gradual harmony, but an increasingly strident and rigid disharmony that threatens to once more tear the PC(USA) asunder.

Two reasons for this continued discord are: (1) disconnect between the theological/pastoral and advocacy strands of the 1978 report on homosexuality and (2) divergent readings of Scripture. Because these are foundational principles, the special committee could not reach consensus.

Over the past three decades, General Assemblies have agreed to pursue advocacy for the homosexual person. During the same time, in presbytery votes, the theological standards have been upheld, particularly in regard to the sexual behavior of those seeking ordination. Recent General Assemblies have begun to advocate for rights for same-gendered couples instead of the individual person.

Most recently, the 218th General Assembly (2008) acted to "renew and strengthen the long-standing Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) commitment to equal protection under the law for lesbian and gay persons and the 216th General Assembly (2004)'s affirmation of the right of same-gender persons to civil union and, thereby, to all the benefits, privileges, and responsibilities of civil union" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 259). This action did not define what the "benefits, privileges, and responsibilities of civil union" should be or how they might relate to the privileges and responsibilities of civil marriage or Christian marriage.

The difficulty is this: Whereas one could advocate for civil rights of the person while continuing to uphold the theological standard cited above and providing pastoral care that worked toward conformity with this theological position, when the General Assembly began to move toward advocacy for the couple, the strands became disconnected for many members in the PC(USA). It seemed contradictory to encourage public favor and subsidy for a behavior that the church had found to be outside of God's design. Or, from the other perspective, it seemed contradictory to demand equality in society that was denied within the church.

B. *Variant Interpretations*

Second, there truly exist variant interpretations of Scripture that in turn dictate different pastoral models and advocacy models. The variant interpretations of Scripture are the foundational reason that the 1978 theological/pastoral/advocacy strands have unraveled. The ongoing controversy around this issue and others will not be resolved until consensus is reached

on the interpretation of Scripture. Unity cannot be reached through polity inventions. Unity will only be reached through common affirmation of truth.

There are at least two larger approaches to biblical interpretation at play in these debates. One tends to call itself “liberal” or “progressive.” The other is variously labeled as “evangelical,” “conservative,” “orthodox,” or “traditional.” Admitting that the terms and descriptions are oversimplified and miss many nuances, it is still useful to compare the two perspectives.

Both approaches appeal to Scripture, although they read it differently. Both refer to history and biological and social sciences. Both see their approach as compassionate toward lesbians and gays, although they understand the requirements of compassion quite differently.

Traditionalists tend to focus on specific biblical commandments that appear to prohibit same-sex relations categorically. Progressives tend to focus on broader principles of love and justice that they regard as more important than the specific commandments.

Traditionalists tend to emphasize a core meaning of marriage established by God in creation. They see the near universality of marriage in almost all known cultures as confirmation of God’s design in creation. They think it unwise for either church or society to alter the core meaning of marriage. Progressives tend to emphasize the variability of marriage across human history and around the world. They are reluctant to fix a core meaning. They view further evolution of the institution as natural and necessary.

Traditionalists tend to see the biblical writers, and the church through its history, as elaborating a fairly consistent strand of teaching on marriage, under divine inspiration. They believe that the church can apply that teaching directly today, despite the differences and even injustices of the societies in which it was formed. Progressives tend to stress contradictions between various biblical passages and church attitudes toward marriage over the years. They view the biblical authors as captives of limited cultural perspectives prevalent in societies deformed by patriarchy and other injustices. They are reluctant to apply sexuality standards originating in the ancient Near East to a modern society that has more scientific knowledge about sexuality.

Traditionalists tend to view the two sexes, male and female, as an important part of God’s providence in creation. They therefore regard marriage, the institution joining the two sexes, as of unique social importance. Although they recognize how sin has distorted relationships between the sexes, and how the grace of Jesus Christ may open new possibilities for just relationships between men and women, they do not believe that God’s grace in Christ nullifies God’s earlier grace in making two complementary sexes to be joined together. Progressives tend to be wary of any purported distinctions between the sexes, in which they suspect the taint of past patriarchal attitudes. They take Paul’s declaration that in Christ “there is no longer male and female” (Gal. 3:28) as a mandate for reconfiguring institutions, such as traditional marriage, that take account of sex differences. For them the biological or social gender identity of a spouse should be an irrelevant factor.

Traditionalists tend to see God’s commands as offering clear choices between limited options. For them, marriage is the single norm for human sexual expression. The ways to God’s blessing are two: either fidelity in marriage or chastity in singleness. Progressives tend to be open to other kinds of covenanted sexual relationships.

Traditionalists draw out biblical themes of purity, emphasizing the calling of Christians to keep their bodies as “the temple of the Holy Spirit.” They speak against specific sexual acts—homosexual acts, or any sex outside of marriage—that they understand to violate that purity. Progressives tend to regard this emphasis on purity as outdated and unhelpful. They are more concerned about the emotional content of a relationship—the love, trust, and commitment between individuals—than about the form of the relationship or the bodily acts by which it is expressed.

Traditionalists acknowledge that sexual desires may be deep-seated; however, they emphasize the choices that individuals have in how to act on their desires. They affirm that, by God’s grace, the behaviors—and even sometimes the desires—can be transformed. Progressives tend to view sexual orientation as a fundamental, indelible part of an individual’s personality. They stress the likelihood that persons will act on their desires and the unlikelihood that the desires can be redirected.

Traditionalists acknowledge that the church has changed its mind previously on issues such as slavery, divorce, and women’s ordination. But they believe those revisions of doctrine came about because of fresh insight into the Scriptures—not merely out of a desire to conform to social trends. They do not see the issue of homosexuality as analogous, because the biblical texts on that topic are much less ambiguous. Progressives believe that sometimes God moves first in society to bring about greater justice and then pulls the church along behind. They believe that changes in teaching on slavery, divorce, and women’s ordination do set a valid precedent for a possible change in teaching on sexuality.

The pastoral model for traditionalists is: Compassion toward practicing homosexual persons means calling them, with all heterosexuals who have departed from God’s intentions, to repentance and restoration. The advocacy model is to call society away from its destructive “anarchy in sexual relationships” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.47). For progressives the pastoral model is: Compassion means affirmation of everyone’s sexual orientation and encouragement to use

it responsibly in covenanted relationships. The advocacy model is to seek the dissolution of distinctions between marriage and same-gender relationships.

C. *A Question for the Church*

The 2008 overture that mandated the formation of this special committee recognized this disconnect. The overture recognized that there are same-gendered partners in the PC(USA). It asked the special committee to state the place of such partnered couples within the Christian community. The overture further asked the committee to explore marriage from a historical, sociological, and political (legal) perspective. The committee has attempted to do this exploration in an accurate, descriptive manner.

Discerning the place of same-gender partnerships in the Christian community, however, requires us to move beyond description and affirm an understanding of the nature of Christian community. First, the Christian community is found in the church. The church is for “the gathering and perfecting of the saints” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.142). We are sealed by baptism into this community. But baptism signifies “forgiveness of sins” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Nicene Creed, 1.3), “walk[ing] in newness of life” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.154), “an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord’s” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Larger Catechism, 7.275), “dying with Christ and a joyful rising with him to new life” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.51), “present[ing] [our] bodies to be living sacrifices to God” (*Book of Order*, W-1.3033).

Therefore the question must be addressed from the perspective of the church as a place to gather and perfect the saints. Ultimately, we find the answer in the person and work of Jesus Christ, as known in Scripture, affirmed in the confessions, and operationalized through the *Book of Order*. It is only by looking at this question as one of discipleship, of sanctification, that we can ensure that the PC(USA) bears the marks of a true church: “first, the true preaching of the Word of God ...; secondly, the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus ...; and lastly, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly administered, as God’s Word prescribes ...” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Scots Confession, 3.18). It is only when we find our unity in the purity of the Word of God that we fulfill our connectional responsibilities to each other.

Based on the above-outlined diversity in views of Scripture and resulting pastoral and advocacy models, the special committee could not develop consensus on the question about same-gender partnerships. The special committee believes there is also significant disagreement among members and officers of the church regarding this question.

D. *Historic Principles*

In this situation of disagreement, we do well to return to the “Historic Principles of Church Order” expounded in Chapter I of the PC(USA) Form of Government: “God alone is Lord of the conscience,” it declares, “and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men [sic] which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship” (G-1.0301). So our consciences are not free in every respect, but rather we are called to bring them into captivity to God’s Word. It is only when confronted with demands that are “contrary to his Word, or beside it,” that we may claim freedom of conscience.

Regarding such scripturally undetermined matters, the historic principles state that “there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ.” They advise that “in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0305). On the other hand, where Scripture does determine a question, “it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the Word of God” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0303).

The issue before us is whether this question of covenanted same-gender partnerships is determined by the Word of God or not. The fact that equal sisters and brothers in Christ have differing convictions does not imply that all those convictions have equal standing in the church. The historic principles maintain that “no opinion can be ... more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man’s opinions are. On the contrary, we are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0304).

E. *The Constitution Holds*

As we work through our disagreements, we recognize that church teaching and church policy are still set by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Members of the special committee may not agree on civil unions and Christian marriage; however, the Constitution has authoritative provisions that bear on these questions. Until such time as the church’s understanding of marriage is changed in *The Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order*, those provisions remain in force. The burden of proof rests on those who would change the teaching.

Since decisions relating to marriage are made by ministers and sessions, it is well to review the obligations of those officers. All church officers vow to “be instructed and led by those confessions as [they] lead the people of God.” They also pledge to “be governed by our church’s polity” and “abide by its discipline” (*Book of Order*, W-4.4003c, e).

“So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards [of the Reformed faith and polity as expressed in *The Book of Confessions* and the Form of Government], without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church,” officers have “freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture.” But “in becoming a candidate or officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) one chooses to exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds. His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek or hold office in that body” (*Book of Order*, G-6.0108a–b).

Regarding marriage, the Constitution consistently declares that:

- Marriage “was instituted by the Lord God himself” (*The Book of Confessions*, 5.246; also 6.131, 6.133, 7.130, 9.47, and *Book of Order*, W-4.9001);
- Marriage is a “spiritual and physical union [of] one man and one woman” (*The Book of Confessions*, 6.131; also 5.246, 6.133);
- Marriage is “designed of God to last as long as they both [husband and wife] shall live” (*The Book of Confessions*, 6.133; also 6.131, 6.137, 9.47 and *Book of Order*, W-4.9001);
- “Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family” (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001; also *The Book of Confessions*, 6.131);
- Marriage serves purposes including “the mutual help of husband and wife; ... the safeguarding, undergirding, and development of their moral and spiritual character; ... the propagation of children and the rearing of them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (*The Book of Confessions*, 6.134; also 6.131);
- “Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man” (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001);
- “For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship” (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001);
- Christian marriages are to be “publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith” (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001);
- Christians are called to continence in single life or “complete love and concord” in marriage (*The Book of Confessions*, 5.245–246; also 4.108, 7.248–249).

Authoritative interpretations of the Constitution have established that:

- “Officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who are authorized to perform marriages shall not state, imply, or represent that a same-sex ceremony is a marriage because under W-4.9001 a same-sex ceremony is not and cannot be a marriage” (*Spahr case, Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 331, 333).
- Sessions “should not allow the use of the church facilities for a same sex union ceremony that the session determines to be the same as a marriage ceremony” (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 395).
- Ministers and churches may celebrate a “loving, caring, and committed relationship” between persons of the same sex. But such a ceremony should not “appropriate specific liturgical forms from services of Christian marriage,” nor should it “confer a new status” upon the persons being blessed. It should not be “construed as an endorsement of homosexual conjugal practice.” Same-sex couples should be instructed “that the service to be conducted does not constitute a marriage ceremony” (*Benton case, Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 588).

F. *A Faithful Answer*

God calls us into relationship with God and then with others. In fact, the call to love one’s neighbor is a command. In fulfilling this command for relationship with others, we must act in conformity with the first relationship to God that we have through Jesus Christ. Then in this life of discipleship to Christ, we are called to become his bond servant: body, soul, and mind. Our bodies are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. We must use our bodies within God’s design. Because God’s design is rooted in creation, this design is not just for the believer but for humanity. Therefore, friendships, whether of same or opposite gender, which do not violate God’s boundaries of sexual expression as defined in Scripture, the confessions, and the *Book or Order* can be honored and encouraged. However, those relationships, whether same or opposite gendered, that although committed and caring, which are outside of God’s design of sexual expression, cannot be encouraged or blessed. Pas-

toral care must be extended to all people within the body of Christ. Such care should always conform to the standards of the confessions as the church works to “gather and perfect” the saints.

For over three decades, the PC(USA) has wrestled with questions of human sexuality. When presbyteries have been asked to depart from the historic teaching of the church, they have declined. The *Book of Order* has been amended to make clear that chastity outside of marriage and monogamy within marriage, with marriage being defined as one man, one woman is a requirement for ordination. If this standard is considered serious enough to bar ordination, then the church in good conscience cannot encourage behavior or relationships that violate this standard. The *Benton* and subsequent decisions make it clear that in blessing same-sex couples, such blessings cannot be seen as marriage and cannot be construed as blessing sexual activity within these relationships.

This answer to the question about the place of covenanted same-gender partnerships may not be the answer that the Presbytery of Denver expected or desired. Others, too, may be disappointed. But this is the most faithful answer that we can give, within the faith that we have received and to which we have pledged ourselves.

G. *Our Covenant*

Throughout our time of prayerful deliberation—and sometimes difficult disagreement—the members of the PC(USA) Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage have been blessed by a remarkable degree of mutual respect, commitment to one another, and Christian love.

From the gifts of unity, respect, commitment, and love that we have received, we commend to our brothers and sisters in the PC(USA) the following covenant.

By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the love of God, and in the communion of the Holy Spirit, we covenant together to:

- Honor the truth that Christ has called and God works through each member;
- Listen to one another with openness and respect;
- Support and pray for each other and for one another’s ministries;
- Earnestly seek and carefully listen to each person’s discernment of God’s will found in Scripture;
- Struggle together with perseverance to find God’s will for us even when the way is difficult;
- Love one another even when we disagree, and to commit ourselves to the reconciliation of any broken relationships we have with one another.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, the question of the place of covenanted same-gender partnerships in the Christian community lifts up only one segment of our community. However, in Ephesians 2, we remember Jesus Christ came to reconcile all of us to God. Therefore, we call the church to a radical inclusivity that invites all people to be transformed by the radical redeeming love of Jesus Christ. We boldly proclaim the power of Jesus Christ to be our peace and to deliver us from all activities and passions that Scripture and our confessions call sin. We challenge the PC(USA) to gather around the cross of Christ and to rejoice that sin and death have no power over the Christian. We call all within our church to repent of whatever sin binds them.

Ephesians 2 talks of growing into a “holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21) and becoming a “dwelling place for God” (Eph. 2:22). As persons within whom the Spirit of God dwells, we are to pay particular attention to the ways we use our bodies. Our bodies are precious to God. Even the hairs on our head are numbered by our good and glorious God. We believe our bodies will be resurrected one day from dust, ashes, and decay. The way we conduct ourselves sexually is therefore extremely important, and God in God’s mercy has given us a perfect plan for this.

In Genesis God says it is not good for man to be alone. A woman is made who completes Adam and the two of them become one flesh. Adam’s joy knows no bounds as he embraces Eve and cries out, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. 2:23). God’s gracious intent for our sexuality is that we would find the one who completes us. Our bodies are carefully designed by the Creator to belong to the one created for us before the foundation of the world was laid. Any sexual activity outside of marriage violates this beautiful intention of God.

Humanity is created male and female, and the sexes complete and complement each other. When creation is so marred, God destroys it with a flood, and it is restored by those who enter the ark two by two, male and female. Jesus mentions the two becoming one flesh as he speaks against divorce and polygamy. “The one who made them at the beginning ‘made them

male and female' ... and two shall become one flesh" (Mt. 19:4, 6; cf. Mk. 10:6, 8). We are to be celibate until marriage and to not violate our marriage vows.

Too often in our hedonistic culture, sex is seen as a liberating act. We falsely believe that there is freedom in doing what feels good and what we want. But like all sin, sexual sins have consequences. God's beautiful gift of sex wrongly used causes terrible emotional and physical carnage. As the church, we should call our young people to the empowering liberation and freedom of knowing they are far too precious not to wait for the one God designed for them. We should see celibacy as a gift as Paul did and support and encourage single people.

The Christian life is one of sanctification. We are to be dead to sin and alive to all that is good. We are to transform our culture and offer to all the joy, grace, and freedom that come from striving daily to be obedient to God's Word. We are to proclaim without exception the all-encompassing power of Jesus Christ to deliver us from any sin with which we struggle. This journey will have times of difficulties, and we will all fail, but the church should be a place of grace, repentance, and restoration, as we seek to be molded into the image of Christ.

The Confession of 1967 says,

The relationship between man and woman exemplifies in a basic way God's ordering of the interpersonal life for which he created mankind. Anarchy in sexual relationships is a symptom of man's alienation from God, his neighbor, and himself. ... The church, as the household of God, is called to lead [all] out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ. Reconciled to God, each person has joy in and respect for his own humanity and that of other persons; a man and woman are enabled to marry, to commit themselves to a mutually shared life, and to respond to each other in sensitive and lifelong concern; parents receive the grace to care for children in love and to nurture their individuality. The church comes under the judgment of God and invites rejection by man when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together, or withholds the compassion of Christ from those caught in the moral confusion of our time (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.47).

We are called to offer the Gospel's grace to a hurting world full of people who desperately need to know God loves them and they can be freed of the things of this world that so easily enslave us. Love is never about license and, for too many years, the PC(USA) has been silent as the carnage of sexual hedonism engulfs our culture. Let us boldly proclaim that God has a place for sex: It is within marriage between a man and woman and that commitment is for life. Let us work to support, encourage, and nurture those who are not married and help them know that God's plan for them is just as important as God's plan for married people. Let us honor celibacy and those who practice it as engaging in a profitable spiritual discipline that may be lifelong or for a season of life.

Holding us all to the same biblical standard will help strengthen the peace, unity, and purity of the PC(USA) and help us all grow in the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To God alone be the glory!

Rationale/Commentary²

A. Biblical and Historical Summary

*The one sufficient revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, to whom the Holy Spirit bears unique and authoritative witness through the Holy Scriptures, which are received and obeyed as the word of God written.*³

In matters of faith and practice, the church turns to Scripture to hear the testimony of the Holy Spirit, so that we might follow the Word of God incarnate in our changing world. A review of Scripture, the confessions, and the history of marriage in the church presents a consistent view of the most foundational aspect of the nature of marriage: that it unites a man and a woman.

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh (Gen. 2:24).

[Jesus] answered, "Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning, 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Mt. 19:4–6).

Christian marriage is an institution ordained of God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, established and sanctified for the happiness and welfare of mankind, into which spiritual and physical union one man and one woman enter, cherishing a mutual esteem and love, bearing with each other's infirmities and weaknesses, comforting each other in trouble, providing in honesty and industry for each other and for their household, praying for each other, and living together the length of their days as heirs of the grace of life (*The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.131).

1. Old Testament

Genesis 2:18–24 tells how God gives humanity the gift of marriage. The Old Testament presents marriage as the basis for the family, the fundamental unit of society. Marriage provides:

- Complementary completeness for man and woman: Genesis 1–2;
- The birth and nurture of children: Gen. 1:28, 9:1 (creation, after the flood), 15:1–6, 21:1–7 (Abraham and Sarah);

- Companionship, mutual support, and affection: Gen. 2:18–24 (Adam and Eve) and 1 Sam. 1:1–28 (Hannah);
- Economic partnership, providing financial support for the family: Prov. 31:10–31 (the virtuous wife).

Marriages were also used as political tools to form alliances: 1 Sam. 18:17–27, 19:11–17, 25:44, 2 Sam. 3:13–15, 6:16–23 (Saul’s daughter, Micah, and David), and 1 Kings 11:1–4 (Solomon and his wives).

The Torah contains many laws regulating marriage and divorce. These include Ex. 20:14, 17; Deut. 5:18, 21 (the Ten Commandments); Lev. 18:6–18; 20:10; Deut. 24:1–5 (divorce and no military service).

Marriage is used by the prophets as a symbol of the exclusive attachment of Israel to God, who is referred to as Israel’s husband. Worshiping other gods is likened to adultery.⁴

- Hosea marries a prostitute, symbolizing God’s gracious love for Israel as Hosea forgives her.
- God restores God’s forsaken wife, Israel (Isa. 54:1–8, 62:1–5).
- Ezekiel depicts Israel’s disobedience as the adultery of an unfaithful wife (Ezekiel 16).

Scripture censures male infidelity, as well (Judah—Gen. 38:26; David—2 Sam. 12:1–15). The exclusively female images above flow from the imagery of God as the husband of Israel. These images are transformed in the New Testament where the church (the new Israel) becomes the bride of Christ.

2. *New Testament*

Jesus’ public ministry begins at a wedding feast in Cana, where he performs his first miracle (Jn. 2:1–11). Throughout his ministry, Jesus makes significant statements about marriage:

- In addressing a question on divorce, Jesus defines marriage (Mt. 19:4–6; Mk. 10:6–9). In this definition Jesus wipes away generations of misused tradition (divorce, polygamy) and brings humankind back to God’s design in Gen. 2:24.
- Jesus addresses a question about a hypothetical widow of seven husbands, indicating that marriage is not part of life in the resurrection (Mt. 22:23–33, as well as Mk. 12:18–27 and Lk. 20:27–40).
- Jesus seems to indicate a preference for celibacy in his comment about eunuchs, while acknowledging this may not be best for everyone (Mt. 19:10–12).
- Jesus uses marriage as an illustration in several parables (Mt. 22:1–14; Mt. 25:1–13; and Lk. 12:35–38).

In the first-century church, marriage was an issue because of the expected imminent coming of the kingdom of God and because the diverse marriage practices in the Greco-Roman culture posed a challenge to good order in the Christian community.

- Paul writes of the divine gift of marriage as an antidote against *porneia*, a Greek term originally meaning “prostitution,” but later broadened to cover a range of sexual misconduct (1 Cor. 7:2–6).⁵
- Paul writes against divorce (1 Cor. 7:7–9, 32–40).
- Paul indicates his preference of celibacy over marriage (1 Cor. 7:7–9, 32–40).
- Marriage is used as a metaphor for the union of Christ with his bride, the Church (Eph. 5:25–27; Rev. 19:6–8; and Rev. 21:9–10).

Toward the end of the first century, as the expectation of an imminent arrival of God’s kingdom faded, several trends emerged, as mentioned in 1 Timothy:

- Qualifications for church leaders (ministers) included that those who were married have only one wife (3:2).
- Some parties within the church promoted celibacy as an ideal, even as a requirement for faithful Christians, but this was rejected by the orthodox leaders (4:1–6).
- Young widows were encouraged to remarry for economic support, procreation, and to avoid immorality and scandal (5:14).

3. *The Early Interplay of Church and State*

Marriage, in varied forms, is almost universal among human societies. It appears as an already existing institution in the earliest records of civilization.⁶ Early Christians understood themselves as set apart and distinct from the culture around them. In Ephesians and elsewhere, the ideas of mutual submission and love distinguished Christian marriage from the absolute rule of the *paterfamilias*⁷ characteristic of Greco-Roman marriage. Christians also distinguished themselves from pagan cultures in confining full sexual expression to marriage between a man and a woman.

The early Christian church was an underground and often persecuted movement with little ability to influence official policies in the Roman Empire on matters like marriage. Nevertheless, theologians (John Chrysostom, Tertullian, etc.) showed interest in the understanding and practice of marriage in the early Christian community. When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in 313, laws enacted under Constantine and his successors began to reflect the influence of Christian views about marriage and chastity. The writings of Augustine (354–430) were a primary source for Christian understandings of marriage. Augustine expounded upon the three “goods” of marriage—offspring, exclusive fidelity, and the unbreakable bond between husband and wife.

By the mid-fifth century, legal codes enacted after Constantine⁸ included many statutes on marriage:

- Restrictions on divorce and remarriage,
- Prohibition of same-sex marriage,
- Proscription of clergy to marry, though married men could become clergy.

After the disintegration of the Roman Empire in the West, marriage was regulated at a local level. The church was involved, but not in a regulatory capacity. Gradually, local customs were combined with biblical interpretations and developed into canon law. Beginning about 800, the church increasingly asserted its authority over marriage.

By the early sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic canon law of marriage was predominant in the West.⁹ It included proscriptions against incest, polygamy, bestiality, and sodomy. Provisions were made for the annulment of marriages formed through duress or fraud; the church claimed the power to declare valid marriage bonds indissoluble. Celibacy was the norm for clerical and monastic life. Marriage, although seen as less holy than celibacy, was a sacrament and “means of grace.”

4. *The Protestant Reformation*

In the sixteenth century, the Protestant reformers insisted that Scripture alone be the basis of authority in the church, and re-examined marriage and canon law in light of biblical teaching. In Protestant churches:

- Marriage became a Christian vocation and was considered good, but no longer a sacrament.
- Celibacy was no longer required of clergy.

However, Protestant views on marriage differed:

- Martin Luther (1483–1546) promoted the state’s role in the regulation of marriage. In Luther’s doctrine of the earthly and heavenly kingdoms, civil magistrates acted as God’s vice-regents in the governance of marriage. Civil marriage codes replaced canon law, although many of the principles of canon law continued in force.

- King Henry VIII (1491–1547) broke with the Roman Catholic Church to obtain a divorce. He placed church authority under the monarchy, while the church retained control of marriage. The family was seen as a “little commonwealth” and the fundamental institution undergirding society.

- John Calvin (1509–1564) stressed marriage as a covenant between individuals, God, and the community. Calvin’s three reasons for marriage were mutual love and support, the birth and nurture of children, and protection from sexual sin. Regulation of marriage in Calvin’s Geneva was shared between church and state.

The Reformed understanding of marriage was made evident throughout the Reformation-era confessions. The Second Helvetic Confession cautioned against making celibacy a mark of spiritual merit and condemned polygamy.¹⁰ The Heidelberg Catechism urged Christians to “live chaste and disciplined lives, whether in holy wedlock or in single life.”¹¹

The Westminster Confession in the original 1647 version stated: “Marriage is to be between one Man and one Woman: neither is it lawfull for any Man to have more than one Wife, nor for any Woman to have more than one Husband; at the same time” (*The Book of Confessions*, 6.131). “Marriage is designed for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the safeguarding, undergirding, and development of their moral and spiritual character; for the propagation of children and the rearing of them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”¹²

Although the reformers viewed the sacramental nature of marriage differently from the Roman Catholic Church, and although the reformers took varying views on the role of the state in marriage, all never wavered in their view of the basic nature of marriage as a union of man and woman.

5. *Marriage Laws in America*

Immigrants from Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Roman Catholic traditions brought their traditions of marriage to America. Enlightenment thinking introduced a fifth pattern—marriage as a social contract. The Enlightenment was an eighteenth-century philosophical movement that held human reason as applicable to all areas of life. It stressed ideals of freedom, equality, and individual rights. During this time, neither laws nor church teachings questioned the nature of marriage as a union of man and woman.

Marriages were required to be registered with civil authorities. States imposed various limitations on each person's choice of possible marriage partners, excluding categories such as close blood relatives, minors, persons deemed legally incompetent, and persons already married. Significant among these prohibitions were interracial relationships during Jim Crow segregation.

As societal attitudes about interracial marriage began to change, the federal government intervened. The U.S. Supreme Court's 1967 ruling in *Loving v. Virginia*¹³ eradicated state laws barring interracial marriage. The court ruled:

Marriage is one of the "basic civil rights of man [sic]," fundamental to our very existence and survival... To deny this fundamental freedom on so un-supportable a basis as the racial classifications embodied in these statutes ... is surely to deprive all the State's citizens of liberty without due process of law.¹⁴

The court concluded that race was an extraneous feature having nothing to do with the essence of marriage, and therefore states lacked the power to limit the choice of possible marriage partners to members of the same race. But within these national constitutional parameters, states still retained the ability to regulate marriage.

Proponents of same-sex marriage later tried to extend the reasoning in *Loving* to their cause. They suggested that biological sex, like race, might be an extraneous feature having nothing to do with the essence of marriage, and therefore states might lack the power to limit a person's choice of potential marriage partners to members of the opposite sex. Several states rejected this reasoning. An example is *Baker v. Nelson*, a case in which the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that Minnesota law "does not authorize marriage between persons of the same sex and that such marriages are accordingly prohibited" and that this limitation did not violate the U.S. Constitution. The plaintiffs appealed, and the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed the appeal "for want of a substantial federal question."¹⁵

In 1996, Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), defining marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman for purposes of all federal laws, and including the provision that states in which same-gender marriage is not legal do not have to recognize a same-gender marriage from another state. To date, thirty-seven states have approved their own DOMAs, thirty-one of which have state constitutional amendments defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

Opponents of DOMA have questioned the constitutionality of the act based on the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the Constitution ("Full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state"). This clause generally mandates that states must recognize marriages solemnized in any other.

In 2004, Massachusetts became the first state to redefine civil marriage to include same-gender couples, a year after its state's highest court ruled that a ban on gay marriage was unconstitutional.¹⁶ At the time of this writing, four additional states (New Hampshire, Vermont, Iowa, and Connecticut) and the District of Columbia have done likewise. Several others, including California, New Jersey, Washington, and Oregon, allow civil unions or domestic partnerships that provide same-gender couples some rights and privileges of marriage under state law. Legislative and judicial efforts to redefine marriage in Maine and California have failed in public referenda.

6. *Marriage in the PC(USA)*

The PC(USA), in careful study of Scripture and its application to current culture, has come to embrace marriage as an equal partnership between husband and wife. The church has also amended The Westminster Confession of Faith concerning divorce, calling it a result of sin but allowing remarriage after repentance.¹⁷

The Confession of 1967 lifts up "anarchy in sexual relationships" as one of four issues of particular concern in the church. The confession enumerates the positive benefits of marriage¹⁸ as a remedy for the "perennial confusion about the meaning of sex." This confession clearly defines marriage as between a man and a woman.

Since the late 1970s, issues related to homosexuality have been debated in the PC(USA) and its predecessor denominations. People of deep faith and commitment are struggling to discern how the church can bring God's redemptive grace to a culture experiencing what The Confession of 1967 refers to as sexual "anarchy."

In 1991, the General Assembly responded to a request for constitutional interpretation by declaring that any same-sex ceremony "considered to be the equivalent of a marriage ceremony ... would not be sanctioned under the *Book of Order*" (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 395). It advised sessions against the use of church facilities in any same-sex ceremony deemed to be the equivalent of a marriage. A more recent General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) decision instructed ministers of the Word and Sacrament not to "state, imply, or represent that a same-sex ceremony is a marriage."¹⁹

In 1996, the *Book of Order* was amended to require that those being ordained "lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness."²⁰ All attempts to delete this section from the *Book of Order* have failed to be ratified by a majority of presbyteries.²¹

In *Benton, et al. v. Presbytery of Hudson River* (2000) the GAPJC did allow for individual ministers and sessions to conduct a same-sex ceremony that "celebrates a loving, caring and committed relationship." Such a ceremony does not "confer a new status" but "blesses an existing relationship." These services "do not constitute a marriage ceremony" and "should not be construed as an endorsement of homosexual conjugal practice proscribed by the General Assembly."²²

7. *Other Christian Traditions and Marriage*

The three bodies with which the PC(USA) is in full communion have taken differing positions:

- The United Church of Christ (UCC): "We ... affirm that all humans are made in the image and likeness of God, including people of all sexual orientations, and God has bestowed upon each one the gift of human sexuality. Further, we recognize and affirm that, as created in God's image and gifted by God with human sexuality, all people have the right to lead lives that express love, justice, mutuality, commitment, consent and pleasure."²³
- The Reformed Church in America (RCA) restricts marriage to "the union of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others." In 1996, the RCA encouraged "the UCC to move toward a more biblically faithful understanding of human sexuality and a repeal of all policies condoning homosexual behavior."
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA): "[M]arriage is a covenant of mutual promises, commitment and hope authorized legally by the state and blessed by God. The historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran confessions have recognized marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman."²⁴ In 2009, its churchwide assembly voted to "commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships."²⁵

The Roman Catholic Church holds to its sacramental view of life-long marriage. "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized."²⁶

The Orthodox Church in America maintains its ancient, sacramental understanding of marriage between a man and a woman as a "Holy Mystery." It is not a juridical contract and is not entered with vows or oaths. It is the "baptizing and confirming" of human love in God by Christ in the Holy Spirit.²⁷

The Episcopal Church views marriage as a "sacramental rite." "Holy Matrimony is Christian marriage, in which the woman and man enter into a life-long union, make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows." There is great disagreement over the issue of same-gender marriage.²⁸

The United Methodist Church: "We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment and shared fidelity between a man and a woman."²⁹

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, "the world's first church group with a primary, positive ministry to gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender persons,"³⁰ strongly supports "marriage equality."

The Southern Baptist Convention: "Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race."³¹

Other church bodies in the United States, Canada, and Europe are wrestling with issues similar to those our special committee was charged with considering. It is important to note, however, that the vast majority of churches in developing

nations view these debates negatively and even threaten to break communion with churches that would deviate from traditional views of marriage. This is seen in the current debates within the Anglican Communion.³² Most Pentecostals, Church of God in Christ, nondenominational, and charismatic churches also hold a more traditional view of marriage.

B. *The Relationship Between Civil Union and Christian Marriage*

There are distinct differences in the way terms like marriage, civil union, and domestic partnership are understood, and because those terms are interpreted differently in various civil jurisdictions, the chart below outlines our understanding and identifies the way these terms will be used in this study.

	Civil Marriage	Redefined Civil Marriage³³	Civil Union/Domestic Partnership³⁴	Christian Marriage in the PC(USA)
Structure	government-licensed contract between a man and a woman	government-licensed contract between two persons	contract between two persons by an individual jurisdiction	covenant of a life-long commitment between God, man and a woman, and the community
Recognition	all states and federal level	only some states	only some states and localities	all states and federal level ³⁵
Purpose	social institution by which a man and a woman form a family, often with the expectation of children resulting from their sexual union	social institution by which two people form a family; children with biological parent(s) outside the household may be brought inside	legal arrangement between two people	mutual help of husband and wife; moral and spiritual development; propagation and rearing of children in the discipline of the Lord (The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.134)
Institution	commitment, publicly witnessed	commitment, publicly witnessed	commitment, publicly registered	lifelong commitment, publicly witnessed, acknowledged by the community of faith
Rights/Privileges	households recognized as social units	households recognized as social units	reciprocal rights/responsibilities that may or may not approximate marriage	those who are married “live out together before God their lives of Christian discipleship” (<i>Book of Order</i> , W-4.9001)
Responsibilities	accountable to each other and government	accountable to each other and government	accountable to each other and government	accountable to each other and government; called to live out discipleship before God
Sexual Expression	traditionally consummated by male-female intercourse	sexual relationship presumed but acts not specified	no necessary sexual relationship	the full expression of love between a man and a woman (<i>Book of Common Worship</i> , 842)

Civil marriage in forty-five states is a state-licensed contract between a man and a woman. In five states and the District of Columbia, marriage has been redefined as a state-licensed contract between two consenting adults. Christian marriage is a *covenant* through which “a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship.”³⁶

Civil marriage occurs through a state-licensed contract granted to parties who meet particular criteria, which may include residency, identification, premarital counseling, evidence that neither party is currently in a civil marriage, medical testing, lack of consanguinity, and age. In the vast majority of states, difference in gender is a state-required criterion; in a small minority, people of the same sex may be licensed to marry.

Civil marriage determines the delineation of the household and a person’s next-of-kin, primary parental rights and responsibilities, and other benefits granted by states to those in licensed civil marriages (e.g., filing taxes together, joint homeownership). Civil marriage is a necessary, but not sufficient, criterion of Christian marriage in the PC(USA).

In Christian marriage, a man and a woman’s covenant to live out their discipleship together in lifelong commitment must accompany civil marriage. The man and woman must demonstrate sufficient “Christian understanding” to be able to enter

into the covenant of Christian marriage.³⁷ Thus, while every state empowers ministers of the Word and Sacrament to officiate on its behalf in civil marriage, the *Book of Order* instructs them not to conduct any covenant ceremony of Christian marriage that they feel is “unwise.”³⁸

Marriage, whether civil or Christian, represents more than a mechanism to meet the needs of individuals and gain state and/or federal benefits. Both constitute the creation of a social unit, a source of meaning and identity.

Since civil unions do not share this social dimension of marriage, some think that such unions cannot adequately substitute for marriage, fearing that the socially indeterminate nature of civil unions may even encourage impermanence among such couples.³⁹ Others see such unions as a helpful compromise in a polarized and polarizing debate. In any case, civil unions cannot fully make peace between those who view homosexual practice differently.

C. *The Effects of Current Laws on Same-Gender Partners and Their Children*

Scripture and the confessions recognize marriage between a man and a woman as creating a basic unit of ordered human society. “The birth and nurture of children are essential for the continuation of the human race and are an expression of hope and confidence in God’s providential care.”⁴⁰

Laws are the result of a political process, which is an “allocation of public values.”⁴¹ Our view of the beneficial or detrimental effect of any legal proposal will be dependent upon our value outlook. Among those differing perspectives which are represented within the PC(USA) are:⁴²

Perspective 1: Laws that fail to give benefits equal to marriage to same-gender couples and their families violate the standards of social justice and equality.⁴³ The differences in benefits result in legal, financial, and social hardships that may affect children. Using the Equal Protection clause of the U.S. Constitution, there should be no difference made between relationships based on gender. From a biblical perspective, it is important to note the different cultural settings between modern and biblical times, especially in the role of the extended family structure in the latter.⁴⁴ From a sociological direction, there is no clear evidence whether children from same-gender parent families are at a developmental disadvantage.⁴⁵

Perspective 2: Same-gender relationships are of low importance in comparison to other more pressing societal issues. While the concerns of those who oppose same-gender marriage may be understandable, when it comes to matters of faith, it is God’s place, not the place of human beings to determine the appropriateness of a relationship.⁴⁶ Under no circumstances should children of same-gender couples be treated any differently under the law because of their parents’ relationship. Same-gender couples and their families should receive fair treatment by society and the church.

Perspective 3: It does not violate social justice or equal protection to offer different benefits to same-gender couples from those offered to a man and a woman who are married. Every relationship or contract does not have to be accorded the same value, protection, or benefit. Marriage between one man and one woman is foundational to the stability of society and is the best possible context for the nurture and flourishing of children. In controlled studies, children separated from one or more biological parent fare less well.⁴⁷ All children should be supported regardless of their family situations; however, public policy should not grant the same favor to relationships in which children are separated from at least one biological parent, such as same-gender partnerships. To promote social stability and justice for children, the law should encourage relationships that are optimal by granting particular benefits to a woman and a man who marry.⁴⁸

Perspective 4: Opposing the acceptance of same-gender marriage rises beyond a sociopolitical argument to an issue of conscience. All sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and a woman is unacceptable. Behavior that is explicitly proscribed by Scripture cannot be encouraged. Providing legal benefits equal to marriage for same-gender couples makes society complicit in encouraging this behavior.⁴⁹

1. *Census Figures*

Determining the size of the populations involved is not a straightforward task because information on same-gender partners has not been collected in past census reports. However, information collected on same-gender couples by the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2008 American Community Survey⁵⁰ indicated a total of 564,743 same-gender couple households in this country. Approximately one-fifth (115,421) of those households included children. The vast majority of these children are from previous heterosexual relationships.⁵¹ The number of same-gender couple households with children represents .3 percent of around 38 million total households with children under the age of eighteen.

2. *Federal Laws*

In 1997, the General Accounting Office (GAO) reported there were 1,049 laws (updated to 1,138 in 2004) in which “marital status” was a “factor ... even though some of these laws may not directly create benefits, rights, or privileges” (for example, this includes some laws that apply to American Civil War widows). The GAO cautioned:

[N]o conclusions can be drawn, from our identification of a law as one in which marital status is a factor, concerning the effect of the law on married people versus single people. A particular law may create either advantages or disadvantages for those who are married, or may apply to both mar-

ried and single people. For example, those who are unmarried fare better than their married counterparts under the so-called marriage penalty provision of the tax laws, while married couples enjoy estate tax benefits not available to the unmarried.⁵²

Areas most significantly affected by federal laws, principally DOMA, are:

- Tax code: Given the complexity of the federal tax code, the benefits, or penalties, of a married filing status depend on a household’s financial situation.

The tax code offers other benefits to married couples. For example, the premiums paid for health insurance for a spouse and children are exempt from federal taxes, while premiums paid for a domestic partner are not.

- Social Security and federal retirement benefits: These programs provide benefits to the spouse of a deceased or disabled plan member. Spousal benefits are limited to a spouse of the opposite sex. A domestic partner or same-gender spouse is not eligible for these benefits.
- Immigration: A same-gender spouse of a U.S. citizen is not eligible for legal permanent resident status (“green card”) or work visa based on marital status. This applies equally to same-gender couples legally married in the U.S. or in another country.
- Recognition of same-gender marriage across state lines: A provision of the federal DOMA declares that states need not recognize other states’ same-gender marriages. The U.S. Supreme Court has yet to hear an appeal of these cases.⁵³

3. *Varieties of State Laws*

States can be divided into five general configurations.⁵⁴

State configurations						
Legal Elements		Constitutional Prohibition States (e.g., SC)	DOMA States (e.g., WA)	Non-DOMA States (e.g., NM)	Civil Unions/ Domestic Partnerships States (e.g., CA)	Redefined Civil Marriage States (e.g., MA)
	Constitutional Language	Yes	no	no	yes	no
	DOMA	Yes	yes	no	no	no
	Restrictive State Law	Yes	maybe	yes	no	no
	Civil Unions/ Domestic Partnerships	No	maybe	maybe	yes	no
	Recognition of Other States’ Redefined Civil Marriages	No	no	no	no	yes

Some states that recognize civil unions/domestic partnerships have granted benefits that are arguably equivalent to the benefits granted through marriage.⁵⁵ These fall into several broad categories:

- Parental: Without the recognition of a civil marriage/domestic partnership, many parental rights may be denied to one member of a same-gender couple. These include joint or co-parent adoption, recognition of a child’s relationship to both parents, and eligibility for foster parenting. This can have implications for the ability to direct medical care for a child, custody of a child on the death of the biological parent, eligibility for public housing or subsidy programs, and ability to extend the nonbiological parent’s employer health insurance to the children. However, as previously noted, the vast majority of children residing in same-gender households are from previous heterosexual relationships. Differences described in this section may not apply to these children.
- Partner: Rights and benefits not available to an unmarried partner include health insurance and Medicare benefits, and the ability to direct medical care and receive survivor benefits. They extend into many economic and commercial areas that married couples take for granted, including the ability to have joint credit, and to own property with special tax benefits and legal protections. A number of legal benefits are also unavailable—protection against being forced to testify against a spouse in court; the ability to structure a dissolution of the relationship through a court-supervised divorce, including child custody and visitation rights; and the right to sue for wrongful death of a partner.
- Tax code: State and local tax codes vary too widely to draw general conclusions about the benefits or penalties of marriage. State tax laws are roughly parallel to federal laws.

4. *Current Research*

While it is possible to describe the differences in the law regarding same-gender relationships, it is still difficult to make definitive statements on the sociological effects of these laws on same-gender families and their children. Research on this specific topic encounters significant challenges.

The journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics offers a comprehensive review of the literature related to the psychosocial aspects of same-gender parents and their children.⁵⁶ Challenges such as small sample size, children originally born into a heterosexual parental relationship, investigator bias, and community attitudes are present in current research.

The effect of the laws and the developmental differences of children in same-gender parent families are difficult to determine because cultural attitudes are not static. As one article states:

“... whether same-sex marriage would prove socially beneficial, socially harmful, or trivial is an empirical question that cannot be settled by any amount of armchair theorizing. There are plausible arguments on all sides of the issue, and as yet there is no evidence sufficient to settle them.”⁵⁷

Endnotes

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 7.
2. This “Commentary,” though similar to Sections II.–IV. of the majority report, reflects a different perspective. Members of the minority appreciate the work of the full committee.
3. *The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.27.
4. Some of these passages have been misappropriated to excuse spousal abuse. Because of our deep concern with domestic violence, we refer all readers to the excellent treatment of this in “Turn Mourning into Dancing! A Policy Statement on Healing Domestic Violence,” 213th General Assembly (2001) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), <<http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/dancing.pdf>>.
5. Frederick Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Robert A.J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2001), 436.
6. Code of Hammurabi (Codex Hammurabi, c. 1790 BC), no. 127–156. Also, “In all or nearly all human societies, marriage is socially approved sexual intercourse between a woman and a man, conceived both as a personal relationship and as an institution, primarily such that any children resulting from the union are—and are understood by society to be—emotionally, morally, practically, and legally affiliated with both parents.” [David Blankenhorn, *The Future of Marriage* (New York: Encounter Books, 2007), 91.]
7. The *paterfamilias* (“father of the family”) was the male head of a Roman household who held the power of life and death (*patria potestas*) over all members of the household, including slaves. [Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1992), chap. 2.]
8. Matthew Kuefler, “The Marriage Revolution in Late Antiquity: The Theodosian Code and Later Roman Marriage Law,” *Journal of Family History*, 2007.
9. John Witte Jr., *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 4.
10. *The Book of Confessions*, Second Helvetic Confession, 5.245, 5.246.
11. *The Book of Confessions*, Heidelberg Catechism, 4.108.
12. *The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.134.
13. 388 U.S. 1 (1967).
14. 388 U.S. at 11, citing *Skinner v. Oklahoma*, 316 U.S. 535, 541 (1942), citations omitted.
15. *Baker v. Nelson*, 191 N.W.2d 185 (1971).
16. *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, 440 Mass. 309 (2003).
17. See *The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.132 and 6.137–139. The original language of Chapter XXIV, paragraphs 5 and 6, is available at <http://www.reformed.org/documents/westminster_conf_of_faith.html>.
18. *The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.47 “... each person has joy in and respect for his [sic] own humanity and that of other persons; a man and woman are enabled to marry, to commit themselves to a mutually shared life, and to respond to each other in sensitive and lifelong concern; parents receive the grace to care for children in love and to nurture their individuality.”
19. Request 91-23, *Minutes*, 203rd General Assembly (1991), Part I, p. 411; *Jane Adams Spahr v. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Presbytery of Redwoods*, <<http://www.pcusa.org/gapjc/decisions/pjc21812withconcurrences.pdf>>, also *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 330ff.

20. *Book of Order*, G-6.0106b.
21. In 1994, 1997, 2001, and 2008.
22. <http://www.pcusa.org/gapjc/decisions/pjc21211.pdf>; see also *Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 588.
23. www.ucc.org/assets/pdfs/in-support-of-equal-marriage-rights-for-all-with-background.pdf, pp. 2–3.
24. “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,” August 19, 2009, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, <http://www.elca.org/~media/Files/Who%20We%20Are/Office%20of%20the%20Secretary/Assembly/CWA%202009%20Revised%20Social%20Statement%20HSGT%20FINAL%20090309.pdf>.
25. Resolution 2 at <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Churchwide-Assembly/Actions/Voting.aspx#MP>.
26. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P3V.HTM.
27. <http://www.oca.org/OCchapter.asp?SID=2&ID=56>.
28. http://gc2009.org/ViewLegislation/view_leg_detail.aspx?id=898&type=Final.
29. http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=IwL4KnN1LtH&b=5066287&content_id={1F927523-A422-4005-BA60-517220DB6D1E}¬oc=1.
30. <http://www.mcccchurch.org>.
31. Southern Baptist Convention, “The Baptist Faith and Message,” as amended June 14, 2000, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000asp>.
32. Conclusion based on the reading of Thaddeus Barnum, *Never Silent* (Colorado Springs: Eleison Publishing, 2008).
33. “Redefined Civil Marriage” denotes the extension of the rights of marriage to same-gender couples.
34. The terms used and benefits conveyed vary among jurisdictions.
35. PC(USA) marriages are required to fulfill the legal requirements of civil marriage (*Book of Order*, W-4.9001).
36. Here and throughout this report, Christian marriage refers to *Book of Order*, W-4.9001.
37. *Book of Order*, W-4.9002b.
38. *Book of Order*, W-4.9002b.
39. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/13/AR2009021303365.html>, last accessed 15 September 2009.
40. *Christian Marriage: Supplemental Liturgical Resource 3* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1986), 91.
41. Walter E. Volkmer, *American Government*, 8th edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 4.
42. For a thorough treatment of the spectrum of viewpoints regarding same-gender relationships, see William Stacy Johnson, *A Time to Embrace: Same-Gender Relationships in Religion, Law, and Politics* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmann, 2006), 39–108.
43. Mt. 22:39, Mt. 7:12, Am. 5:24.
44. Ruth 4:13–17, Esth. 2:7.
45. “Transforming Families,” 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/transformingfamilies.pdf>; see also *Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 747ff.
46. Matt. 7:1–5.
47. “Transforming Families,” 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/transformingfamilies.pdf>; see also *Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 747ff.
48. Gen. 1:27–28; 2:23–24, Mk. 10:6–9, Eph. 5:21–6:4.
49. Heb. 13:4, 1 Cor. 6:12–7:17, Eph. 5:1–3.
50. <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/index.html>. Narrative by Gates, http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/pdf/ACS2008_Final%282%29.pdf.
51. “The Effects of Marriage, Civil Union, and Domestic Partnership Laws on the Health and Well-beings of Children: In Reply,” Den A. Trumbull, Joseph R. Zanga, Leah M. Wilson, and Vicki Tucci, *Pediatrics* 2006; 118; 2261b-2264 DOI: 10.1542/peds.2006-2310, p. 2262.

52. <<http://www.gao.gov/archive/1997/og97016.pdf>>; <<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04353r.pdf>>. Not all of these provisions are of equal magnitude. See further <<http://www.marriedebate.com/pdf/iMAPP.GAO.pdf>>.
53. <<http://www.domawatch.org>>.
54. The current status of a particular state can be found at <<http://www.ncsl.org/IssuesResearch/HumanServices/SameSexMarriage/tabid/16430/Default.aspx>> or <<http://marriage.about.com/cs/marriagelicense/a/samesexcomp.htm>>.
55. See Glenn T. Stanton and Bill Maier, *Marriage on Trial* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 20 for the affirmative argument, and Pawelski (p. 356) for the negative.
56. Pawelski, p. 358ff.
57. Meezan and Rauch, 2005, "Gay Marriage, Same-sex Parenting, and America's Children," *The Future of Children*, vol. 15, no. 2, p. 110. Even the most recent comprehensive summary, the monograph *Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children: Research on the Family Life Cycle* (Abbie Goldberg, American Psychological Association, 2010), recognizes methodological limitations and the need for further research regarding children, youth, and adult children of same-gender couples.

Item 13-01

[The assembly answered Item 13-01 by the action taken on Item 13-02. See pp. 65, 67.]

On the War in Afghanistan—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) to do the following:

1. Declare itself in opposition to further military operations by the United States in Afghanistan.
2. Call upon the United States government to engage in a responsible withdrawal plan, including
 - a. taking noncombative actions, and only those, in vigorous pursuit of stability, prosperity, and peace in Afghanistan and in the region;
 - b. cooperating with the United Nations and Afghanistan neighbors in the stabilization process;
 - c. cooperating with the United Nations in providing and overseeing greatly expanded aid to Afghanistan for the delivery of humanitarian services and economic development assistance.
3. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council, in conjunction with ecumenical partners, to take the following actions, where appropriate assigning responsibilities to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian Washington and UN Offices, or other entities, to
 - a. communicate to the United States president and Congress the position of this assembly as set forth in Recommendation 2 above;
 - b. urge the president and Congress to commit the United States government to the use of peaceful means for the making of peace and for the pursuit of national interests, concentrating upon diplomacy, international collaboration, and material aid for education, the reduction of poverty, and the broadening of political enfranchisement in Afghanistan and elsewhere;
 - c. encourage congregations and individual Presbyterians to pray for the people of Afghanistan and all fighting forces there, those on all sides who have been wounded and families who have lost loved ones, and to engage in advocacy and actions for peace;
 - d. call upon the United States government to provide adequate healthcare and rehabilitation, including psychiatric care, trauma therapy, and substance abuse programs for members and veterans of its armed forces;
 - e. ask the United States government to tabulate Afghanistan war casualties among all parties, civilian and military, and make a general inventory of destruction so that the human and material costs of the war may be assessed and the moral obligations of reconstruction and restitution be kept before the conscience of the nation;
 - f. provide congregations and presbyteries with materials appropriate for studying the effects of the present war in Afghanistan and of noncombative actions the United States might take in pursuit of the region's stability, prosperity, and peace;
 - g. direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to convene a seminary- and college-wide review of peace studies, including peacemaking opportunities appropriate to the need to demilitarize U.S. international relations, and to report the results of this study to the 221st General Assembly (2014); and
 - h. call for the federal government to make a public report on the spoils of war, asking to make transparent the contracts, figures, and contract duration involving American companies participating in the war efforts and its aftermath.

Rationale

To date none of the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has addressed the war in Afghanistan [which has been ongoing for more than eight years]. Consequently, not only has there been no directive to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to develop informational and study materials regarding the conflict, the voice of the church has been silent in a world anticipating its religious bodies to speak out. This overture brings the war in Afghanistan to the table of the 219th General Assembly (2010) for discussion and action. It is time for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be heard.

Afghanistan is frequently called the graveyard of empires. Today it has become an illustration of Jesus saying that those who take the sword will perish by the sword (Matt. 26:52). There is widespread opinion, in military as well as civilian circles,

that the war cannot be won on the battlefield. Whether any modern war can truly be won is debatable, but there is scant reason to think the United States can find military victory where so many empires of the past have failed.¹

The war being conducted in Afghanistan by United States forces does not have the support of most Afghans. Such support as there has been is declining.² This works to the long-range advantage of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, whose defeat is the apparent aim of the United States government. This war, like most, is counterproductive.

Although the war in Afghanistan is by no means the largest in recent times, its human costs are immense. At least 18,000 Afghans have been killed³ and tens of thousands more have been injured, mostly noncombatants since the U.S.-led international intervention began in 2001. As of late 2009, Operation Enduring Freedom, as it is called, had cost the United States some 800 fatalities plus more than 2,500 seriously wounded.⁴ There is also a rising and alarming rate of drug and alcohol usage by our fighting forces, doubtless a reaction to stress, and perhaps related to ambivalence about the mission they are being asked to pursue.⁵

The war's financial costs are also huge: more than \$273 billion, according to the Center for Defense Information.⁶ To bring about peace, stability, and the reduction of terrorism, such a sum would produce far better results if spent on goods and services of benefit to the people of Afghanistan and its neighbors: education, health care, economic development, food security, poverty reduction, and the like. The Rand Corporation has determined that political work, local law enforcement, and peacekeeping would be more effective than increases in military force.⁷

The current situation in Afghanistan provides an opportunity to shift American resources and strategy in a far more productive direction than at present. It is too costly and breeds too much resentment. The long-range interests of the United States require less reliance on military strategies for spreading democracy, reducing terrorism, and providing for our own safety. The root of war, especially in our time, is injustice, usually expressed as severe economic inequity. Hunger and desperation do not nourish peace.

Jesus' warning that one cannot serve two masters is highly relevant in international affairs. A nation cannot pursue peace while waging war, nor justice through militarism. The centuries-long attempt by many churches and Christians to justify war as a strategy of peace is coming apart in our time. Wars such as the one in Afghanistan increasingly result in the rape and killing of civilians, the destruction of their homes, and the devastation of lands, economies, and social structures.

The gospel of and about Jesus Christ is a gospel of peace and peacemaking. There is no more appropriate time for a church to proclaim the peace of Christ and to pursue its mandates than when a country and its government are pursuing the horrors and futility of a misbegotten war.

It is not the province of a church to devise a template of government strategies; we are not a political party. But it is our responsibility to call the nation and the world to the way of peace and to resist the logic of war. That is at the heart of the biblical vision and the gospel of Christ. "For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength (1 Cor. 1:25, NRSV).

Endnotes

1. Powerful armies that met defeat in Afghanistan include those of Alexander the Great in the 4th Century BCE, the British in the 19th Century CE, and the Soviet Union in the 20th.

2. ABC News/BBC/ARD National Survey of Afghanistan, ANALYSIS by GARY LANGER, Feb. 9, 2009. "In 2005 ... 83 percent of Afghans expressed a favorable opinion of the United States—unheard of in a Muslim nation. Today just 47 percent still hold that view, down 36 points, accelerating with an 18-point drop in U.S. favorability this year alone." URL: <http://abcnews.go.com/PollingUnit/story?id=6787686&page=1>

3. United for Peace and Justice, Fact Sheet #1, online at <http://unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=4019>

4. See: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>

5. "... figures shows that by the end 2005 of the 104,000 who had sought medical help after serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 32,010 were suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, depression, drug addiction, or alcoholism. ... Proportionally, that's three times as many as those who returned from Vietnam. ... A Pentagon health study found that the rate of binge drinking in the Army shot up by 30 percent from 2002 to 2005 and, they concluded, that it may signal an increasing pattern of heavy alcohol use in the Army. ... 3,057 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were diagnosed with potential drug dependency from 2005 to 2007, according the Veteran Health Authority. From 2002 through 2004 only 277 veterans were diagnosed with a drug dependency." Center on Conscience and War, *Reporter*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (2009), p. 3.

6. Precise figures are not available. According to the Congressional Research service, almost \$143 billion had been appropriated for Operation Enduring Freedom by the end of 2008. OEF principally refers to Afghanistan, while including some operations in the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, and "elsewhere." See the Center for Defense Information, <http://www.cdi.org/friendlyversion/printversion.cfm?documentID=4072>.

Outlays increased considerably with the increase in troop strength in 2009, although the amount is not available at the date of writing this overture. In May 2009, the Department of Defense announced that in 2010 the cost of running the war in Afghanistan would exceed the cost of the conflict in Iraq. It requested \$130 billion for “overseas contingency operations,” mostly for Afghanistan. See “Sign of the Times: Afghanistan War Costs Higher Than Iraq,” By Nathan Hodge, May 7, 2009. URL: <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/05/sign-of-the-times-afghanistan-war-costs-higher-than-iraq/>

Taken together, these figures suggest that the cost of waging war in Afghanistan has been at least \$273 billion, not counting whatever was spent in 2009.

7. United for Peace and Justice Fact Sheet #1, online at <http://unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=4019>

Concurrence to Item 13-01 from the Presbyteries of Baltimore and New York City.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 13-01 calls for the 219th General Assembly (2010) to take a series of actions related to the war in Afghanistan.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 13-01 be answered by the General Assembly’s action regarding Item 13-02, and that recommendation 3g be answered by its action on Item 13-11.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns supports this and all resolutions requesting support for peacemaking, as women civilians always find themselves in the most vulnerable position in situations of violence and war. The ACWC would draw particular attention to this fact, and recommend that any and all future resolutions and reports written in response to violence and war around the globe incorporate information on the particularly precarious situation of women in these contexts. Citing a concern from the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (adopted in 2000), ACWC notes that amongst civilians, women and children “account for the vast majority of those affected by armed conflict.”¹

Further, ACWC would encourage future reports and resolutions to include an affirmation of the essential role that women play in peacemaking, in much the same way that the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 cites the importance of

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.²

Unfortunately, this and all other resolutions to the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding war, violence, and a call for peace have left out the particular plight and specific gifts of the women in these various situations. All of the resolutions also fail to highlight the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence, particularly rape used as a weapon of war, another specific point made by the UN Security Resolution 1325.³ Given the pervasiveness of this atrocity, it must not be left out of any report on war and violence.

The ACWC encourages those writing future resolutions to incorporate these essential points in order to capture a more comprehensive understanding of war, violence, and peacemaking processes that includes the experiences of women.

Endnotes

1. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). (http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf).
2. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). (http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf).
3. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). (http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf).

Item 13-02

[The assembly approved Item 13-02 with amendment. See pp. 65, 66–67.]

On the War in Afghanistan—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

[We of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have deep appreciation for the patriotic loyalty of our nation's citizens and service personnel for the extreme sacrifice they paid and will continue to pay to support our effort to achieve peace and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to protect the citizens of our nation. However, we believe further sacrifices and services will not serve the purposes for which we have been engaged. Therefore, the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010)]

1. Call upon the United States government to

a. ~~[take only non-combat actions in vigorous pursuit of]~~ [pursue non-combat actions that will support] stability, prosperity, and peace in Afghanistan and ~~[in]~~ the [surrounding] region;

[b. cease direct combat operations, except those to protect coalition troops remaining, Afghani security force troops, and humanitarian efforts;]

~~[b-]~~ [c.] cooperate with the United Nations and the neighbors of Afghanistan in the stabilization process;

~~[e-]~~ [d.] cooperate with the United Nations in providing and overseeing greatly expanded aid to Afghanistan for the delivery of humanitarian and economic development assistance;

[e. engage directly with and among the Afghani people in a process of peacemaking by¹

[(1) creating a multilevel, participatory, consensus building process that seeks input from every sector and level of society and does not exclude from participation any group of stakeholders;

[(2) building a broad base of civil support that makes peacemaking cost-effective;

[(3) engaging in a public process involving consultation with leaders of civil society, a representative process, and open media communication among the populace;

[(4) incentivizing peace by focusing on security, economic stability and justice, political access and participation, and identity associated with territory through both culturally identified internal and external incentives;

[(5) practicing consistent and intensive diplomatic engagement at multiple levels that is culturally knowledgeable and sensitive, language fluent, and skilled in mediation; and

[(6) allocating resources that link mediation with implementation.]

2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to take the following actions in collaboration with ecumenical partners and, where appropriate, asking the General Assembly Mission Council to assign responsibilities to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian Washington and UN Offices, or other entities of the General Assembly Mission Council:

a. communicate to the United States president and Congress ~~[the position of this General Assembly as set forth in Recommendation 1. Above]~~ [that the PC(USA) opposes the war in Afghanistan]

b. further urge the president of the United States and Congress to commit the U.S. government to the use of peaceful means in the pursuit of national interests, concentrating upon diplomacy, international collaboration, [inter-faith dialogue,] material aid for education, reduction of poverty, and the broadening of political enfranchisement in Afghanistan ~~[and elsewhere];~~"

c. encourage congregations and individual Presbyterians to pray for the people of Afghanistan and all fighting forces there—particularly those who have been wounded or who have lost loved ones—and to engage in advocacy and actions for peace;

[d. encourage congregations and individual Presbyterians to pray for the people who lost loved ones in the attacks of September 11, 2001, and to pray for those first responders and volunteers who are ill as a result of their service and dedication.]

~~[d-]~~ [e.] call upon the United States government to provide adequate healthcare and rehabilitation, including psychiatric care, trauma therapy, and substance abuse programs for members and veterans of its armed forces;

~~[e-]~~ [f.] ask the United States government to tabulate Afghanistan war casualties among all parties, civilian and military, and make a general inventory of destruction so that the human and material costs of the war may be assessed and the moral obligations of reconstruction and restitution be kept before the conscience of the nation;

~~[f-]~~ [g.] provide congregations and presbyteries with materials appropriate for studying the effects of the present war in Afghanistan and of non-combative actions the United States might take in pursuit of the region's stability, prosperity, and peace;

~~[g-]~~ [h.] ~~[direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to convene a seminary and college wide review of peace studies, including peacemaking opportunities focusing on the need to demilitarize U.S. international relations, and to report the results of this study to the 221st General Assembly (2014)]~~ [recognize the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence as a weapon of war and affirm the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stress the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution].

Rationale

Afghanistan is frequently called “the graveyard of empires” (see Milton Bearden, Council on Foreign Relations, “Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires,” November/December 2001). Today it has become an illustration of Jesus’ saying that “... all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Mt. 26:52). There is widespread opinion, in military as well as civilian circles, that the war cannot be won on the battlefield.²

The war being conducted in Afghanistan as a NATO operation with major participation by United States forces does not have the support of most Afghans and such support as there has been is declining.³ This works to the long-range advantage of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, whose defeat is the apparent aim of the United States government. Thus, the war is becoming counterproductive to U.S. interests.

Although the war in Afghanistan is by no means the largest in recent times, its human costs are immense. At least 18,000 Afghans have been killed⁴ and tens of thousands more have been injured—mostly noncombatants—since the U.S.-led international intervention began in 2001. As of late 2009, Operation Enduring Freedom, as it is called, had cost the United States some 933 fatalities plus more than 2,500 seriously wounded.⁵ There is also a rising and alarming rate of drug and alcohol usage by our fighting forces, doubtless a reaction to stress.⁶

The war’s financial costs are also huge: more than \$287 billion, according to the Center for Defense Information.⁷ To bring about peace, stability, and the reduction of terrorism, such a sum would produce far better results if spent on goods and services of benefit to the people of Afghanistan and its neighbors through education, health care, economic development, food security, poverty reduction, and the like. The Rand Corporation has determined “... that political, local law enforcement, and peacekeeping solutions are a more effective alternative to increases in foreign military force.”⁸

The current situation in Afghanistan provides an opportunity to shift American resources and strategy in a far more productive direction than at present. The present war is too costly and breeds too much resentment. The long-range interests of the United States require less reliance on military strategies for spreading democracy, reducing terrorism, and providing for our own safety. The roots of war, especially in our time, are injustice and severe economic inequity. Hunger and desperation do not nourish peace.

Jesus’ warning that one cannot serve two masters is highly relevant in international affairs. A nation cannot pursue peace while waging war, nor justice through militarism. Wars such as the one in Afghanistan increasingly result in the rape and killing of civilians, the destruction of their homes, and the devastation of lands, economies, and social structures.

The gospel of and about Jesus Christ is a gospel of peace and peacemaking. There is no more appropriate time for a church to proclaim the peace of Christ and to pursue its mandates than when a country and its government are pursuing the horrors and futility of a misbegotten war. It is not the province of a church to devise a template of government strategies; we are not a political party. But it is our responsibility to call the nation and the world to the way of peace and to resist the logic of war. That is at the heart of the biblical vision and the gospel of Christ. “For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength” (1 Cor. 1:25).

Endnotes

[1. These principles are modified from the 3D Security Initiative: Development, Diplomacy, Defense; Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University.]

2. Powerful armies that met defeat in Afghanistan include those of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE, the British in the nineteenth century CE, and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century.
3. Gary Langer, "Frustration with Way, Problems in Daily Life Send Afghan Support for U.S. Efforts Tumbling," ABC News/BBC/ARD National Survey of Afghanistan, Feb. 9, 2009. "In 2005 ... 83 percent of Afghans expressed a favorable opinion of the United States—unheard of in a Muslim nation. Today just 47 percent still hold that view, down 36 points, accelerating with an 18-point drop in U.S. favorability this year alone." <<http://abcnews.go.com/PollingUnit/story?id=6787686&page=1>>.
4. "United for Peace and Justice, Fact Sheet #1", <<http://unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=4019>>.
5. See Department of Defense updated statistics at <<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>>.
6. "... figures [show] that by the end 2005, of the 104,000 who had sought medical help after serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 32,010 were suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, depression, drug addiction, or alcoholism... Proportionally, that's three times as many as those who returned from Vietnam.... A Pentagon health study found that the rate of binge drinking in the Army shot up by 30 percent from 2002 to 2005, and, they concluded, that 'may signal an increasing pattern of heavy alcohol use in the Army.' ... 3,057 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were diagnosed with potential drug dependency from 2005 to 2007, according [to] the Veteran Health Authority. From 2002 through 2004 only 277 veterans were diagnosed with a drug dependency." Matt Kennard, "Drug Abuse and Alcoholism Rises within Military," *Reporter for Conscience's Sake* from the Center on Conscience & War, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Summer 2009), p. 2.
7. While precise figures are not available for the cost of the Afghan War, according to Congressional Research Services, over \$157 billion had been appropriated for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) by the end of 2008. OEF principally refers to Afghanistan, and includes some operations in the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, and "elsewhere." For more information, check with the Center for Defense Information, <<http://www.cdi.org/friendlyversion/printversion.cfm?documentID=4072>>.

Outlays increased considerably with the increase in troop strength in 2009, although the amount is not available at the date of writing this overture. In May, 2009, the Department of Defense announced that in 2010 the cost of running the war in Afghanistan would exceed the cost of the conflict in Iraq. It requested \$130 billion for "overseas contingency operations," mostly for Afghanistan. See Nathan Hodge, "Sign of the Times: Afghanistan War Costs Higher than Iraq," *Wired*, May 7, 2009, <<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/05/sign-of-the-times-afghanistan-war-costs-higher-than-iraq/>>.

Taken together, these figures suggest that the cost of waging war in Afghanistan has been at least \$287 billion and climbing.

8. "United for Peace and Justice Fact Sheet #1," <<http://unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=4019>>.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 13-02, Recommendation 2.g. be answered by its action on Item 13-11, and that with that exception, Item 13-02 be approved with the following addition to Recommendation 1: [Text to be added is shown in brackets and an underline.]

"[d. engage directly with and among the Afghani people in a process of peacemaking by¹

"[(1) _____ creating a multilevel, participatory, consensus building process that seeks input from every sector and level of society and does not exclude from participation any group of stakeholders;

"[(2) _____ building a broad base of civil support that makes peacemaking cost-effective;

"[(3) _____ engaging in a public process involving consultation with leaders of civil society, a representative process, and open media communication among the populace;

"[(4) _____ incentivizing peace by focusing on security, economic stability and justice, political access and participation, and identity associated with territory through both culturally identified internal and external incentives;

"[(5) _____ practicing consistent and intensive diplomatic engagement at multiple levels that is culturally knowledgeable and sensitive, language fluent, and skilled in mediation; and

"[(6) _____ allocating resources that link mediation with implementation.]"

Rationale

The process of establishing a stable peace in a nation or region requires the coordinated and comprehensive, direct, open, and genuine engagement of all the people or groups of stakeholders. Peacemaking is a process that must be built methodically and comprehensively in a manner that is culturally knowledgeable and sensitive, adequately resourced, and committed for

the duration of the process. Item 13-02 requires greater methodological specificity in its peacemaking process that acknowledges the necessity of buy-in and participation by the Afghani people as a whole and groups of stakeholders within that nation.

As of early May 2010, there are indications that some level of negotiation with the Taliban is being considered by both US and Afghan government representatives. Very little continued presence of Al Qaeda is assumed to exist but Taliban forces return to most areas after US forces leave the area. Considerable moral debate is growing over the use of unmanned drones to target bombs on alleged terrorists, partly as it can be a form of assassination, and partly because collateral damage—civilian deaths—is counter-productive. The principles ACSWP recommends adding would involve internationalizing a peace process and shifting some international roles to the United Nations from NATO, many of whose European governments have effectively withdrawn support for the venture. At the same time, we recognize the concern of those who focus on the legitimacy of the government of President Karzai, given both election fraud and persistent corruption. Those who favor the reconstruction approach point to many more children, including girls, in school and some success at building infrastructure. Others feel there is a growing partnership with Pakistan that is weakening Taliban and other resistance groups.

In light of nine years of Soviet occupation in the past, and the nine year campaign of the US and NATO forces (thus far), the overtures under consideration seem wise in their overall critique of an overly-military dependent approach. Whether cultural and religious barriers can in fact be surmounted at this time remains an open question, answered in the negative by hard-liners of various kinds. Thus there is a realism as well as idealism in the overture's plan (which bears some similarities to House Resolution 11, calling for more rapid withdrawal of combat forces).

Endnote

[1. These principles are modified from the 3D Security Initiative: Development, Diplomacy, Defense; Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University.]

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC's rationale for Item 13-01.

Item 13-03

[The assembly answered Item 13-03 by the action taken on Item 13-02. See pp. 65, 67.]

On the War in Afghanistan—From the Presbytery of Scioto Valley.

The Presbytery of Scioto Valley overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Declare itself in opposition to the further pursuit of a military solution to the situation in Afghanistan.
2. Call upon the United States government to:
 - a. cease active combat operations, except those to protect soldiers, and only pursue non-combative actions in vigorous pursuit of stability, prosperity, and peace in Afghanistan and the region;
 - b. work with the Afghanistan government and other appropriate governments to stabilize the area and provide for humanitarian aid and economic development of Afghanistan;
 - c. cooperate with the United Nations in providing and overseeing greatly expanded aid to Afghanistan for the delivery of humanitarian services and economic development assistance.
3. Direct the Stated Clerk, through the Office of the General Assembly and in conjunction with ecumenical partners, to take the following actions, where appropriate working with the General Assembly Mission Council to assign responsibilities to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian Washington and UN Offices, or other entities of the General Assembly Mission Council:

- a. communicate to the United States president and Congress the position of this assembly as set forth in Recommendation 2 above;
- b. further urge the president and Congress to commit the United States government to use of peaceful means for security and the pursuit of national interests, concentrating upon diplomacy, international collaboration, and material aid for education, the reduction of poverty, and political enfranchisement in Afghanistan and elsewhere;
- c. encourage congregations and individual Presbyterians to pray for all people in Afghanistan, particularly those who are serving in the military, those who have been wounded, or who have lost loved ones; and to engage in advocacy and actions for peace;
- d. call upon the United States government to provide adequate healthcare and rehabilitation, including psychiatric care, trauma therapy, and substance abuse programs for members and veterans of its armed forces;
- e. ask the United States government to tabulate Afghanistan war casualties among all parties, civilian and military, and make a general inventory of destruction so that the human and material costs of the war may be assessed;
- f. provide congregations and presbyteries with materials appropriate for studying the effects of the present war in Afghanistan and of non-combative actions the United States might take in pursuit of the region's stability, prosperity, and peace;
- g. and direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to convene a seminary- and college-wide review of peace studies in order to understand more about peacemaking opportunities appropriate to the need to demilitarize U.S. international relations, and to report the results of this study to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

Rationale

The gospel of and about Jesus Christ is a gospel of peace and peacemaking. There is no more appropriate time for a church to proclaim the peace of Christ and to pursue its mandates than when a country and its government are pursuing the horrors and futility of a misbegotten war.

Jesus' warning that one cannot serve two masters is highly relevant in international affairs. A nation cannot pursue peace while waging war, nor justice through militarism. The centuries-long attempt by many churches and Christians to justify war as a strategy of peace is coming apart in our time. Wars such as the one in Afghanistan increasingly result in the rape and killing of civilians, the destruction of their homes, and the devastation of lands, economies, and social structures.

Afghanistan is frequently called "the graveyard of empires" (see Milton Bearden, Council on Foreign Relations, "Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires," November/December 2001). Today it has become an illustration of Jesus' saying that "... 'all who take the sword will perish by the sword'" (Mt. 26:52). There is widespread opinion, in military as well as civilian circles, that the war cannot be won on the battlefield. Whether any modern war can truly be won is debatable, but there is scant reason to think the United States can find military victory where so many empires of the past have failed.¹

The war being conducted in Afghanistan by United States forces does not have the support of most Afghans. Such support as there has been is declining.² This works to the long-range advantage of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, whose defeat is the apparent aim of the United States government. This war, like most, is counterproductive.

Although the war in Afghanistan is by no means the largest in recent times, its human costs are immense. At least 18,000 Afghans have been killed³ and tens of thousands more have been injured—mostly non-combatants—since the U.S.-led international intervention began in 2001. As of late 2009, Operation Enduring Freedom, as it is called, had cost the United States some 933 fatalities plus more than 2,500 seriously wounded.⁴ There is also a rising and alarming rate of drug and alcohol usage by our fighting forces, doubtless a reaction to stress, and perhaps related to ambivalence about the mission they are being asked to pursue.⁵ Furthermore, there is widespread corruption among Afghan leaders, often related to the opium trade; and the August 2009 election was marred by considerable voting fraud. The use of unmanned drones by the United States has accounted for many civilian casualties and has led to increased resentment among Afghans.

The war's financial costs are also huge: more than \$273 billion, according to the Center for Defense Information.⁶ To bring about peace, stability, and the reduction of terrorism, such a sum would produce far better results if spent on goods and services of benefit to the people of Afghanistan and its neighbors: education, health care, economic development, food security, poverty reduction, and the like. The Rand Corporation has determined "... that political work, local law enforcement, and peacekeeping are a more effective alternative to increases in foreign military force."⁷

The current situation in Afghanistan provides an opportunity to shift American resources and strategy in a far more productive direction than at present. War is too costly and breeds too much resentment. The long-range interests of the United States require less reliance on military strategies for spreading democracy, reducing terrorism, and providing for our own

safety. The root of war, especially in our time, is injustice, usually expressed as severe economic inequity. Hunger and desperation do not nourish peace.

It is not the province of a church to devise a template of government strategies; we are not a political party. But it is our responsibility to call the nation and the world to the way of peace and to resist the logic of war. That is at the heart of the biblical vision and the gospel of Christ. “For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength” (1 Cor. 1:25).

Endnotes

1. Powerful armies that met defeat in Afghanistan include those of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE, the British in the nineteenth century CE, and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century.
2. Gary Langer, “Frustration with Way, Problems in Daily Life Send Afghan Support for U.S. Efforts Tumbling,” ABC News/BBC/ARD National Survey of Afghanistan, Feb. 9, 2009. “In 2005 ... 83 percent of Afghans expressed a favorable opinion of the United States—unheard of in a Muslim nation. Today just 47 percent still hold that view, down 36 points, accelerating with an 18-point drop in U.S. favorability this year alone,” <<http://abcnews.go.com/PollingUnit/story?id=6787686&page=1>>.
3. “United for Peace and Justice, Fact Sheet #1,” <<http://unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=4019>>.
4. See Department of Defense updated statistics at <<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>>.
5. “... figures [show] that by the end 2005, of the 104,000 who had sought medical help after serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 32,010 were suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, depression, drug addiction, or alcoholism... Proportionally, that’s three times as many as those who returned from Vietnam.... A Pentagon health study found that the rate of binge drinking in the Army shot up by 30 percent from 2002 to 2005, and, they concluded, that ‘may signal an increasing pattern of heavy alcohol use in the Army.’ ... 3,057 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were diagnosed with potential drug dependency from 2005 to 2007, according [to] the Veteran Health Authority. From 2002 through 2004 only 277 veterans were diagnosed with a drug dependency.” Matt Kennard, “Drug Abuse and Alcoholism Rises within Military,” *Reporter for Conscience’s Sake* from the Center on Conscience & War, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Summer 2009), p. 2.
6. While precise figures are not available for the cost of the Afghan War, according to Congressional Research Services, over \$157 billion had been appropriated for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) by the end of 2008. OEF principally refers to Afghanistan, and includes some operations in the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, and “elsewhere.” For more information, check with the Center for Defense Information, <<http://www.cdi.org/friendlyversion/printversion.cfm?documentID=4072>>.

Outlays increased considerably with the increase in troop strength in 2009, although the amount is not available at the date of writing this overture. In May, 2009, the Department of Defense announced that in 2010 the cost of running the war in Afghanistan would exceed the cost of the conflict in Iraq. It requested \$130 billion for “overseas contingency operations,” mostly for Afghanistan. See Nathan Hodge, “Sign of the Times: Afghanistan War Costs Higher than Iraq,” *Wired*, May 7, 2009, <<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/05/sign-of-the-times-afghanistan-war-costs-higher-than-iraq/>>.

Taken together, these figures suggest that the cost of waging war in Afghanistan has been at least \$287 billion and climbing.

7. “United for Peace and Justice Fact Sheet #1,” <<http://unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=4019>>.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 13-03 calls for the 219th General Assembly (2010) to take a series of actions related to the war in Afghanistan.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 13-03 be answered by the its action on Item 13-02, and that recommendation 3g be answered by its action on Item 13-11. A more comprehensive discussion may be found in the Advice and Counsel on those items, 13-02 and 13-11.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 13-01.

Item 13-04

[The assembly approved Item 13-04 with amendment. See pp. 65–66]

On Partnering for Peace in Sudan—From the Presbytery of Trinity.

The Presbytery of Trinity overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) to show that working toward a just and lasting peace for all of Sudan is a high priority in keeping with the Great Ends of the Church (*Book of Order*, G-1.0200) by approving the following objectives:

1. Support intercessory prayer and advocacy by the churches regarding (a) renewed international commitment to the full and timely implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 (CPA), including international protection in Southern Sudan for the referendum on whether to secede; (b) increased private investment for the economic development of Southern Sudan and other areas affected by conflict; (c) increased development assistance by the United States government, including assistance in restoring security for the citizens of Southern Sudan and other areas affected by violence and proliferation of arms; and (d) renewed efforts by all parties to end hostilities in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan, including full access by humanitarian organizations to provide care and resettlement assistance to refugees and the internally displaced, all for the purposes of the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God and the promotion of social righteousness.”

2. Support the formation of new covenant-based partnerships by PC(USA) presbyteries with presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS) or the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC), making arrangements through the PC(USA) [~~Sudan Mission Network~~] [General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), World Mission ministry area], with presbyteries reporting results to the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council by July 1, 2011, for review by the General Assembly Mission Council and thereafter, publication on appropriate web sites, all for the purposes of the proclamation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of humankind, the preservation of the truth, and the maintenance of divine worship.

3. Designate, after consultation with other interested denominations, a period of several weeks in 2010 as an ecumenical “Season of Prayer for Peace in Sudan,” urging the churches to include prayers for peace in Sudan in regular worship services, culminating in a “National Day of Prayer for Peace in Sudan,” including the celebration of partnering relationships by PC(USA) presbyteries with PCOS and SPEC for the purpose of the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Rationale

The CPA was executed on January 9, 2005, after years of persistence by international negotiating teams in the face of resistance by the government of Sudan, thereby establishing a Government of National Unity (GONU) for an interim period of six years during which Southern Sudan is at once a participant in the GONU and semi-autonomously governed.

The CPA set deadlines for a national census, elections based on the census results, and, at the end of the Interim Period (i.e. January 9, 2011), a referendum for self-determination for the people of Southern Sudan. However, the census results are in dispute, the date for elections has been postponed twice, and adoption of a referendum law is still pending, in large part due to continual undermining, manipulations, and delays imposed by the GONU’s majority party based in Khartoum; as a result, the CPA, the best hope ever for improved governance in Sudan, is in imminent danger of failure.

The Sudan Council of Churches, at its 17th General Assembly in 2009, made an urgent appeal to all parties to the CPA to reinvigorate their efforts and fulfill commitments agreed to in the CPA.

We, who have been richly blessed, have connections and resources to pray for our brothers and sisters in Sudan and advocate on their behalf with our government, and also to partner with them, presbytery to presbytery, accompanying them as they labor to rebuild their lives and communities and integrate returnees.

The time has come to expand the number, commitment, and scope of our partnerships with Presbyterians in Sudan to assuage the acute needs they are experiencing in the ongoing process of governmental transition and regional reconstruction.

To the extent that peace and reconciliation in Sudan has been achieved, it is due to God’s mercy and the ecumenical Church in Sudan, the voice for the voiceless, which works through community-based networks to advocate for the advancement of civil society.

The Church in Sudan, though mighty in faith, faces tremendous challenges, including limited resources and lack of security to engage in capacity building as it seeks to educate people who never before have participated in an election process. Thus an ecumenical “Season of Prayer for Peace in Sudan” as an exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world will be a special encouragement to the Church in Sudan, in particular, our sister denominations the PCOS and SPEC.

Similar resolutions to the objectives stated hereinabove were adopted by The Episcopal Church at its 76th Convention, July 8–14, 2009.

Concurrence to Item 13-04 from the Presbyteries of Foothills, Greater Atlanta, Middle Tennessee, Northern Kansas, Redstone, Scioto Valley, Shenango, Sheppards and Lapsley, and West Virginia.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 13-04 be approved with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through, text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“1. Support intercessory prayer and advocacy by the churches regarding (a) renewed international commitment to the full and timely implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 (CPA) [including international protection in Southern Sudan for the referendum on whether to secede, scheduled for January 2011]; (b) increased private investment ...

“2. Support the formation of new covenant-based partnerships by PC(USA) presbyteries with presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS) or the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC), making arrangements through the PC(USA) [~~Sudan Mission Network~~] [World Mission ministry area of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC)], with presbyteries reporting results to the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) by July 1, 2011....”

Rationale

Over the past seventeen years, the General Assembly has repeatedly approved PC(USA) statements seeking to achieve peace in Sudan. These actions include:

Commissioners' Resolution 93-15, On Expressing Concern for the People of Sudan (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 938–9)

Commissioners' Resolution 94-6, On the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Supporting Mission Efforts in the Sudan (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, pp. 70–74, 570–3)

Overture 97-75, On the Situation in the Sudan and Our Response to That Situation—From the Presbytery of Shenango (*Minutes*, 1997, Part I, p. 721)

Commissioners' Resolution 01-12. On the Civil War in Sudan (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 491–2)

2006 Item 11-28, On Supporting the Peace Process in Sudan—From the Presbyteries of the Trinity and Shenango (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 1002–6).

Prayer and advocacy are important expressions of church witness and they should be reaffirmed in the case of Sudan. In view of the limited progress towards peace that these actions have achieved to date, and the danger of renewed large scale warfare involved in potentially dividing the country, it is appropriate to experiment with more direct demonstrations of solidarity with fellow Presbyterians in the Sudan such as the presbytery partnerships now proposed, and to share the results with interested parties.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) affirms the work of the Sudan Mission Network (SMN) in keeping issues regarding Sudan before the church. However, given the complexity of the issues in the Sudan region, ACSWP believes the World Mission ministry area of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) is the most appropriate entity to facilitate partnerships between the PC(USA) presbyteries and our Sudan partner churches.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 13-04 be approved.

Rationale

The ACREC concurs with the item and acknowledges the need to support the people of Sudan towards a resolution of hostilities and reconciliation of all the children of God and peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims in one land.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 13-01.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 13-04

Comment on Item 13-04—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

World Mission welcomes this overture that again brings to the attention of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) the need for us to walk with our sisters and brothers in Sudan—particularly those of our two partner churches: the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS) and the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC)—as they face the continuing challenges within their country. This overture highlights the important concerns that the PC(USA) has had as we have listened to our partners in Sudan. It is of particular concern at this time as we approach the end of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that brings to the people a referendum to decide the future of Sudan. Voting on this referendum has the potential of resulting in increased conflict thereby further disrupting the opportunities for development of the country and peace for her people.

World Mission concurs with the three points of the overture, and adds the following comments for completion and clarification.

1. The call for prayer and advocacy is in line with previous actions of the PC(USA) General Assemblies. Statements such as this are bound by the time in which they are written. With the volatile situation in Sudan, it is important to hear what further needs for prayer and advocacy may have developed that may not have been captured in this overture. An example of this is the need to encourage the U.S. Government to advocate for the provision of security and effective monitoring to ensure a free, fair, and peaceful referendum voting process.

2. World Mission understands the interest expressed by this point to increase the number of presbyteries in the PC(USA) that are in partnership with PC(USA) partners in Sudan. The Sudan Mission Network does serve an important role as we join together in ministry with our partners in Sudan. In terms of the language of “making arrangements through the Sudan Mission Network,” this point seeks to connect other Presbyterians to Sudan. The Sudan Mission Network is a good place to do this. However, the work of facilitating partnerships between PC(USA) presbyteries and our partner churches in Sudan has historically, and continues to be the work of World Mission, which has developed much experience and expertise in this area. The people of the Sudan Mission Network serve well to strengthen our work and ability to engage in effective and faithful witness as we join together in communities of mission practice.

3. A period of prayer for Sudan highlights the grave nature of the situation in Sudan. The culmination in a day of prayer will draw people to a new awareness. We welcome the celebration of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministry in Sudan, which dates from 1900, and encompasses the commitment of PC(USA) mission personnel who have given themselves to the people of Sudan, as well as the many Presbyterians, congregations, presbyteries, and GAMC staff who have responded to God’s call to bring God’s perfect peace to the people of Sudan.

Item 13-05

[The assembly approved Item 13-05 with amendment. See pp. 65, 71.]

On ~~[Protecting Christians in the Muslim World]~~ **[the Protection of Religious Minorities]**—From the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.

The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010), through its proper offices singly, or in conjunction with other denominations and faiths, through our appeal to them, to jointly encourage the United Nations to use its valuable influence, and through its diplomatic channels, to exhort the religious and political leaders of ~~[Muslim nations]~~ **[nations with Christian and other religious minorities]** to moderate extreme behavior and protect its religious minorities from such harm, and encourage **[mutual respect and forbearance]** ~~[brotherly harmony between each other]~~.

Rationale

There is a significant population of Christians in the Muslim world with Pakistan, alone, having a minority population of some 3 percent of its total, and almost three million being fellow Presbyterians. The Peacemaking Committee of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia has been in constant contact with the Executive Office of the Presbyterian Church in Pakistan, as the result of recent interfaith efforts with them, we have learned through their correspondence, and through a recent news release by the United Methodist Church, of violent attacks on Christians in the village of Gojra near Faisalabad, a nearby major city, in which 9 persons were killed, some 175 injured, and more than 100 homes looted and destroyed, as well as many other such acts that have been regularly confirmed by world news agencies.

There are also examples of unfairly enforced violations of Islamic law on religious minorities in the country, such as a young Christian man, accused of violating their Blasphemy Laws, being murdered while in jail, awaiting trial in which the police claimed his death was a suicide, though circumstances suggest otherwise.

Sister and brother Christians, as well as other religious minorities, have been subjected to persecution, bodily harm, and property deprivation by extreme elements of Muslim world, specifically including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The above knowledge came from the testimony of our fellow Pakistani Presbyterians, as well as our friends, the United Methodists.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 13-05 with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strikethrough; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

1. Revise the title to read, “On Protecting Christians [~~in the Muslim World~~] [and Other Religious Minorities in Pakistan].”
2. “The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010), through its proper offices singly, or in conjunction with other denominations and faiths, through our appeal to them, to jointly encourage the United Nations to use its valuable influence, and through its diplomatic channels, [~~to exhort the religious and political leaders of Muslim nations to moderate extreme behavior and protect its religious minorities from such harm, and encourage brotherly harmony between each other~~][to urge the religious and political leaders of Pakistan to protect all its religious minorities from harm].”

Rationale

This will make the recommendation consistent with the *Rationale*, which speaks only of Pakistan. The original wording makes an unnecessary sweeping statement about all nations where Muslims are the majority population.

The ACSWP further advises consideration of the following:

1. The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved Item 07-01, On Calling for Tolerance and Peaceful Relations Between the Christian and Muslim Communities, stating that “... though we hold differing understandings of how God has been revealed to humankind, the PC(USA) affirms that, as children of this loving God, we share the commandments of love for God and neighbor ...” and should work together to “... promote peace, resolve conflict; ensure human rights, prevent discrimination; develop dialogue, emphasize commonality; recognize differences, celebrate diversity; advocate justice, oppose bias...” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 507).
2. The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved item 07-07, On Peaceful Relations between Christian and Muslim Communities, that affirmed “... the PC(USA)’s commitment to and call for understanding, mutual respect, and peaceful relations between the Christian and Muslim communities...” and called for efforts to “... improve good relations between Presbyterians and Muslims at the level of national and international dialogue in order to promote peace, enhance mutual understanding, counteract bias and discrimination, recognize commonality, and celebrate diversity...” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 526).
3. The 214th General Assembly (2002) approved Item 14-03, Ecumenical Partnership: Human Rights and Religious Freedom Abroad, that encouraged congregations and presbyteries to use the “Guiding Principles for Ethical Decisions Concerning Religious Freedom Around the World” (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, pp. 666–669).

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 13-05 be disapproved.

Rationale

There is no context in this item for the situation of the Christians in Pakistan who have come to represent “The West” where they live. In all the countries mentioned, the U.S. has been at war in the area and any mention of this fact is glaringly absent. Christians have become a proxy representative of “The West” and even of America. The attacks on Christians are also an attack on the American presence and war in their region.

The call from this item only puts the Christian minorities in these countries at greater danger as it underlines the fact that these minorities do indeed have “guardian angels” in the West, which makes them unwelcome members of their own Eastern communities and turns them into outsiders.

Item 13-06

[The assembly answered Item 13-06 by the action taken on Item 13-11. See pp. 65, 69.]

On Entering a Six-Year Term of Discernment to Seek Clarity on Whether God Is Calling the Church to Embrace Nonviolence as Its Response to War and Terror—From the Presbytery of National Capital.

The Presbytery of National Capital respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to affirm the following actions:

1. To direct appropriate General Assembly Mission Council staff, and to call on all congregations to enter into a six-year “time of discernment” seeking clarity on whether God is calling the church, at this historic moment, to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to war and terror.

During this season of discernment, the entire church will be invited to study Scripture and the history of the Christian church’s response to violence, to engage in faithful direct action against violence, and to pray and labor with one another faithfully to develop a theology of nonviolence to guide it as it responds to the challenges of violence, terror, and war in the twenty-first century. Specific activities would include, but not be limited to, the following:

a. Call all Presbyterians to pray and study Scripture for guidance about how to respond faithfully to Jesus’ call to be peacemakers.

b. Direct the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to develop and identify appropriate resources for congregational study about the history of Christian responses to violence, and to disseminate those resources across the church.

c. Invite the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship to work collegially with and support the efforts of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and other General Assembly Mission Council programs as they carry out the directives of this overture.

d. Invite Presbyterian congregations into a time of study and reflection on root causes of violence and responses to violence that honor the gospel, the history of the church, and the movement of the Holy Spirit as Christ’s church attempts to live out His command to love its enemies.

e. Invite and equip individual congregations to respond through prayer, direct action, and advocacy to prevent and respond to violence on the local level (e.g., action and advocacy concerning gang violence, gun violence, family violence), the national level (e.g., action and advocacy on budget priorities, decisions about investments, concerns about the military-industrial complex and its effect on the lives of Christians), and the international level (e.g., action and advocacy on issues of war and peace).

2. To create a broadly representative national committee (appointed by the current Moderator in consultation with the two prior Moderators) to study the issue of nonviolence and report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly in 2014, allowing the entire church to reflect on their report before taking final action in 2016. The committee would be asked to pay particular attention to and bring forth recommendations on the following questions:

a. Is Just War Theory a relevant and faithful response to violence in our time?

- b. How are the denomination, judicatories, congregations, and members affected by U.S. participation in the military-industrial complex?
- c. What can we learn from the history of the use of principled nonviolence?
- d. In what ways might the church effectively reduce and even eliminate dependence on violence, military options, and war as a response to the challenges of this age?
- e. What are the implications for the church of embracing nonviolence in its responses to immediate and emergency situations of genocide and terrorism?
- f. How can the church most faithfully provide pastoral support to its members who are working in the U.S. military, in industries that support the military, or that benefit financially from a war economy?

Rationale

Christian Scripture is replete with examples of the gospel call to nonviolence:

- Jesus calls his disciples to love, pray for, and not retaliate against one's enemies (Matt. 5:38–48) and thus sets a guide line for living into the prophetic visions of a day when swords are beaten into plowshares and nations study war no more (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3).
- Peter, Paul, and the whole of the apostolic witness in Scripture explicitly call for Christians to adopt a new behavior toward those who do harm to them (Rom. 12:14–21; 1 Pet. 3:9–19; James 3:13–4:3).
- The presumption of the New Testament is that suffering for the faith is a material aspect of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ and not something to be dodged or otherwise avoided, but rather embraced (Mark 13:9–13; Matt. 10:17–21, 24:9–14; Luke 21:12–19). This presumption echoes the call of the Old Testament prophets to endure the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap (Mal. 3:2) along the path to justice and shalom.

The history of Christian responses to violence tells a compelling story of the initial embrace of the nonviolent witness of Jesus. From the withdrawal into the countryside of the first-century Jerusalem church in response to the invasion of its homeland (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.3) to the refusal of early Christians in Rome to engage in any violence because they trusted that their love for fellow citizens would point people to the new day dawning in Jesus Christ (Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 14.3; Origen, *Against Celsus*, 8.68, 75; Arnobius, *Against the Nations*, 1.6), the first Christians embraced and lived according to that nonviolent witness of Jesus.

Moreover, early Christian theologians asserted that the coming of the Messiah, taking with utmost seriousness the Hebrew prophets, Micah and Isaiah, had obviated the need for members of the beloved community to do anything other than beat their swords into plowshares when it came to matters of violence (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 110; Origen, *Against Celsus*, 5.33; Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, 5; cf. also Cyprian, *On the Advantage of Patience*, 14).

Indeed, there exists not a single affirmation of killing or war anywhere in the writings of the pastors and theologians of the early church, nor is there anywhere the idea that Christians making war would make the world a better or safer place. The early writings are replete with prohibitions against killing of any sort, some of which even carried the explicit sanction of forbidding admission to the Eucharist directed at persons engaged in such acts (*Canons of the Synod of Illiberis*, 56; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, Canon 16; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 6.20.16–17). The early Christians would not watch killings either by observing the carrying out of legal death sentences or by attending the gladiatorial games (Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 30.6, 31.6; Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians*, 35).

The history of the Christian response to violence changed abruptly in the fourth century. At that time the church took up arms on behalf of the Roman Empire, after being offered inducements and blandishments of money, property, and power. The change was such that while in 300 CE it was forbidden for Christians to serve in the military, by the middle of the next century *only* Christians were allowed to serve.

The Christian participation in the wars of the Roman Empire led to the establishment of the so-called Just War Doctrine or Theory, developed primarily by Bishop Augustine of Hippo. The Just War Theory established the ground rules under which a Christian might be understood to be acting morally when killing another human being.

Even Augustine, though believing that protecting the innocent made killing justifiable, nevertheless taught that a Christian killing in self-defense was immoral. After Augustine, the justification for killing on the part of Christians expanded to include self-defense and even further, to the killing of other Christians. This practice has continued until our own times.

The practice of granting exceptions and exclusions to the basic principles of the Just War Theory has resulted in an ever expanding re-definition of the concept of "just war." Each new exception becomes the new standard, which then gets broad-

dened to embrace the next exception. The result is that Just War now seems to mean that the government may do what it wants to do militarily, including the use of atomic weapons and the manufacturing of thousands of weapons of mass destruction. This happens in a country wherein the majority profess to be followers of Jesus Christ.

It has become ordinary for the country to stockpile thousands of nuclear weapons that have the capacity to destroy all life on the planet, with scarcely a ripple in the pews or a sound from the pulpits.

Nevertheless, the General Assembly has spoken consistently over the last thirty years about its opposition to war, particularly with the following actions:

- “Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling,” was adopted by the 192nd General Assembly (1980) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America
- Resolution on Just Peacemaking and the Call for International Intervention for Humanitarian Rescue approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- Resolution on Violence, Religion, and Terrorism approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- The endorsement of “... the research and development of a ‘global nonviolent peace force’ as recommended by the People’s Millennium Forum at the United Nations, May 2000, in order to create and maintain a highly trained group of active and reserve specialists in conflict resolution, nonviolent strategies, negotiation skills, civil social development, and confidence building” by the 213th General Assembly (2001). (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, p. 55)

The church must lead the nations of the world into a new understanding of how to respond to violence in our time. The church is called by the Scriptures to be a counter-cultural community, much like it was in its first three centuries, pointing the world to God’s coming reign in Jesus Christ as its only hope.

The mission of the church in any generation is to be found in “sharing with Christ in the establishing of his just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world” (G-3.0300c(3)(e)) “... even at the risk of losing its life, trusting in God alone as the author and giver of life, sharing the gospel, and doing those deeds in the world that point beyond themselves to the new reality in Christ” (G-3.0400).

Beyond the history of the church, two striking and contradictory twentieth century developments point increasingly toward the simple necessity of developing practical alternatives to violence:

1. Prior to World War I, civilian deaths were less than 10 percent of war casualties. In the wars of the latter part of the twentieth century, more than 90 percent of the casualties are civilians. This reversal undermines classic Just War Theory for the conduct of war. Just War Theory requires that acts of war be directed towards enemy combatants, and not towards non-combatants or civilians caught in circumstances they did not create. Actions that would be prohibited under classic Just War Theory include: bombing civilian residential areas that include no military targets, committing acts of terrorism, reprisals against ordinary civilians, and weapons that cause inordinate civilian casualties. Unfortunately changes in weapons and tactics in contemporary warfare make such actions common, and thus make fighting a so-called “just war” all but impossible.

2. At the same time, there is a growing and compelling history of successes in nonviolent resistance. From independence in India to the American Civil Rights Movement, from the “velvet revolution” in Eastern Europe to the Peace and Reconciliation work in post-Apartheid South Africa, there are examples of the use of nonviolence to produce massive, nonviolent change. This can inform the church as we struggle to find effective, nonviolent means of responding to crises in the world.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 13-06 be answered by action on Item 13-11. A more comprehensive Advice and Counsel from the ACSWP is found there.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 13-06

Comment on Item 13-06—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

Recommendation 1.b. “[d]irects the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to develop and identify appropriate resources for congregational study about the history of Christian responses to violence, and to disseminate those resources across the church” (Item 13-06).

The General Assembly Mission Council reminds the assembly that the GAMC is changing in response to trends in mission engagement and funding throughout the denomination. The focus of this ministry is to inspire, equip, and connect Presbyterians as they engage in ministry.

The GAMC is moving away from:

- creating offices at the denominational level to coordinate every area of specialized ministry, and
- producing PC(USA) resources where good resources exist from other sources.

This ministry focus for the GAMC is consistent with the available funding streams and the broad range of ministry support that Presbyterians expect.

We invite Presbyterians with a passion for specialized ministries to form ministry networks for collaboration and coordination. The PC(USA) Web site provides tools for these networks to form and for synergies to emerge. New features are being added to the Web site to improve that capability. These varied ministries are vital for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and we will continue to seek ways to foster connections and collaboration to join in expanding partnership in God's mission and to grow Christ's church deep and wide.

Item 13-07

[The assembly answered Item 13-07 by the action taken on Item 13-11. See pp. 65, 69.]

Twenty-first Century Peacemaking and Seminaries, Colleges, and Congregations—From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to work with the PC(USA)-related seminaries and colleges, ecumenical partners, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and through the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, World Mission, and any other appropriate units of the GAMC:

1. to investigate the possibility of instituting comprehensive study and education programs dealing with peacemaking, as described in *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling* and other related documents, and the twenty-first century challenges threatening or preventing peace, including:

a. the "wars" in which the United States has engaged, whether wars in the Middle East or in "the global war on terror" and "war on drugs," and how these affect the world-wide mission of the PC(USA) and efforts to promote peacemaking;

b. globalization and pluralism as they impact international relations and affect the worldwide mission of the PC(USA) and efforts to promote peacemaking;

c. the implications of U.S. foreign policy and funding patterns on developing nations as they affect the world-wide mission of the PC(USA), and promotion of peacemaking;

d. the pressures of climate-change and the increasing competition for natural resources by developing nations as they affect the world-wide mission of the church and promotion of peacemaking.

2. to make a preliminary report back to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

Rationale

It is difficult for congregations and the pastors leading them to understand how to embrace the prophetic vision of peace and Jesus' words about loving enemies in the complex socio-political and economic realities of the twenty-first century. Churches know that our country has now been actively engaged in foreign wars for a longer time than World War II; that extreme measures to build physical barricades on the southern borders of the country and to crack down on illegal immigration has not resolved migration issues; that wars on terrorism and drugs seem to be endless and escalating; that global markets can affect not only the prices at home but the livelihoods of populations far away; and that experiences of changed and extreme weather patterns are part of what scientists have named Climate Change.

Looking through our own lens of faith and through the eyes of the connectional church, we aren't educated enough or prepared enough to know how to respond to some of these pressures. The life and mission of the church exist not just in a local context, but in a global context that church members may not understand.

The connectional church and the local church alike need opportunities to deal with the real issues impacting people and the planet through faith. What are some distinctive insights from the Reformed Tradition that can guide our study and action? Can church leaders learn new approaches to help churches face global realities of the twenty-first century? How can seminaries and colleges provide more opportunities for students and others for short-term courses or seminars?

How can seminaries help churches taking part in mission trips to understand the greater social and economic pressures that have led to the need for mission help? The denomination and its ecumenical partners could also provide an analysis of global challenges and sensitivity with regard to multiculturalism that could help educate and inform church leaders.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 13-07 be answered by action on Item 13-11. A more comprehensive Advice and Counsel from the ACSWP is found there.

Item 13-08

[The assembly approved Item 13-08 with amendment. See pp. 65, 70–71.]

On Assisting with a Process for Negotiation of a Peace Accord in Colombia—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

The Presbytery of Chicago respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take the following actions:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to write the administration of President Barack Obama and the Congress of the United States of America seeking the permanent suspension of the U.S. military use of seven Colombian bases initiated in 2009, given that this expanded U.S. military presence in Colombia will:

- **increase violence and displacement within Colombia, and be perceived by many Colombians as a violation of Colombia's national sovereignty; and**
- **sow distrust among nearby Andean nations which perceive the expanded U.S. military presence in South America to be a threat to their national security.**

2. ~~[Request that]~~ [Direct] the Stated Clerk ~~[ask]~~ [to request] President Barack Obama and the Congress to assist with a process for the negotiation of a peace accord in Colombia ~~[instead,]~~ in order to end Colombia's internal armed conflict which has lasted more than fifty years and which is a threat to the entire Andean region.

3. Call on the church to strengthen initiatives of prayer and action in PC(USA) congregations and by PC(USA) leaders in order to broaden and support the movement of citizens toward peace in Colombia.

4. Encourage Presbyterian churches, as part of these undertakings of prayer and action, to visit Colombia in order to monitor the Colombian bases and their impact—so long as the United States maintains a presence in them.

[5. Direct appropriate offices of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to work with ecumenical partners to monitor and post periodic updates on the impact of United States military use of seven military bases in Colombia.]

Rationale

History and Call of the Presbyterian Churches of Colombia and the United States to Work for Peace

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has had a long relationship with Colombia, both in spreading the gospel message of God's peace and in strengthening its democracy. The first Presbyterian missionaries established schools that have educated generations of respected citizens with an open and democratic mindset that strengthens Colombian society.

The PC(USA) continues a 154-year relationship and honors the testimony of education, evangelism, and service of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia (IPC), by answering the call to help them in their ministry of accompaniment to the displaced population and the most impoverished communities, and the search for peace as the fruit of justice.

Given the armed conflict that Colombia has lived for more than fifty years, the IPC has advised us of the damages of Plan Colombia (the common term for U.S. legislation aimed at curbing drug smuggling and insurgency, also used by Columbia's leaders) and the grave consequences of the approval of a free trade agreement for wide sectors of the Colombian

populace. We have witnessed that pastors and members of the churches frequently put their lives at risk to the point that some have been martyred for being witnesses and remaining faithful to the requirements of the Gospel to serve those most in need and those who have been victims of the violence.

In the 210th, 213th, 216th, and 218th General Assemblies, the PC(USA) has responded to the call of the IPC, rejecting this circle of violence. Today, several presbyteries in the PC(USA) have partnerships with presbyteries of the IPC that make up a network of mission and solidarity with Colombia. The PC(USA) has also created the Accompaniment Program to provide a physical presence by citizens of the United States giving protection to threatened communities and to the church whose leaders and pastors involved in human rights protection have been victims of surveillance and threats.

While it is appropriate to recognize and remember our past and present contributions to the troubled country of Colombia, it is essential that we focus on the responsibilities and opportunities we have as U.S. citizens who are followers of Christ. We must work in religious and political spheres and with social networks in our own country to contribute to a future of peace with more justice and equality for all of the Colombian people.

We have learned from the IPC that the election of President Barack Obama generated hope in Colombia that the United States would strengthen the search for peace and a greater respect for human rights. This has not been the case. In September 2009, the government of the United States certified the Colombian government in human rights even with the revelation of a high number of extra-judicial killings of youth—everyday citizens—whom the army tried to pass off as guerrilla members killed in combat, murders known as “false positives.” It was also made public that the Colombian intelligence agency, which depends directly on President Uribe, was used to keep illegal surveillance on leaders of the opposition, human rights defenders, and church leaders, threatening them because of their work for peace.

In these times, the hopes for peace in Colombia seem far away. Rather than supporting initiatives toward a peace accord, the government of President Obama has instead made an accord with the Colombian government for the U.S. military to use seven military bases within Colombia. The IPC in the 65th General Assembly of the Synod, a biennial assembly (Feb 10–12, 2010), expressed its concern:

... that the democratic security promoted by the [Colombian] government, the increased military costs, and the growth of the army have not shown us the prospect of peace even though they have reduced the actions of illegal armed groups. It is evident that there is a resurgence or strengthening of former armed groups. Furthermore, there are tensions with Columbia’s neighbors—Ecuador, Venezuela, and throughout the region because of the announcement of the U.S. Army’s use of Colombian military bases (Public Pastoral Declaration from Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia, Bogotá: February 12, 2010, translated by the church).

For this reason the IPC has called on the PC(USA) to join them in making stronger efforts (initiatives) toward peace in Colombia. As Christians we are obligated to respond to injustices, wherever they may be—healing the sick, feeding the poor, denouncing injustice, and ministering to those in need—with the values that we have in union with the words and actions of Jesus Christ. A great many people in Colombia suffer injustice caused by war, indifference, and the greed of their own government in collaboration with powerful global economic interests. This suffering has been aggravated by the good intentioned but often counter-productive politics of the United States. It is time to develop more visible means to help the work of Presbyterians in the United States and in Colombia who are working to create a more just and peaceful society, as the gospel exhorts us to do.

Plan Colombia and the Use of Military Bases in Colombia by the United States Military

Colombia has been identified by the government of the United States as a key strategic ally in the Western Hemisphere. The external politics of the United States have had an important, yet adverse, impact in the evolution of the armed conflict that exists in Colombia. In 2000, a policy called “Plan Colombia” was developed by the governments of the United States and Colombia with the purpose of eradicating coca crops to reduce exports of cocaine to the United States as well as the unstated desire to undermine the guerrilla forces that controlled around 40 percent of the country. The plan has been financed by the United States, which has given more than \$7 billion—80 percent destined for military aid and the eradication of coca, 20 percent for alternative development, human rights, help to displaced persons, and judicial reform.

This well-intentioned goal has failed either to diminish the cultivation of coca or the export of cocaine to the United States. It has had grave unforeseen consequences for the situation in Colombia. The aerial fumigations directed at the eradication of the coca crop have caused an ecological crisis and medical harm to the civilian population. It has caused massive displacement. The fifty-year-old Colombian conflict has become even more deeply entrenched with the military aid offered by the United States. Paramilitary groups directly linked to the Colombian military, developed with the help of large landowners, are responsible for 70 percent of the violations of human rights. The guerrillas, far from beaten, have continued their actions of war. The FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrillas have kidnapped and hold close to thirty military personnel, some for more than ten years. They seek prisoner swaps with their members held in jails in both Colombia and the United States. All of these efforts have effectively had the opposite result of U.S. goals. (See: “Bases, Bullets, and Ballots: The Effect of U.S. Military Aid on Political Conflict in Colombia,” Working Paper 197, by Oeindrila Dube and Suresh Naidu, Center for Global Development, January 2010, available at: <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1423498/>, pp. 26–27.)

During the span of Plan Colombia there have been more than two million people displaced from their land. Added to those that already existed, more than four million people have been displaced, making Colombia the country with the second-highest rate of internal displacement rate in the world. These uprooted people look for refuge in neighboring countries and in poor neighborhoods that encircle the large cities of Colombia. The most recent available annual report for the Colombia Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights identifies “continuous growth” in the numbers of internally displaced persons, with more than a quarter of a million new displaced persons recorded in the first half of 2008 alone, and a “disproportionate effect on communities located in regions where the armed conflict is fiercest.” (See: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Colombia, March 2009, p.22, available at <http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/alldocs.aspx?doc_id=15200>.)

In this context, the announcement that the United States military will use seven Colombian bases makes aspirations for peace in Colombia become ever more distant. The guerilla groups have announced their intent to fight together against the presence of the U.S. Army in Colombia. In addition, there have been tensions with border countries and in the region because of this base agreement. The most significant tension is with Venezuela and the government of Hugo Chavez, who sees the presence of the U.S. military in Colombia as a threat and the preparation for military aggression against his country.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 13-08 from the Presbytery of Chicago asks the General Assembly to call for the suspension of a pact authorizing the use of seven military bases in Colombia by military personnel from the United States of America.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 13-08 be approved with amendments to recommendations 1 and 2 (no changes to 3 and 4). [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“1. ~~Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to write the administration of President Barack Obama and the Congress of the United States of America seeking the permanent suspension of the U. S. military use of seven Colombian bases initiated in 2009, given that this expanded U. S. military presence in Colombia will;~~ Direct appropriate offices of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to work with ecumenical partners to monitor and post periodic updates on the impact the U. S. military use of seven military bases in Colombia, given the danger that expanded U. S. military operatives may;]

“• increase violence and displacement within Colombia, and be perceived by many Colombians as a violation of Colombia’s national sovereignty; and

“• sow distrust among nearby Andean nations which perceive the expanded U. S. military presence in South America to be a threat to their national security.

“2. Direct ~~Request that~~ the Stated Clerk ~~ask~~ to request President Barack Obama and the Congress to assist with a process for the negotiation of a peace accord in Colombia, ~~instead~~ in order to end Colombia’s internal armed conflict which has lasted more than fifty years and which is a threat to the entire Andean region.”

Rationale

The origin of this overture is a pastoral letter from the Presbyterian Church in Colombia. The General Assembly of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Colombia has sought to discern a path toward a peaceful future through prayer, Bible study, and corporate worship. Their process of discernment produced a letter addressed to all the Presbyterian congregations in Colombia and their sister churches throughout the world, urging a united response to the violence that continues to plague Colombia. This letter calls for the suspension of an agreement that permits U.S. troops to operate in Latin America from seven bases established in Colombia.

The United States and Colombia, however, have already renewed the agreement authorizing the use of these military bases for ten more years. The Washington Office of the PC(USA) comments, “This appears to be an agreement without borders, potentially allowing the U.S. military to conduct virtually any mission against virtually any perceived threat.” The Presbyterian Washington Office further notes that, despite the declared intention not to operate beyond Colombia’s borders, intentions often change over the life of an agreement. Other nations in the Latin America have expressed concerns about the purportedly limited scope of military activity in light of the history of U.S. military intervention in the region (Washington Office Legislative Action: November 25, 2009, Washington, D.C.).

The opportunity to suspend the joint use agreement may have passed, but the potential for damage to the environment, U.S. relationships in Latin America, and the PC(USA)’s relationship to the Presbyterian Church in Colombia remains as long as this pact stands. Therefore, ACSWP recommends that Presbyterian World Mission and the Compassion, Peace and Justice programs of the PC(USA) monitor the use and impact of these bases in cooperation with the Presbyterian Church of Colom-

bia and publish periodic reports on the PC(USA) website. ACSWP further recommends that the General Assembly instruct the Stated Clerk to write a letter to the President of the United States stating the concerns of the Presbyterian Church in Colombia and the PC(USA) about the use and impact of these bases.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 13-01.

Item 13-09

[The assembly answered Item 13-09 by the action taken on Item 13-02. See pp. 65, 67.]

On the War in Afghanistan—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

The Presbytery of San Francisco respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Declare itself in opposition to further military operations by the United States in Afghanistan.
2. Call upon the United States government to:
 - a. take non-combatative actions, and only those, in vigorous pursuit of stability, prosperity, and peace in Afghanistan and in the region;
 - b. cooperate with the United Nations and Afghanistan’s neighbors in the stabilization process; and
 - c. cooperate with the United Nations in providing and overseeing greatly expanded aid to Afghanistan for the delivery of humanitarian services and economic development assistance.
3. Direct the Stated Clerk, through the Office of the General Assembly, in conjunction with ecumenical partners, to take the following actions, where appropriate working with the General Assembly Mission Council to assign responsibilities to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian Washington and UN Offices, or other entities of the General Assembly Mission Council:
 - a. communicate to the United States president and Congress the position of this assembly as set forth in recommendation 2 above;
 - b. further urge the president and Congress to commit the United States government to the use of peaceful means for security and the pursuit of national interests, concentrating upon diplomacy, international collaboration, and material aid for education, the reduction of poverty, and the broadening of political enfranchisement in Afghanistan and elsewhere;
 - c. encourage congregations and individual Presbyterians to thank our soldiers and their families for their sacrifices, to pray for the people of Afghanistan and all fighting forces there, particularly those who have been wounded or who have lost loved ones; and to engage in advocacy and actions for peace;
 - d. call upon the United States government to provide adequate healthcare and rehabilitation, including psychiatric care, trauma therapy, and substance abuse programs for members and veterans of its armed forces;
 - e. ask the United States government to tabulate Afghanistan war casualties among all parties, civilian and military, and make a general inventory of destruction so that the human and material costs of the war may be assessed and the moral obligations of reconstruction and restitution be kept before the conscience of the nation;
 - f. make available to congregations and presbyteries materials appropriate for studying the effects of the present war in Afghanistan and of non-combatative actions the United States might take in pursuit of the region’s stability, prosperity, and peace; and
 - g. direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to convene a seminary- and college-wide review of peace studies, including peacemaking opportunities appropriate to the need to demilitarize U.S. international relations, and to report the results of this study to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

Rationale

Afghanistan is frequently called “the graveyard of empires” (see Milton Bearden, Council on Foreign Relations, “Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires,” November/December 2001). Today it has become an illustration of Jesus’ saying that “... ‘all who take the sword will perish by the sword’” (Mt. 26:52). There is widespread opinion, in military as well as civilian circles, that the war cannot be won on the battlefield. *Whether any modern war can truly be won is debatable, but there is scant reason to think the United States can find military victory where so many empires of the past have failed.*¹

The war being conducted in Afghanistan is a NATO operation with major participation by United States forces, but it does not have the support of most Afghans. Such support as there has been is declining.² This works to the long-range advantage of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, whose defeat is the apparent aim of the United States government. This war, like most, is counterproductive.

Although the war in Afghanistan is by no means the largest in recent times, its human costs are immense. At least 18,000 Afghans have been killed³ and tens of thousands more have been injured—mostly non-combatants—since the U.S.-led international intervention began in 2001. As of late 2009, Operation Enduring Freedom, as it is called, had cost the United States some 933 fatalities, plus more than 2,500 seriously wounded.⁴ There is also a rising and alarming rate of drug and alcohol usage by our fighting forces, doubtless a reaction to stress, and perhaps related to ambivalence about the mission they are being asked to pursue.⁵ Furthermore, there is widespread corruption among Afghan leaders, often related to the opium trade; and the August 2009 election was marred by voting fraud. The use of unmanned drones by the United States has accounted for many civilian casualties and has led to increased resentment among Afghans.

The war’s financial costs are also huge: more than \$273 billion, according to the Center for Defense Information.⁶ To bring about peace, stability, and the reduction of terrorism, such a sum would produce far better results if spent on goods and services of benefit to the people of Afghanistan and its neighbors: education, health care, economic development, food security, poverty reduction, and the like. The Rand Corporation has determined “... that political work, local law enforcement, and peacekeeping are a more effective alternative to increases in military force.”⁷

The current situation in Afghanistan provides an opportunity to shift American resources and strategy in a far more productive direction than at present. It is too costly and breeds too much resentment. The long-range interests of the United States require less reliance on military strategies for spreading democracy, reducing terrorism, and providing for our own safety. The root of war, especially in our time, is injustice, usually expressed as severe economic inequity. Hunger and desperation do not nourish peace.

Jesus’ warning that one cannot serve two masters is highly relevant in international affairs. A nation cannot pursue peace while waging war, nor justice through militarism. The centuries-long attempt by many churches and Christians to justify war as a strategy of peace is coming apart in our time. Wars such as the one in Afghanistan increasingly result in the rape and killing of civilians, the destruction of their homes, and the devastation of lands, economies, and social structures.

The gospel of and about Jesus Christ is a gospel of peace and peacemaking. There is no more appropriate time for a church to proclaim the peace of Christ and to pursue its mandates than when a country and its government are pursuing the horrors and futility of a misbegotten war.

It is not the province of a church to devise a template of government strategies; we are not a political party. But it is our responsibility to call the nation and the world to the way of peace and to resist the logic of war. That is at the heart of the biblical vision and the gospel of Christ. “For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength” (1 Cor. 1:25).

Endnotes

1. Powerful armies that met defeat in Afghanistan include those of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE, the British in the nineteenth century CE, and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century.
2. Gary Langer, “Frustration with Way, Problems in Daily Life Send Afghan Support for U.S. Efforts Tumbling,” ABC News/BBC/ARD National Survey of Afghanistan, Feb. 9, 2009. “In 2005 ... 83 percent of Afghans expressed a favorable opinion of the United States—unheard of in a Muslim nation. Today just 47 percent still hold that view, down 36 points, accelerating with an 18-point drop in U.S. favorability this year alone.” <<http://abcnews.go.com/PollingUnit/story?id=6787686&page=1>>.
3. “United for Peace and Justice, Fact Sheet #1,” <<http://unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=4019>>.
4. See Department of Defense updated statistics at <<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>>.
5. “... figures [show] that by the end 2005, of the 104,000 who had sought medical help after serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 32,010 were suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, depression, drug addiction, or alcoholism... Proportionally, that’s three times as many as those who returned from Vietnam.... A Pentagon health study found that the rate of binge drinking in the Army shot up by 30 percent from 2002 to 2005, and, they concluded, that ‘may signal an increasing pattern of heavy alcohol use in the Army’.... 3,057 veterans of

the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were diagnosed with potential drug dependency from 2005 to 2007, according to the Veteran Health Authority. From 2002 through 2004 only 277 veterans were diagnosed with a drug dependency.” Matt Kennard, “Drug Abuse and Alcoholism Rises within Military,” *Reporter for Conscience’s Sake* from the Center on Conscience and War, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Summer 2009), p. 2.

6. While precise figures are not available for the cost of the Afghan War, according to the Congressional Research service, over \$157 billion had been appropriated for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) by the end of 2008. OEF principally refers to Afghanistan, and includes some operations in the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, and “elsewhere.” See the Center for Defense Information, <<http://www.edi.org/friendlyversion/printversion.cfm?documentID=4072>>.

Outlays increased considerably with the increase in troop strength in 2009, although the amount is not available at the date of writing this overture. In May, 2009, the Department of Defense announced that in 2010 the cost of running the war in Afghanistan would exceed the cost of the conflict in Iraq. It requested \$130 billion for “overseas contingency operations,” mostly for Afghanistan. See Nathan Hodge, “Sign of the Times: Afghanistan War Costs Higher than Iraq,” *Wired*, May 7, 2009, <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/05/sign-of-the-times-afghanistan-war-costs-higher-than-iraq/>.

Taken together, these figures suggest that the cost of waging war in Afghanistan has been at least \$287 billion and climbing.

7. “United for Peace and Justice Fact Sheet #1,” <<http://unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=4019>>.

Concurrence to Item 13-09 from the Presbytery of Genesee Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-09 Section 3g—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that recommendation 3g of Item 13-09 be answered by approval of the Advice and Counsel memorandum (and substitute text) at Item 13-11.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 13-01.

Item 13-10

[The assembly approved Item 13-10. See p. 65.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the report on the “Commitment to Peacemaking”:

1. Commends those sessions, presbyteries, synods, and other entities that have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking.”

2. Recognizes that the office of the Stated Clerk sends a certificate of commendation to the stated clerk of the presbytery in which the congregation is located for presentation at a stated meeting of presbytery for those sessions that have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking.”

3. Requests stated clerks of presbyteries who receive the certificates for sessions that have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking” to present them at a stated meeting of presbytery in such a way as to adequately commend the congregation for this achievement.

4. Urges presbyteries to find ways to share and celebrate the experiences of congregations where sessions have adopted and implemented the “Commitment to Peacemaking.”

5. Urges presbyteries and synods also to consider adopting the “Commitment to Peacemaking” in forms appropriate to those governing bodies and commends those governing bodies that have done so.

6. Commends the sixty-three presbyteries and six synods that have 50 percent or more of their congregations whose sessions have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking.”

7. Commends the four presbyteries that have 75 percent or more of their congregations whose sessions have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking.”

8. Urges peacemaking committees of the presbyteries to contact the sessions in their presbytery that have not adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking” to express the importance of this commitment and to urge their adoption of it.

9. Recognizing that the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program maintains a list of those sessions, presbyteries, synods, and other entities that have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking” in order to serve them in their peacemaking efforts, requests that a report be made to the 220th General Assembly (2012) on the number of sessions that have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking.”

10. Requests the 219th General Assembly (2010) to commend publicly those presbyteries that have actively incorporated peacemaking into their ministry; including acknowledging and supporting those congregations whose sessions have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking.”

11. As requested by the 218th General Assembly (2008), the 219th General Assembly (2010) honors those presbyteries that have reached 50 percent or more of their congregations whose sessions have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking” since the 218th General Assembly (2008).

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral:

2008 Referral: Item 11-19. The Commitment to Peacemaking, Recommendation 9. That a Report Be Made to the 219th General Assembly (2010) on the Number of Session That Have Adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking”—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 47, 1185).

The “Commitment to Peacemaking” is a tool that Presbyterians use to plan, implement, and evaluate ministries that seek peace and pursue justice. In the words of the General Assembly Mission Work Plan, the “Commitment to Peacemaking” helps Presbyterians “join God in transforming societies to reflect God’s intention for a just, peaceful, and compassionate world.”

The “Commitment to Peacemaking” has been made by 4,521 congregations as of March 5, 2010.

This information will be updated and reported to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues.

Item 13-11

[The assembly approved Item 13-11 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 65, 67-69.]

On Strengthening the Peacemaking Program—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh.

~~[The Presbytery of Pittsburgh respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to strengthen the Peacemaking Program by the following actions:~~

~~[1. Recognize and celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* and the Peacemaking Program.~~

~~[2. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACWSP) to create a nine person task force (as specified below) to~~

~~[a. review *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* and its action recommendations and report the results to the 220th General Assembly (2012), with the intent of updating the engagement of Presbyterians in peacemaking; and~~

~~[b. prepare a resolution for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to forward to the 220th General Assembly (2012) on the dangers of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and responses to this proliferation in light of Christian ethics, the impact of ongoing wars, and previous General Assembly policies.~~

~~[3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, with the advice of the Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to create an advisory committee of six expert persons to meet quarter-~~

~~ly to counsel the Peacemaking Program on issues regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and other emerging issues.~~

~~[4. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to convene a seminary and college-wide review of peace studies and peacemaking opportunities appropriate to the major shifts in the approach of the United States international relations and to report the results of the study to the 220th General Assembly (2012). The goal of the review is to engage students in active peacemaking and to share the wisdom of faculty among our church-related educational institutions.]~~

[Lifting the example of Jesus as the model of our behavior and beliefs in love and peacemaking exemplified in Luke 6: 27–38 as our policy for Presbyterians now and in the future, the 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the General Assembly Mission Council, through the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and the Peacemaking Program, to appoint a five-person steering team, at least one of whom shall be a college student or other young adult, to work with ACSWP and Peacemaking Program representatives to design and implement a broadly participatory four-year process to do the following:

[1. Seek clarity as to God’s call to the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war;

[2. Identify, explore, and nurture new approaches to active peacemaking and nonviolence, reporting to the 221st General Assembly (2014) with recommendations for policy and action. This process shall include the following elements:

[a. Build upon “Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling” (1980), “Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age” (1988), “Just Peacemaking and the Call for Intervention for Humanitarian Rescue” (1998), and other policies related to just war, just peacemaking, and nonviolent principles and issues of peace and justice approved by past General Assemblies, culminating in updated policies on nonviolence and peacemaking.

[b. The steering team is encouraged to consult with ministries of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), particularly Compassion, Peace and Justice, World Mission, and Presbyterian Women; Office of the General Assembly; college chaplains and campus ministers; middle governing body staff; and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship in the design and implementation of the proposed policies and process.

[c. The steering team is encouraged to consult with national and international ecumenical and interfaith partners and draw on the experience and learnings from the International Ecumenical Peacemaking Convocation of the World Council of Churches (2011), and other initiatives of the broader Christian and interfaith community.

[d. The process shall help Presbyterians on all levels of the church to recognize and focus upon updated policies and actions that

[(1) consider the new realities, challenges, and opportunities for working for peace and seeking justice, including the dangers currently posed by weapons of mass destruction, globalization, pluralism, the implications of U.S. foreign policy (including two current wars), impact of climate change, and an increasing competition for natural resources by developing nations as they affect the worldwide mission of the church and promotion of peacemaking;

[(2) explore new thinking on nonviolence, reconciliation (including the role of truth-telling, forgiveness, confession, and public apology), human rights, security strategies, genocide and terrorism prevention, economic conversion, development, and the violence of poverty;

[(3) explore new models for engaging in active peacemaking and working for justice, including new technology for advocacy and organizing, communication and decision-making, accompaniment, conflict-resolution, artistic expressions, church-based community organizing, and nonviolent direct action;

[(4) respond to and prevent violence on the local level (e.g., action and advocacy concerning gang violence, gun violence, and family violence), the national level (e.g., action and advocacy on budget priorities, and decisions about investments in dependent industries), and the international level (e.g., action and advocacy on issues of war and peace) through prayer, direct action, and advocacy; and

[(5) address sexism, racism, and other patterns of oppression as tasks of peacemaking and justice seeking.

“[e. The steering team shall

[(1) consider at least two gatherings of individuals who are engaged in action and reflection on peacemaking and justice seeking, including faculty and students from Presbyterian colleges, universities, and seminaries (“... to engage students in active peacemaking and to share the wisdom of faculty among our church-related educational in-

stitutions”), activists, individuals engaged in nonviolent witness, grassroots persons working for justice and peace, and others engaged in peacemaking in congregations, middle governing bodies, Presbyterian Women, and other Presbyterian-related entities;

[(2) invite Presbyterians, individually and corporately, across the church into a time of study and reflection on the root causes of violence and responses to it, and on peace, justice, and ministries of peacemaking and justice—seeking that honor the gospel, the history of the church, and the movement of the Holy Spirit as the church attempts to live out Christ’s command to love one another, even those we call our enemies; and

[(3) create new resources or identify existing resources, working ecumenically when appropriate, that will help Presbyterians pray and study Scripture for guidance about how to respond faithfully to Jesus’ call to be peacemakers in this time.

[f. The steering team, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and Presbyterian Peacemaking Program staff, would recruit additional writer(s) or team members as necessary to help create a report with recommendations to bring to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

[g. An interim report shall be made to the 220th General Assembly (2012). The interim report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) will include specific recommendations of strategy and policy to invite the broader church into the time of discernment, framing the conversation, naming the best partners, and laying out a process to help our congregations to wrestle with these important ethical questions.

[h. The steering team will offer its recommendation for action to the 221st General Assembly (2014), asking for that assembly to receive the report for a two-year period of study before final action in 2016.]”

[Comment: The committee advises that the funding of Item 13-11 be shared equally between the GAMC and the per capita budgets. This action also answers Items 13-01 (Recommendation 3.g.), 13-02 (Recommendation 2.g.), 13-03 (Recommendation 3.g.), 13-06, 13-07, and 13-09 (Recommendation 3.g. [now 3.h.).]

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$2,088; (2011) \$68,598; (2012) \$4,643 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$2,087; (2011) \$68,597; (2012) \$4,642 (Mission—GAMC)]

Rationale

Thirty years ago the 192nd General Assembly (1980) issued a call to the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America to give priority to peacemaking and to create a Peacemaking Program. The biblical and theological ethics of *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* have served the church well. The Peacemaking Program has educated the church with excellent programs, educational materials, international visitors, study tours, and conferences. At this time, however, the mission of this program deserves careful review, both in terms of current challenges to peace and commitment of the church’s resources for this witness. Some funds designated for the program in the past have been spent down, and other related education and action programs (such as *Church & Society* magazine) have been ended. The United Nations’ Office has also seen its funding reduced, at a time when the needs and opportunities for theologically informed international witness substantially increased.

The introduction to *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* said that

This request of the General Assembly was a product of its times

—born in part from the United States’ defeat in Southeast Asia and the loss of prestige and power in the changing world situation;

—born in part from the unwillingness of the emerging nations to accept the continued domination of the developed nations;

—born in part from the increasing insecurity over the perilous nuclear weapons stalemate in which any miscalculation could annihilate humanity;

—born in part from concern for the hungry and oppressed of the world. (*Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling*, p. 1)

However, the times have changed:

—The United States regained its prestige and new powers prior to 9/11, playing the role of “superpower” and “indispensable nation” in the eyes of many.

—The cold war was concluded.

—New wars have broken out and threaten to break out over disputes about weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have become a major issue at the United Nations.

—The phenomenon of globalization has been recognized and to many it represents Americanization of the finances of the world. The credit crisis and global recession have weakened the capacity and credibility of the United States' global leadership.

—Religions of the world are now widely recognized to be major influences in wars, peacemaking, and international decision making.

—The rise of Muslim influence and militancy was not considered as a factor in the 1980 policy.

These new factors interrelate to make very timely a review of *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling* and the peacemaking work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Arms control, expenditures, and threats of war over the non-proliferation questions require work beyond the 1988 policy, *Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age*. There is now fear that terrorists are seeking weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capacity. The U.S. and its supporters apply economic sanctions to countries suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and consider war against certain countries obtaining weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capacity. The issue of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capacity was one of the motivating factors for the second war in Iraq.

Peacemaking work deserves the counsel and expertise of the church to address these issues. This need could be met by a committee of Presbyterian experts in the fields of disarmament, social ethics, weapons, war and peace studies, the United Nations, development, and human rights. These experts should be drawn from previous task forces, resolution teams, or outstanding peace leaders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who have in-depth understanding of both church and international relations. Six persons consulting quarterly should be sufficient. This same pool of persons, including those with military experience, would provide nominees for the review task force and college and seminary consultations.

Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling recommended actions vis-à-vis higher education, and new priorities and funding for this work can be based on a study of opportunities of peacemaking in these institutions. The whole panoply of tasks around peacemaking work deserves review if a prudent selection of work to be energized and funded is to be considered. This is particularly true for coordinating peacemaking work in seminaries and colleges of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). There is much energy and expertise in the Presbyterian higher education world that the church should encourage and relate to its peacemaking work. Not only is peacemaking part of our evangelism on college campuses, new forms of joint work can be cost-effective with cyber networking technology.

Since 1946, General Assemblies have called for the negotiated abolition of nuclear weapons, based on the immorality of relying upon weapons of mass destruction (WMD) for security. *Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age* (1988) warned against the numbing acquiescence to nuclear weapons. The church is in danger of learning to live with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) until they are used.

Energy and commitment inspired by Jesus Christ's peacemaking needs to be ignited in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to face new issues not discussed in 1980.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-11—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Recognizing the pressures of cost and seeking to draw on similar visions, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to replace Item 13-11 with the following substitute motion, and approve it, and that this action also answer Items 13-01 (recommendation 3g), 13-02 (recommendation 2g), 13-03 (recommendation 3g), 13-06, 13-07, and 13-09 (recommendation 3g): [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

~~“[The Presbytery of Pittsburgh respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to strengthen the Peacemaking Program by the following actions:~~

~~“[1. Recognize and celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling* and the Peacemaking Program.~~

~~“[2. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACWSP) to create a nine person task force (as specified below) to~~

~~“[a. review *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* and its action recommendations and report the results to the 220th General Assembly (2012), with the intent of updating the engagement of Presbyterians in peacemaking; and~~

~~“[b. prepare a resolution for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to forward to the 220th General Assembly (2012) on the dangers of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and responses to this proliferation in light of Christian ethics, the impact of ongoing wars, and previous General Assembly policies.~~

~~“[3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, with the advice of the Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to create an advisory committee of six expert persons to meet quarterly to counsel the Peacemaking Program on issues regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and other emerging issues.~~

~~“[4. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to convene a seminary and college wide review of peace studies and peacemaking opportunities appropriate to the major shifts in the approach of the United States international relations and to report the results of the study to the 220th General Assembly (2012). The goal of the review is to engage students in active peacemaking and to share the wisdom of faculty among our church-related educational institutions.]~~

“[That the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and the Peacemaking Program, to appoint a five-person steering team, at least one of whom shall be a college student or other young adult, to work with ACSWP and Peacemaking Program representatives to design and implement a broadly participatory four-year process to explore new approaches to active peacemaking and nonviolence, reporting to the 220th General Assembly (2014) with recommendations for policy and action. This process shall include the following elements:

“[1. Build upon *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* (1980), *Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age* (1988), *Just Peacemaking and the Call for Intervention for Humanitarian Rescue* (1998), and other policies related to just war, just peacemaking, and non-violent principles and issues of peace and justice approved by past General Assemblies.

“[2. The steering team is encouraged to consult with ministries of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), particularly: Compassion, Peace and Justice, World Mission, and Presbyterian Women; with the Office of the General Assembly; college chaplains and campus ministers; middle governing body staff, and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship in the design and implementation of the process.

“[3. The steering team is encouraged to consult with national and international ecumenical and interfaith partners and draw on the experience and learnings from the International Ecumenical Peacemaking Convocation of the World Council of Churches (2011), and other initiatives of the broader Christian and interfaith community.

“[4. The process shall help Presbyterians on all levels of the church:

“[a. consider the new realities, challenges, and opportunities for working for peace and seeking justice including the dangers currently posed by weapons of mass destruction, globalization, pluralism, the implications of U.S. foreign policy (including two current wars), impact of climate change, and an increasing competition for natural resources by developing nations as they affect the worldwide mission of the church and promotion of peacemaking;

“[b. explore new thinking on nonviolence, reconciliation (including the role of truth-telling, forgiveness, confession, and public apology), human rights, security strategies, genocide and terrorism prevention, economic conversion, development, and the violence of poverty;

“[c. explore new models for engaging in active peacemaking and working for justice, including new technology for advocacy and organizing, accompaniment, conflict-resolution, artistic expressions, church-based community organizing, and nonviolent direct action;

“[d. respond to and prevent violence on the local level (e.g., action and advocacy concerning gang violence, gun violence, and family violence), the national level (e.g., action and advocacy on budget priorities, and decisions about investments in dependent industries), and the international level (e.g., action and advocacy on issues of war and peace) through prayer, direct action, and advocacy; and

“[e. address sexism, racism, and other patterns of oppression as tasks of peacemaking and justice seeking.

“[5. The steering team shall:

“[a. convene at least two gatherings of individuals who are engaged in action and reflection on peacemaking and justice seeking, including faculty and students from Presbyterian colleges, universities, and seminaries (“... to engage students in active peacemaking and to share the wisdom of faculty among our church-related educational institu-

tions”), activists, individuals engaged in nonviolent witness, grassroots persons working for justice and peace, and others engaged in peacemaking in congregations, middle governing bodies, Presbyterian Women, and other Presbyterian-related entities;

“[b. invite Presbyterians individually and corporately across the church into a time of study and reflection on the root causes of violence and responses to it, and on peace, justice, and ministries of peacemaking and justice-seeking that honor the gospel, the history of the church, and the movement of the Holy Spirit as the church attempts to live out Christ’s command to love one another, even those we call our enemies; and

“[c. create new resources or identify existing resources, working ecumenically when appropriate, that will help Presbyterians pray and study Scripture for guidance about how to respond faithfully to Jesus’ call to be peacemakers in this time.

“[6. The steering team, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and Presbyterian Peacemaking Program staff, would recruit additional writer(s) or team members as necessary to help create a report with recommendations to bring to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

“[7. An interim report shall be made to the 220th General Assembly (2012).]”

Rationale

Summary of overtures

Item 13-11 is one of a number of overtures, or sections of overtures—Item 13-01 (section 3g), Item 13-02 (section 2g), Item 13-03 (section 3g), Item 13-06, Item 13-07, and Item 13-09 (section 3g)—that seek to strengthen the peace witness and peacemaking efforts of Presbyterians and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Together these overtures reflect the role of General Assembly commissioners in providing vision and guiding policy for the short- and long-term ministries of the church at all levels. All build on existing policy and call the church to explore new ways of thinking about peacemaking and new ways of engaging in ministries seeking peace and pursuing justice.

The items considered all reflect the current policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), of which we cite two statements. The 192th General Assembly of the UPCUSA (1980) accepted the report, *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling*, as the church’s guiding policy on issues of war, violence, and injustice. It stated unequivocally:

1. The church is faithful to Christ when it is engaged in peacemaking.... (*Minutes*, 1980, Part I, p. 202)

3. The church bears witness to Christ when it nourishes the moral life of the nation for the sake of peace in our world. The church’s faithful obedience to its calling means active participation in the formation of the values and beliefs of our society... By God’s grace we are members of a world community and can bring our global insights and peacemaking to our particular settings. By God’s grace we are freed to work with all people who strive for peace and justice and to serve as signposts for God’s love in our broken world. To deny our calling is a disservice to the church and the world.... (*Minutes*, 1980, Part I, p. 203)

In 1988, the 200th General Assembly (1988) adopted a major policy statement entitled *Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age*. The statement followed an inquiry into the basic question of the morality of war, with the added dilemma of whether the nature of war—given nuclear weapons—had been qualitatively changed. The policy approved by the General Assembly determined that nuclear war could not be justified on traditional “just war” grounds, and analyzed non-violent conscientious objection by individuals and the Christian community.

Reviewing the specific overtures, Item 13-11 is a comprehensive overture that recommends authorizing a task force with expertise to review the foundational 1980 policy, *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling*, with the intent of updating the engagement of Presbyterians in peacemaking, and to prepare a shorter resolution on recent concerns not addressed by the assembly: ongoing dangers of WMD (weapons of mass destruction), the effects of on-going Iraq and Afghan wars, and more. It calls for the creation of a new advisory committee to work with the Peacemaking Program on issues of WMD. It calls for convening Presbyterian seminary and college/university thinkers to bring new ideas before the church on the dangers facing us thirty years after *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* and “to engage students in active peacemaking.” There would be a report to the 220th General Assembly (2012). While the ACSWP appreciates the scope of this overture, this response drops the potentially costly role of an advisory committee for the Peacemaking Program, intending the process here recommended to draw upon such experts in the field.

Items 13-01 (section 3g), 13-02 (section 2g), 13-03 (section 3g), and 13-09 (section 3g) call for convening a seminary- and college-wide review of peace studies with an emphasis on “peacemaking opportunities appropriate to the need to demilitarize U.S. international relations” (Item 13-09). There would be a report to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

Item 13-06 calls for the church “... to enter into a six-year ‘time of discernment’ seeking clarity on whether God is calling the church, at this historic moment, to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to war and terror.” It lays out a range of elements to guide the church through that discernment process. It calls for the creation of “a broadly representative

committee (appointed by the current Moderator in consultation with the two prior Moderators) to study the issue of nonviolence and report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly in 2014, allowing the entire church to reflect on their report before taking final action in 2016.” It also identifies questions for the committee to address with recommendations. While sharing the overture’s conviction that Jesus calls us to be faithful peacemakers and endorsing a number of its elements, this response focuses more intentionally on younger persons and shortens the timeline. Using a smaller committee, and existing staff and committee members should be less costly than the use of a special committee.

Item 13-07 calls for the exploration of the possibility of instituting study and education programs dealing with peacemaking and contemporary challenges to peace and justice. This exploration would involve the PC(USA)-related seminaries and colleges, ecumenical partners, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, World Mission, and any other appropriate units of the GAMC. There would be a “preliminary report” to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

Each overture represents a deep commitment to engage in careful theology and prayerful action for peace and justice. Each overture builds on existing policy and seeks to strengthen the peacemaking and justice-seeking witness and efforts of Presbyterians and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In their different ways, these overtures testify to the importance of the social witness policy, *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling*, in the life of the church, honor the effective work of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, and recognize the need for new thinking, action, and spiritual discipline if the church is to embody nonviolent peacemaking and justice seeking in the years ahead.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) concurs with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy’s (ACSWP) Advice and Counsel on Item 13-11.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 13-11

Comment on 13-11—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The recommendations in this overture have significant financial implications. The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) hopes that the intent of the overture can be fulfilled in a more cost effective manner than currently suggested.

The GAMC welcomes the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* (commended to congregations and governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), by the 175th General Assembly (1980) of the UPCUSA). It also encourages the assembly to lift up and celebrate the work of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. This program has nurtured and equipped the PC(USA)’s commitment to peacemaking as followers of Jesus in individual lives, families, congregations, communities, the nation, the global community, and with God’s creation, for thirty years.

The GAMC notes that, for example, since its creation in 1980, the Peacemaking Program has helped Presbyterians across the church address the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). There is significant General Assembly policy that provides adequate guidance and background support enabling the Peacemaking Program to address concerns about WMD. In this moment when world leaders are promoting the PC(USA)’s longstanding vision for a world free of nuclear weapons, the Peacemaking Program is providing information and resources to help Presbyterians to engage in advocacy on things such as the new START treaty between the U.S. and Russia, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The GAMC is also aware that the Peacemaking Program routinely seeks out expert advice from leaders across the church, the ecumenical community, and faith-based organizations on a wide range of peacemaking issues. The program currently works with a number of Presbyterian and ecumenical partners on issues related to WMD. An advisory committee of experts focused on WMD and related issues would limit the Peacemaking Program’s ability to be flexible in its response to the broader peacemaking concerns of the church and the world.

The GAMC appreciates the intent of a seminary and college-wide review of peace studies and peacemaking opportunities; especially one that would focus on young adults and strengthening their commitment to peacemaking and service as disciples in the global community.

Item 13-12

[The assembly approved Item 13-12 with amendment. See pp. 65, 69–70.]

Commissioners' Resolution. On the Restoration of Sustainable Agriculture in Haiti.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. ~~[Call upon the leadership of the church and particularly on]~~ [Direct] the Stated Clerk and ~~[on]~~ the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to write

[a.] to the administrator of [the] United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to convey the [concerns] [reservations] of Presbyterians regarding the [vision and initiatives of] [strategy adopted by] USAID [in relation with plans for the restoration of sustainability] [to restore sustainable] agriculture in Haiti, and to request that USAID (i) involve hired Haitian horticultural students, Haitian farmers, and small farmer associations in the planning of local agricultural projects; and (ii) prioritize support to grassroots farmers' associations, including women's associations, designed to establish a sustainable small farm agriculture in preference to the introduction of commercial and/or industrial farming practices;

~~[2.] [b.] [Call upon the leadership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to contact] [to] former President Bill Clinton [and Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive] to request that the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti (ICRH) adopt more transparent [and accountable] processes [and greater accountability] [in relation] to the people of Haiti; and that the Haitian people deserve no less than to be consulted systematically before developing] [;~~ including systematic consultation with the Haitian people regarding development] plans that will affect their lives and the future of ~~[the] [their]~~ country.

~~[3.] [Call upon the leadership of PC(USA) to request from USAID that support be given to efforts by grassroots farmers associations towards strengthening sustainable agriculture in the context of subsistence farming instead of focusing principally on introducing commercial and/or industrial farming practices to Haiti.]~~

~~[4.] [2.] [Alert] [Inform] the PC(USA) membership and the leadership of the church to the [potentially] problematic nature of agro-business initiatives [aimed at using] [being planned for] Haitian land, including so-called marginal land, [in] [based on] bio-fuel production schemes, especially [those] relying on foreign hybrid and/or GMO seeds,] [and] [or] the [unproven] industrial plantation of Jatropha [or any other agro-business export schemes].~~

~~[5.] [3.] [Urge] [Request] the Executive Director of the GAMC to [commit Presbyterian responses to post-earthquake reconstruction in Haiti not only to emergency assistance but also to] [solicit supplemental funds to complement emergency assistance by supporting] medium and long-term development [assistance] [efforts] to strengthen Haitian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots farmers' groups [and enable them to] [so that they can] implement and manage rehabilitation programs of their own conception and design, including small scale, sustainable [agriculture] [agricultural] activities, and to provide them with short- and long-term technical assistance [in the form of mission personnel] to help them upon request.~~

~~[6.] [4.] [Commit] [Direct] the PC(USA) to work collaboratively with other [churches] [denominations] and ecumenical institutions [in ensuring] [to ensure] that~~

a. Haiti is [increasingly] able to feed itself ~~[first]~~;

[b. the value of reinstating tariffs as transitional protection for recovering local agriculture is given due consideration;]

~~[b.] [c.] exports are secondary to creating viable food economies for Haitians; [and]~~

[d. emergency food aid to Haiti is monitored and managed in such a way that it provides incentives (and not disincentives) for local food production;]

~~[e.] [c.] [platforms are secured] [mechanisms are created] for Haitian farmers to [get] [make] their voices heard as they advocate [before] [for themselves to] the Haitian government, the ICRH, USAID, and other international organizations [that are directly involved in the Haitian reconstruction].~~

Rationale

Haiti's production of food commodities was severely jeopardized in recent years by the unfair competition of cheap imports of U.S. subsidized rice, corn, and beans, encouraged by the lifting of import tariffs on commodity imports mandated by

the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) with the support of the U.S. government, a fact acknowledged by former President Bill Clinton.

Haiti's agricultural economy has been near collapse in recent times and is in dire need of a boost to restore its capacity to feed its population.

The Bible states: "And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined towns are now inhabited and fortified'" (Ezek. 36:35). And "I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit" (Am. 9:14).

The Hope for a Global Future policy document, approved by the 208th General Assembly (1996), states the following:

- "The challenge for agriculture policymakers in all food-producing regions of the world is to maintain the viability of farming for small-scale landholders, to restore land to the many people who have been displaced, and to identify and promote systems that stabilize quality yields above the subsistence level while ensuring the integrity and productivity of agro-ecosystems"
- "Calls upon the Worldwide Ministries Division (including all personnel involved in mission in developing countries, those involved in the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and persons working with the Self-Development of People) to encourage partners to give high priority to agricultural sustainability and sufficiency, increased food self-reliance within each region or country, fairer distribution of land, and the viability of small farms and community-based programs for sustainable agriculture."
- "Urges the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States government in all its policies that relate to development around the world to give high priority to research, promotion, and assistance to increase agricultural yields, to the sustainability of agriculture, and to increased food sufficiency within each region or country, fairer distribution of land, and the viability of small farms and community-based programs for sustainable agriculture."

The earthquake of January 12, 2010, brought the Haitian government to its knees and led to the virtual surrendering of Haiti's sovereignty to international institutions and particularly to the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti (ICRH) headed by former President Bill Clinton and the Haitian Prime Minister, a commission that is not accountable to the Haitian parliament or to the Haitian people in general.

There are serious concerns in various sectors of Haitian society that there is no significant consultation by U.S. and Haitian decision-makers with direct stakeholders regarding reconstruction plans for all sectors of the country and in particular with the agricultural sector, in contradiction with the first guiding principle of the new U.S. government "Feed the Future Initiative" to "Invest in country-owned plans that support results-based programs and partnerships, so that assistance is tailored to the needs of individual countries through consultative processes"

It is rumored that the Haitian government and the ICRH are considering applying the law of eminent domain to most areas of Port au Prince affected by the earthquake to expropriate people of their land and/or damaged buildings in order to proceed freely with reconstruction plans developed without their knowledge or participation.

According to the website of the WINNER project under the Peasant, Private, Public, Partnership (PPPP) principle, the purpose and intent of the WINNER Project in Haiti is to restore the country's agriculture and to move it from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture and then to industrial agriculture. This is in direct opposition to the aspirations of organized small farmers in Haiti, as reflected in the statement by a Haitian peasant leader who said: "For Haitian peasants the choice is for family oriented ecological agriculture for the production of food to support their community, instead of for commercial or industrial agriculture to create wealth for agro-businesses and multi-nationals, an agriculture that is a threat to the environment and to the very existence of the peasant social class in Haiti. For us peasants, this is a choice between life and death" (C. Jean Baptiste, June 14, 2010).

The Reverend Nancy K. Troy, Presbytery of Mid Kentucky
Elder Daniel DeBrucker, Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-12—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 13-12 with the following amendments:[Text to be deleted is shown in brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

“1. ~~[Call upon the leadership of the church and particularly on]~~ [Direct] the Stated Clerk and ~~[on]~~ the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to write

“a. to the administrator of [the] United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to convey the ~~[concerns]~~[reservations] of Presbyterians regarding the ~~[vision and initiatives of]~~[strategy adopted by] USAID ~~[in relation with plans for the restoration of sustainability]~~ [to restore sustainable] agriculture in Haiti, and to request that USAID (i) involve small farmer associations in the planning of local agricultural projects; and (ii) prioritize support to grassroots farmers’ associations, including women’s associations, designed to establish a sustainable small farm agriculture in preference to the introduction of commercial and/or industrial farming practices];

“~~[2.] [b.] [Call upon the leadership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to contact]~~ [to] former President Bill Clinton to request that the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti (ICHR) adopt more transparent ~~[and accountable]~~ [and greater accountability] ~~[in relation]~~ to the people of Haiti~~[-]; [-]~~ [including systematic consultation with the Haitian people regarding development] plans that will affect their lives and the future of their country;

“~~[3. Call upon the leadership of PC(USA) to request from USAID that support be given to efforts by grassroots farmers associations towards strengthening sustainable agriculture in the context of subsistence farming instead of focusing principally on introducing commercial and/or industrial farming practices to Haiti.]~~

“~~[4.] [2.] [Alert]~~ [Inform] the PC(USA) membership and the leadership of the church to the [potentially] problematic nature of agro-business initiatives ~~[aimed at using]~~ [being planned for] Haitian land, including so-called marginal land, ~~[in]~~ [based on] bio-fuel production schemes, especially [those] relying on foreign hybrid and/or GMO seeds, ~~[and]~~ [or] the [unproven] industrial plantation of Jatropha. ~~[or any other agro-business export schemes].~~

“~~[5.] [3.] [Urge]~~ [Request] the Executive Director of the GAMC to ~~[commit Presbyterian responses to post-earthquake reconstruction in Haiti not only to emergency assistance but also to]~~ [solicit supplemental funds to complement emergency assistance by supporting] medium and long-term development [assistance] [efforts] to strengthen Haitian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots farmers’ groups ~~[and enable them to]~~ [so that they can] implement and manage rehabilitation programs ~~[of their own conception and]~~ [that they have helped to] design, including small scale sustainable agricultural activities, and to provide them with short- and long-term technical assistance ~~[in the form of mission personnel]~~ to help them upon request.

“~~[6.] [4.] [Commit]~~ [Direct] the PC(USA) ~~[to work collaboratively with other [churches] [denominations] and ecumenical institutions [in ensuring] [to ensure] that:~~

“a. Haiti is [increasingly] able to feed itself ~~[first];~~

“b. [the value of reinstating tariffs as transitional protection for recovering local agriculture is given due consideration];

“~~[b.] [c.]~~ exports are secondary to creating viable food economies for Haitians; ~~[and]~~

“[d. emergency food aid to Haiti is monitored and managed in such a way that it provides incentives (and not disincentives) for local food production];

“~~[e.] [c.] [platforms are secured] [mechanisms are created]~~ for Haitian farmers to ~~[get]~~ [make] their voices heard as they advocate ~~[before]~~ [for themselves to] the Haitian government, the ICRH, USAID, and other international organizations [that are directly involved in the Haitian reconstruction].”

Rationale

This proposed resolution is highly consistent with policies approved by previous General Assemblies. In essence, it speaks to the need for transparency, accountability, and participation in decision-making processes that affect the lives of disempowered persons such as the rural poor in Haiti. The cited *Hope for a Global Future* (1996) adopts these terms as indicative of human rights principles that should guide international development efforts. Moreover, this document also emphasizes that “Women’s rights require special consideration because the evaluation of development often ignores the international feminization of poverty, and because effective development strategies must be directed to the particular roles and needs of women.”

These themes were revisited and reaffirmed in the policy paper of 2006, approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006), entitled *Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership, and Accountability*. Subsequently, the 218th General Assembly (2008) addressed the aftermath of a natural disaster on our own shores—a situation not unlike that currently prevailing in

Haiti following its earthquake—when it approved the recommendations and study entitled, *Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future*. Many of its observations are relevant for Haiti’s reconstruction efforts. For example, Recommendation 2 underscores “the Reformed Tradition’s understanding of the role of government as the arm of a whole people acting to maintain the common good.”

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 13-12

Comment on Item 13-12—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) affirms the item’s intent of uplifting and supporting the people of Haiti after the devastating earthquake. More than \$10.5 million has been given through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to enable a significant response for relief and recovery efforts related to the earthquake in Haiti. These funds supplement the initial One Great Hour of Sharing disbursement to provide for immediate assistance and long-term recovery.

Much of what is requested in recommendation 5 of this item would require alternative funds as these activities extend beyond the original donor restriction of gifts to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Item 13-13

[The assembly approved Item 13-13. See pp. 65, 69.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Appealing for Peace and Reconciliation in Korea.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

1. Expresses its solidarity with the people of Korea in their search for peace, reconciliation, and reunification on the Korean peninsula.

2. Renews its commitment to pray and work for peace, justice, and reconciliation in Korea for the well-being of all Koreans.

3. Urges the governments of South and North Korea to reopen communications with each other and to engage in genuine dialogue that reduces tensions on the peninsula, and leads to concrete steps toward peace and reconciliation.

4. Calls for an end to inflammatory rhetoric by all parties and any suggestion that the conflicts can be resolved by a resort to military action.

5. Supports strongly the replacement of the present armistice agreement with a just and lasting peace treaty between North and South Korea, brokered by the United Nations, and endorsed by the United States and other powers with interests in the region.

6. Prays for the day when the people of Korea will live as one family in a reunified, free, and peaceful nation.

[7. Directs the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to convey our convictions to the president of the United States, the Congress, the United Nations, the governments of North and South Korea, the Presbyterian Churches of Korea, and our ecumenical partners.]

Rationale

Jesus Christ came into the world as the Prince of Peace, and Jesus calls us to be peacemakers.

The people in North and South Korea have suffered more than sixty years of division, tension, separation, and alienation since the devastating war of 1950–53.

We are deeply concerned about the precarious situation in the Korean Peninsula following the recent hostilities and the decision of South and North Korea to cut off all communications links.

Korea remains in a state of war, and the current crisis of confrontation between North and South Korea carries the great potential to ignite a major conflagration on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

In order to bring a lasting resolution to the fundamental issues on the Korean peninsula, the present armistice agreement on Korea (the truce signed in 1953) should be replaced with a peace agreement that brings an end to the Korean War and provides a foundation for lasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) partner churches in South and North Korea and ecumenical bodies support strongly the peace and reconciliation of the Korean peninsula.

Hi Chul Yang, Presbytery of New York City
Shin-Hwa Park, Presbytery of The Pacific

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-13

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) advises that Item 13-13 be approved.

Rationale

Item 13-13 is written in response to the prayers of Korean and Korean American members of the PC(USA). The ACREC stands with these brothers and sisters, and prays with them for the increase of peace, and an eventual peace agreement that brings an end to the Korean War.

Item 13-14

[The assembly approved Item 13-14 with amendment. See pp. 65, 71.]

Commissioners' Resolution. On Restoration of Democracy in Madagascar and Honduras.

The 219th General Assembly (2010), concerned that U.S. foreign policy better reflect Christian and democratic standards and honor human rights, and particularly concerned about threats to church leaders and other pro-democracy groups in Madagascar and Honduras following coups in both countries, calls for the following actions of both General Assembly agencies and other councils, congregations, and members:

1. Directs the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Mission Council, and the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to communicate to the president of the United States and appropriate congressional leaders the need to support democracies by

~~a. not recognizing military or other "coup d'états";~~

b. supporting regional treaties designed to restrain powerful interests from attempting such illegitimate government take-overs, such as those occurring in Madagascar and Honduras in 2009;

c. suspending recognition, aid, and military assistance to resulting coup governments so as not to reward perpetrators;

d. supporting consistent application of international law and coordinated peacemaking action by the United Nations and member countries;

e. encouraging processes of reconciliation with justice involving violence-prevention, truth-seeking, mutual understanding, accountability, and forgiveness wherever possible;

f. strengthening U.S. diplomacy and development assistance rather than military capacities for addressing potential conflicts and tensions in countries with weak governance systems and vulnerability to climate and other disruptions.

2. Directs the Washington Office and the Presbyterian United Nations Office to

a. advocate for consistent monitoring of human rights/civil liberties standards and of laws designed to limit financial or other interference in the affairs of other nations by private interests, and to support independent judiciaries and other parties seeking transparency, anti-corruption measures, and protection or restoration of freedom of speech and association, including labor organization;

b. identify opportunities for Presbyterians to advocate on behalf of democracy and on behalf of our sisters and brothers in Honduras and Madagascar.

3. With regard to Madagascar, the 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the Stated Clerk and appropriate programs of the General Assembly Mission Council to call upon the president of the United States and leaders of the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees to

a. appeal to both the de facto government and to the United Nations to ensure the security of pastors and members of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) and to protect religious liberty and freedom of association, including free speech;

b. support multilateral dispute resolution procedures initiated by regional bodies (such as SADC and the AU) and by the United Nations, and to engage with France and China to secure the restoration of civil freedoms and environmental protection;

c. press for the release of political prisoners; the end of intimidation, harassment, and violence against opponents of the new regime; and the free use of airwaves by church-related and other radio stations. [~~The FJKM radio station, Radio Fahazavana, was closed and key staff arrested.~~]

4. With regard to Honduras, the 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the Stated Clerk and appropriate programs of the General Assembly Mission Council to call upon the president of the United States and leaders of the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees to

a. work to suspend the current policy of supporting the coup government despite opposition from most other countries in the region;

b. urge the Organization of American States, the United Nations, and nongovernmental organizations to push for the restoration of protection for opposition political leaders, labor leaders, journalists, and church leaders supporting democracy and protesting the expansion of privileges for economic elites;

c. urge a review of the U.S. policy direction in Honduras and Latin America from a human rights and economic justice standpoint.

5. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and ecumenically, the 219th General Assembly (2010) encourages congregations and individual Presbyterians to

a. pray for and with the people of Madagascar and Honduras;

b. learn about the history and current realities faced by the people of Madagascar and Honduras;

c. reflect carefully on mission opportunities in Honduras, Madagascar, and elsewhere in light of the policies of coup governments;

d. continue to stand for a priority on universal human rights, rule of law and protection of conscience in relations with other nations and peoples, and to study the biblical and confessional bases for these stances; and

e. advocate personally with representatives on the need for U.S. foreign policy to support democracy and encourage lawful transitions and fair constitutions.

6. Directs the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010), the Stated Clerk, the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council, and the appropriate staff members in World Mission to communicate with our church partners in Honduras and Madagascar and with our mission coworkers serving in those countries,

a. giving thanks for them as our sisters and brothers in Christ and for their ministries;

b. expressing our concern for them and for their country in the situation they face;

c. informing them of our ongoing prayers on behalf of them and their country;

d. sharing this action with them; and

e. reaffirming our commitment to their ministries.

Rationale

Subversion of democracy usually occurs top-down, when elections are stolen, militaries depose elected leaders, or neighboring countries invade. Corruption accompanies repression, inequality grows, and, in most cases, cultures stagnate. Exploitation of labor and destruction of environments increase. In such climates of desperation, justice is denied, morality is debased, and faith is weakened, affecting the church's witness in profound ways. Fear and hostility to minorities or perceived enemies can be spread and violence can follow. Democracy and elections are not magic antidotes to these tragic patterns, but they are avenues for hope and the possibility of positive change. The United States has symbolized the value of democracy in the past; the measures recommended here would shift the U.S. role more toward support of democratic values, particularly in the two countries of specific concern. This is not to imply that many other countries are not currently dictatorships or experiencing some measure of one-party rule, but part of coup-prevention and democracy-restoration is responsible international action before takeovers can be "normalized."

In 2008, the General Assembly approved a resolution focused on the U.S. political process, "Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 977ff). Among the biblical, theological, and ethical foundations affirmed are the convictions that "power is held in trust for the common good" (Ibid, p. 984) and that power can also magnify sin. Hence, "we affirm that fundamental basis for checks and balances of power, and the awareness of our ultimate accountability to God and not to other human beings and groups (Peter: 'we must obey God rather than men'). Along-

side the awareness of human fallibility is the strength that God gives us: “God alone is lord of the conscience and has set it free from the doctrines or rules of men (human doctrines or rules), or anything contrary to scripture” (Ibid).

Madagascar’s crisis flared in late January 2009 when Andry Rajoelina, the mayor of the capital city, Antananarivo, called for the removal of the country’s democratically-elected president, Marc Ravalomanana. Rajoelina attempted to form a parallel government, known as the High Authority of the Transition (HAT), but made little headway until mutinous army officers precipitated a coup d’état on 17 March 2009, handing power to Rajoelina. Ravalomanana fled the country, and Rajoelina consolidated his power by closing parliament and “packing” the High Constitutional Court. African organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), quickly condemned the coup and called on Madagascar’s political leaders to restore democracy. The SADC brokered multilateral talks involving supporters of Rajoelina and Ravalomanana, as well as two previous presidents, Didier Ratsirika and Albert Zafy. In late 2009, these negotiations twice reached agreement on steps to resolve the political impasse, only to have the HAT government take unilateral actions that violated and wrecked the accords. This prompted the AU and European Union to impose targeted economic and travel sanctions on key HAT officials earlier this year. The government has suppressed press freedom, arresting a number of journalists and closing down Radio Fahazavana, the station operated by the PC(USA)’s partner, the four million strong Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM). On May 20, 2010, soldiers attacked an ecumenical group of pastors who were trying to hold a worship service to pray for peace in the nation; one FJKM pastor was killed and another was badly beaten and detained. The United States initially condemned the coup (during which the U.S. ambassador was also assaulted) and has terminated economic assistance to Madagascar’s government, but it has failed to condemn publicly the human rights abuses perpetrated by the HAT government.

In Honduras, on June 28, 2009, a coup removed President Manuel Zelaya early in the morning on the day he planned to hold a nonbinding referendum to see if the population was in favor of having a constitutional assembly that would propose changes to the constitution. Military officers, including those trained at the School of the Americas (WHINSEC), deported Zelaya to Costa Rica. After initially condemning the coup, the Obama Administration accepted a quick election to confirm the coup leadership. That election was widely boycotted; the Carter Center and the United Nations declined to send observers. Only one other nation in the Organization of American States has recognized the new government. A pro-democracy coalition of labor, peasant, and other groups has been severely repressed; seven journalists have also been killed so far in 2010, and four judges were fired in May for denying the legitimacy of the coup. Labor rights gained over time in the Maquiladoras (assembly factories in the free trade zone) have been lost. All of these developments bring back sad memories of casual U.S. attitudes towards “banana republics” and support for the very forces of inequality that drive continued immigration northward.

Repairing the social fabric in Madagascar and Honduras and rebuilding trust in democratic institutions will take years, underlining how shortsighted it is to recognize coup governments. A wise Christian faith understands how God’s justice transcends human justice but also does not give up on the democratic project, knowing that God has planted the hope of freedom in every person.

Jeffrey Geary, Presbytery of Long Island
Robin Hogle, Presbytery of Hudson River

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-14

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-14—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) concurs with this resolution and advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 13-14. The resolution is consistent with PC(USA) policy and concern for human rights.

Item 14-01

[The assembly answered Item 14-01 with the action taken on Item 14-03. See pp. 50, 52.]

On Divestment from Caterpillar, Inc.—From the Presbytery of Newark.

The Presbytery of Newark, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to do the following:

1. Commend the Church of England and Hampshire College for their conscientious and courageous stands in choosing to divest their assets from Caterpillar, Inc.
2. Instruct the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to begin the process of disinvestment from Caterpillar, Inc. and to not reinvest in this corporation unless the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is fully satisfied that Caterpillar, Inc. no longer engages in the selling of equipment to Israel that is used to build illegal Israeli settlements, construct walls that illegally encroach upon Palestinian lands cutting Palestinians off from their own property and natural resources, destroy Palestinian life and property, and otherwise continue to support the occupation of Palestinian territories.
3. Communicate to all other PC(USA) judicatories and entities this action, and by its witness invite and strongly encourage any of these groups and organizations that may hold assets in Caterpillar, Inc. to divest as well.
4. Inform our ecumenical partners of this action, national, global, and especially within Israel and Palestine, encouraging them to hear our witness and follow our lead.

Rationale

In July 2004, the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), meeting in Richmond, Virginia, took the ecumenical world by storm in its decision to begin the process of engaging in selective divestment from U.S. corporations that provide support, technology, and military equipment to the Israeli government for the purposes of sustaining the occupation and destruction of life and property in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT).

At the 217th General Assembly (2006) in Birmingham, Alabama, with new overtures for divestment coming before the assembly, the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI) of the PC(USA) reported that corporate engagement with Caterpillar and four other corporations was ongoing and yielding positive results. This General Assembly chose against divestment in order to allow corporate engagement to continue as reported. For any who attended this General Assembly, it was very clear that the assembly felt that a divestment decision was premature.

Once again, divestment overtures came before the 218th General Assembly (2008) in San Jose. By this time, one corporation had been dropped from the potential divestment list and MRTI reported to Committee 11 that corporate engagement was continuing with the other four corporations. With three of those corporations there was good progress. It was reported that progress with Caterpillar, Inc. was not quite as good as with the other three but that talks were continuing and meetings were taking place. As a result of that report, even though many substantive overtures were passed in support of Palestinians in their struggle, the General Assembly once again opted for corporate engagement rather than divestment.

At the time of this reporting before the 218th General Assembly (2008), Caterpillar corporate behavior had shown no signs of change. D-9 CAT bulldozers were still destroying Palestinian homes and ripping up Palestinian agricultural lands. They also continued to be a primary tool in the nonstop construction of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Jeff Halper, executive director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), testified before Committee 11 about the devastation wreaked by CAT bulldozers in the OPT and that such activity continued unabated.

Following the 218th General Assembly (2008), no change in CAT corporate behavior was forthcoming. It was reported at the MRTI meeting on November 6, 2009, that a meeting with Caterpillar executives was unproductive. During the 2009 war in Gaza, more than 4,000 homes were completely destroyed by CAT D-9 bulldozers. In addition to this, Caterpillar employees were enlisted to tow disabled bulldozers from battlegrounds, repair them, and get them back into service as soon as possible.

At Caterpillar, Inc.'s 2009 annual meeting, investors rejected an effort by human right activists and dissident shareholders to stop the firm from selling bulldozers to Israel. Corporation CEO, Jim Owen, told the body: "If you don't like how CAT does business, you don't have to hold your shares."

At its meeting on November 5, 6, and 7, 2009, in Cincinnati, it was reported to MRTI that corporate engagement, in the manner by which it had been employed since 2004, was no longer working in regard to CAT. After discussion and debate about what the next step should be, on November 7th, MRTI decided to recommend to the General Assembly Mission Coun-

cil (GAMC) February 2010 meeting that it adopt a statement of denouncement in regard to the behavior of Caterpillar, Inc. for purposes of forwarding this to the 219th General Assembly (2010) in Minneapolis for action. The statement began as a denouncement, but was amended to include words of commendation for Caterpillar business practices outside of the OPT.

By its own admission, MRTI now recognizes that the corporate engagement encouraged and endorsed by three successive General Assemblies is not working. With its recommendation to GAMC, MRTI believes that it is continuing its corporate engagement with Caterpillar, Inc. in a new way. CAT's unchanged behavior and failure to seriously engage in conversation with our denomination, its decision at the 2009 shareholder annual meeting, and the public statement of the company's CEO are all clear indications that the corporation has no intentions of changing its business practices whatsoever.

Three successive General Assemblies have made it clear that in regard to our investments with Caterpillar, Inc. there are only two options before us: (1) Engagement as shareholders in the company to effect substantive change towards just business practices in regard to the OPT, or (2) Divestment from all assets held by the PC(USA) in CAT. It is believed by the writers and endorsers of this overture that a public statement of denouncement, with a smattering of praise, will not change CAT corporate behavior. In the meantime, more settlements will be built in the West Bank, more Palestinian land and natural resources will be stolen, the presence of indigenous Palestinian Christianity will continue its rapid decline in the land of Christ's birth, and more Palestinians will die. Now that corporate engagement is no longer a realistic option, the only option left is disinvestment. It is no longer a question about how long we can wait, but rather, whether we will do the right thing, or even anything at all.

The writers and endorsers of this overture deeply understand that decisions like these are extremely difficult. We know that by taking such action we hurt the feelings and spirits of some who we call our fellow Presbyterian brothers and sisters, as well as the people of God outside of our fold. We recommend such action with profound humility, confession of our brokenness as a human race, and with an ongoing desire for reconciliation even in the face of serious disagreement. In light of the reality that we are called to address injustice and oppression in this world in the name of Jesus Christ, the internal work of healing that we must do within our denominational fellowship and outside of it is both our burden and obligation as we carry forth this work. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we can heal hearts and spirits within our own house, and outside of it, as a result of the decisions we make. What we cannot do is take back the death and destruction that is happening daily in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as a result of sinful corporate policy.

We have no illusions that this recommended action will actually sway Caterpillar, Inc. to engage in better and more just business practices, although we always pray for this eventuality. What it will do, however, is keep us consistent with the following affirmation: *We are the Church of Jesus Christ. When the powers of the world decide that they will conduct business as usual, and that business is contrary to the teachings of Christ and the will of God for humanity, then it is time for the church to end its complicity in this sinful behavior. If we do not, then we remain unrepentant.*

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 14-01 be answered by the action on Item 14-03. A more complete Advice and Counsel with proposed changes may be found there.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 14-01 be approved.

Rationale

Answered by comments on Items 14-02 and 14-03.

We agree that corporate engagement has not worked. As faithful Christians, we can no longer support the actions of Caterpillar, Inc., which has chosen to continue to sell equipment to the Israeli government that is being used to unjustly cause death and destruction in Palestinian communities. We support the comment by the Newark Presbytery: "We are the Church of Jesus Christ. When the powers of the world decide that they will conduct business as usual, and that business is contrary to the teachings of Christ and the will of God for humanity, then it is time for the church to end its complicity in this sinful behavior."

Item 14-02

[The assembly answered Item 14-02 with the action taken on Item 14-03. See pp. 50, 52.]

On Divestment from Caterpillar, Inc.—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

The Presbytery of San Francisco overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Affirm that the occupation of Palestine needs to end, both for the sake of justice between Jews, Christians, and Muslims and to prevent the extinction of Christianity in Jerusalem and the West Bank.
2. Affirm that church investments should not support or profit from injustice and that actions of corporate divestment, when other shareholder engagement has not succeeded, are based both in the church's own integrity and in the likelihood of greater continuing witness and effective influence from the outside, as was the case in the worldwide ecumenical campaign against South African apartheid.
3. Commend the Church of England and Hampshire College (among others) for their conscientious and courageous stands in choosing to divest their assets from Caterpillar, Inc., a company internationally known to be instrumental in the construction of the separation wall on occupied land and the destruction of Palestinian homes.
4. Instruct the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to begin the process of disinvestment from Caterpillar, Inc., and not to reinvest in this corporation unless the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is fully satisfied that Caterpillar, Inc. no longer engages in the selling of equipment to Israel that is used to build illegal Israeli settlements, construct walls that illegally encroach upon Palestinian lands that cut Palestinians off from their own property and natural resources, destroy Palestinian life and property, and otherwise continue to support the occupation of Palestinian territories.
5. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to all other PC(USA) judicatories and entities, and invite and strongly encourage those groups and organizations that hold assets in Caterpillar, Inc. to divest as well.
6. Direct the State Clerk to inform our ecumenical partners of this action, both nationally and globally—particularly within Israel and Palestine—encouraging them to hear this witness and consider following suit in applying social responsibility and human rights criteria to other companies in their portfolios that support the occupation of Palestine.

Rationale

In July 2004, the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), meeting in Richmond, Virginia, took the ecumenical world by storm in its decision to begin the process of engaging in selective divestment from U.S. corporations that provide support, technology, and military equipment to the Government of Israel to sustain the occupation of the Palestinian Territories. During the six years following that action, prospects for a viable two-state solution in Israel and Palestine have declined, and the number of Christians in occupied Palestine has decreased steadily.

At the 217th General Assembly (2006) in Birmingham, Alabama, with new overtures for divestment coming before the Assembly, the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI) of the PC(USA) reported that corporate engagement with Caterpillar and four other corporations was ongoing and yielding positive results. This General Assembly chose against divestment in order to allow corporate engagement to continue as reported.

Once again, divestment overtures came before the 218th General Assembly (2008) in San Jose. By this time, one corporation had been dropped from the potential divestment list and MRTI reported to Committee 11 that corporate engagement was continuing with the other four corporations. With three of those corporations there was good progress. It was reported that progress with Caterpillar, Inc. (CAT) was not quite as good as with the other three but that talks were continuing and meetings were taking place. As a result of that report, even though many substantive overtures were passed in support of Palestinians in their struggle, the General Assembly once again opted for corporate engagement rather than divestment.

At the time of the report to the 218th General Assembly (2008), Caterpillar corporate behavior had shown no signs of change. CAT bulldozers were still being used to destroy Palestinian homes and ripping up Palestinian agricultural lands. They also continued to be a primary tool in the nonstop construction of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Jeff Halper, Executive Director of the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (ICAHD), testified before Committee 11 about the devastation wreaked by CAT bulldozers in the Palestinian Territories and that such activity continued unabated. The lawsuit *Corrie v Caterpillar* (2003–09) was dismissed after finding that CAT was a military provider and therefore the court did not have jurisdiction because adjudication would intrude upon the executive branch's foreign policy decisions. Though CAT was labeled a military provider, their investment status among PC(USA) institutions hasn't changed.

Following the 218th General Assembly (2008), no change in CAT corporate behavior was forthcoming. It was reported at the MRTI meeting on November 6, 2009, that a meeting with Caterpillar executives was unproductive. During the 2009 war in Gaza, over 4000 homes were completely destroyed by CAT bulldozers. In addition to this, Caterpillar employees were enlisted to tow disabled bulldozers from battlegrounds, repair them, and get them back into service as soon as possible, "... marking the first time the [Israeli] army will be conscripting the staff of a private firm in wartime." (Anshel Pfeffer, "IDF to draft civilians to maintain bulldozers in battle," *Haaretz*, November 3, 2009, <<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1070057.html>>) As of April 7, 2009, ICAHD estimates that 21,145 homes have been demolished since 1967. There have been 315 house demolitions in East Jerusalem alone in 2009.

At Caterpillar's 2009 annual meeting, investors rejected an effort by human right activists, dissident shareholders, and the interfaith coalition of Christian and Jewish investors with whom the PC(USA) partnered to stop the firm from selling bulldozers to Israel. Corporation CEO, Jim Owens, told the body that: If you don't like how CAT does business, you don't have to hold your shares. By their own admission, stopping these sales will have minimal impact on Caterpillar's business, but it would have a great impact on the lives of Palestinians and all people of good will in the region.

At its meeting on November 5–7, 2009, in Cincinnati, Ohio, it was reported to MRTI that corporate engagement, in the manner in which it had been employed since 2004, was no longer working in regard to CAT. After discussion and debate about what the next step should be, on November 7, 2009, MRTI decided to recommend to the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC)—at its February 2010 meeting—adoption of a statement of denouncement in regard to the behavior of Caterpillar, and send it to the 219th General Assembly (2010) in Minneapolis for action. The statement began as a denouncement, but was amended to include words of commendation for Caterpillar business practices outside of the Palestinian Territories.

By its own admission, MRTI now recognizes that the corporate engagement encouraged and endorsed by three successive General Assemblies is not working. With its recommendation to GAMC, MRTI believes that it is continuing its corporate engagement with Caterpillar in a new way. CAT's unchanged behavior and failure to engage seriously in conversation with the denomination, its decision at the 2009 shareholder annual meeting, and the public statement of the company's CEO are all clear indications that the corporation has no intentions of changing its business practices whatsoever.

Three successive General Assemblies have made it clear that in regard to the church's investments with Caterpillar there are only two options: 1) engagement as shareholders in the company to effect substantive change towards just business practices in regard to the Palestinian Territories, or 2) divestment from all assets held by the PC(USA) in CAT. It is believed by the writers and endorsers of this overture that a public statement of denouncement, with a smattering of praise, will not change CAT corporate behavior. In the meantime, more settlements will be built in the West Bank, more Palestinian land and natural resources will be stolen, the presence of indigenous Palestinian Christianity will continue its rapid decline in the land of Christ's birth, and more Palestinians will die. Now that corporate engagement is no longer a realistic option, the only option left is disinvestment. It is no longer a question about how long the church can wait, but rather, whether it will do the right thing, or even anything at all.

The writers and endorsers of this overture deeply understand that decisions like these are extremely difficult. We know that by taking this action we hurt the feelings and spirits of some of our Presbyterian brothers and sisters, as well as the people of God outside of the Presbyterian church. We recommend such action with profound humility, confession of our brokenness as a human race, and with an ongoing desire for reconciliation even in the face of serious disagreement. In light of the reality that we are called to address injustice and oppression in this world in the name of Jesus Christ, the internal work of healing that we must do within our denominational fellowship and outside of it is both a burden and obligation as we carry forth this work. What we cannot do is take back the death and destruction that is happening daily in the Palestinian Territories as a result of sinful corporate policy.

We have no illusions that this recommended action will actually sway Caterpillar to engage in better and more just business practices, although we pray for this eventuality. What it will do, however, is keep the church consistent with the following affirmation: *We are the Church of Jesus Christ. When the powers of the world decide that they will conduct business as usual, and that business is contrary to the teachings of Christ and the will of God for humanity, then it is time for the church to end its complicity in this sinful behavior. If we do not, then we remain unrepentant.*

Bibliographical Information

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) statement on divestment and update on the situation, <www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/israelpalestineresolution.htm>.

Information on the MRTI meeting came from personal accounts and from PC(USA) News, see the report at: <www.pcusa.org/gamc/business/sept09/information/224.pdf>.

Information on the CAT bulldozers and their destruction in was collected from several sources, most notably: <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/FactFindingMission.htm>>; The most pertinent information is found on pages 210–14 of the report. There are many references to the use of bulldozers in these pages of the report, but in regard to the D-9 CAT

bulldozer involvement, note the following footnote #509 on page 212: *One soldier recalls: "There was a point where D-9s were razing areas. It was amazing. At first you go in and see lots of houses. A week later, after the razing, you see the horizon further away, almost to the sea. They simply took down all the houses around so terrorists would have nowhere else to hide."*

See also: <www.icahd.org>, under the tab "Demolition Statistics Since 1967".

Steadfast Hope, Israel-Palestine Mission Network of the PC(USA), <<http://www.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org/>>, pp. 28–29 in particular. The accompanying DVD speaks specifically on the use of CAT bulldozers for destruction of Palestinian property, showing footage of such bulldozers at work.

Two particular sources for Jim Owens' statement, <www.ramallahonline.com> search: *Jim Owens says* (exact phrase), and Sydney Levy of Jewish Voice for Peace, citing witnesses to CEO Jim Owens statement, <www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org>.

"MRTI recommends denouncement of Caterpillar, Inc. for corporate irresponsibility in Israel/Palestine," Presbyterian News, <www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09964.htm>.

Concurrence with Item 14-02 from the Presbytery of San Jose.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 14-02 be answered by the action on Item 14-03. A more complete Advice and Counsel with proposed changes may be found there.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 14-02 be approved.

Rationale

Please see our comments to Item 14-01 and 14-03.

Since 2004, the PC(USA), through the MRTI, has made several attempts of corporate engagement with Caterpillar, Inc., to encourage the company not to sell its products to the Israeli government. In 2009, however, at Caterpillar's annual meeting, investors rejected a proposal to stop selling bulldozers to Israel. The MRTI was advised that as of November 2009, corporate engagement was no longer working. We agree that corporate engagement has not worked. As faithful Christians, we can no longer support the actions of Caterpillar, Inc., which has chosen to continue to sell equipment to the Israeli government that is being used to unjustly cause death and destruction in Palestinian communities. It is time to divest.

Item 14-03

[The assembly approved Item 14-03. See pp. 50, 52.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the Report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) of Its Engagement with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank, and do the following:

1. Renew the call of previous General Assemblies to all corporations doing business in the region to confine their business activity solely to peaceful pursuits, and refrain from allowing their products or services to support or facilitate violent acts by Israelis or Palestinians against innocent civilians, construction and maintenance of settlements or Israeli-only roads in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory, and construction of the Separation Barrier as it extends beyond the 1967 "Green Line" into Palestinian territories.

2. Continue to urge all corporations doing business in the region to seek proactive ways to promote respect for human rights, peace building, and equal employment opportunity.

3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), to continue the corporate engagement process with identified companies doing business in the region, as follows:

a. That the engagement with Motorola, ITT, United Technologies, and Hewlett-Packard be continued, together with ecumenical partners, as part of MRTI's regular work plan, in accordance with the previously identified positions and priorities of the General Assembly, and subject to ordinary reporting to each General Assembly and report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) on its work including appropriate recommendations.

b. Whereas the Spirit of Christ "... gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace" (*The Book of Confessions*, A Brief Statement of Faith—Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), lines 66–71), we seek to fulfill this calling by continued engagement with Caterpillar in accordance with the following policy statement of the 219th General Assembly (2010):

Caterpillar, Inc. has produced, sold, and profited from equipment that has been and continues to be used—with or without modifications made by their exclusive dealers and by others—for clearly non-peaceful purposes. Caterpillar thus profits from continued actions by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and other government agencies (at times by private companies under contract with government entities or on construction projects approved by Israeli government bodies) that have been condemned by the international community and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). These uses include (but are not limited to) the demolition of the homes of Palestinian civilians, the building of Israeli settlements and the separation barrier on Palestinian territory that is occupied illegally by Israel, and the provision of (and possible conscription in the future) of civilian employees of Caterpillar's exclusive dealer to the Israeli military for the purpose of maintaining Caterpillar equipment for military purposes.

The inaction of Caterpillar in addressing the injustice and pain caused by its failure to monitor and take actions to prevent such uses by its Israeli dealer is inconsistent with our stated position calling on all corporations doing business in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank "to confine their business activity solely to peaceful pursuits and refrain from allowing their products or services to support or facilitate violent acts by Israelis or Palestinians against innocent civilians, construction and maintenance of settlements or Israel-only roads in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory and construction of the Separation Barrier as it extends beyond the 1967 'Green Line' into Palestinian territories."

Further, Caterpillar has been slow to engage the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment and the broader ecumenical community in these shareholders' earnest attempts to have constructive conversation about these concerns. For extended periods, the company was unwilling to meet. When they have met, they have denied any responsibility for how their products are used or for their knowledge of the clear purposes for which these products are acquired from Caterpillar's dealers. Caterpillar's representatives have been dismissive of the ecumenical community's concerns, and their responses (or lack thereof) have stood in sharp contrast with those of other companies doing business in Israel/Palestine. While we might like to see greater progress in some of those other dialogues, Caterpillar's unwillingness to engage with authenticity and openness is unique and disappointing. Their actions do not provide much encouragement about the possibility for real change coming through conversation and correspondence conducted "behind the scenes."

In contrast to its unyielding stance on this specific issue, Caterpillar has in many ways provided positive leadership to its community, its state, and the nation. It has donated considerable resources and equipment in support of local development and disaster relief at home and overseas. It has significantly improved workplace safety, acted aggressively to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and pursued environmental conservation within its production processes. In recognition of these accomplishments, Caterpillar has been listed for seven consecutive years in the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. But these positive acts do not excuse the severity of the particular injustice that is being done to the Palestinian people through the use, in part, of certain Caterpillar products and from which Caterpillar profits directly or indirectly. This injustice undermines Caterpillar's own stated commitment to human rights and positive global citizenship.

On the basis of Christian principles and as a matter of social witness, the 219th General Assembly (2010) strongly denounces Caterpillar's continued profit-making from non-peaceful uses of a number of its products. We call upon Caterpillar to carefully review its involvement in obstacles to a just and lasting peace in Israel-Palestine, and to take affirmative steps to end its complicity in the violation of human rights. We hope that, by God's grace, Caterpillar will come to exercise its considerable power and influence in the service of a just and lasting peace in Israel/Palestine.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referrals:

2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 11-01. On Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel, Recommendation 6. Instruct the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to Report Regularly to the General Assembly Council on Its Communication and the Compliance, or Lack Thereof, by Caterpillar, Motorola, and Other Corporations In-

volved with Regard to General Assembly Guidelines and Concerns for Justice and Human Rights—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 46, 1137–39).

2008 Referral: Item 11-27. Report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment of Its Engagement with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank. Recommendation 4. Direct the General Assembly Council, Through Its Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, to Continue the Corporate Engagement Process, and Report on Its Status with Any Recommendations to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 46, 47, 1223–25).

Report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment of Its Engagement
with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank

MRTI Report on Engagement with Corporations on Israel-Palestine Issues from 2004 to 2009

Historical Background: 2004-2006

The 212th General Assembly (2004) instructed the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to begin a process of “phased, selective divestment” related to corporations doing business in Israel. Following the assembly, MRTI initiated a process consistent with General Assembly (GA) policy. First, MRTI reviewed the 1984 GA policy on the use of divestment as a strategy for socially responsible investing, and the criteria for consideration of any recommendation for divestment. Also reviewed was the 1985 GA policy describing the process of phased, selective divestment.

At its first meeting following the General Assembly, MRTI identified GA policy positions on the obstacles to a just peace in Israel and Palestine. These included the ongoing violence perpetrated by Israelis and Palestinians against innocent people; the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and United Nations resolutions; the presence of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories; the construction of the separation barrier; and the need for a viable Palestinian economy to enhance the possibility of a successful Palestinian state. These GA policies were incorporated into criteria to focus the research into corporations that may be profiting from involvement in any of the obstacles to a just peace. The MRTI also adopted a clear statement on the process of progressive engagement of any such companies that affirmed the cycle of dialogue, shareholder resolutions, and proxy voting and more dialogue before MRTI would be in any position to consider recommending possible divestment action to the General Assembly. This was reported to the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), and publicized widely.

The MRTI conducted research to determine which corporations, if any, met the criteria. In August 2005, MRTI reviewed the research to select from among the identified companies an initial group to engage. These were Caterpillar, Citigroup, ITT Industries, Motorola, and United Technologies. The MRTI also maintained contact with various ecumenical partners that were committed to engaging companies on the issue of their involvement in Israel and Palestine. These included the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, and several Roman Catholic religious orders.

The MRTI began the process of contacting and meeting with the five companies (meetings were held with Citigroup, ITT Industries, and Motorola), communication with the presbyteries where the companies are headquartered, and continued interpretation of the process to the church and the general public. The MRTI also worked ecumenically on strategies for proactive investment in Israel and Palestine by churches and corporations in consultation with James Wolfensohn, special envoy for the Quartet (the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Russia), whose charge included helping to rebuild the Palestinian economy.

2006–2008

In 2006, the General Assembly responded to numerous overtures regarding corporate engagement on Israel-Palestine issues, and approved a statement urging that “... financial investments of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as they pertain to Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank, be invested in only peaceful pursuits, and affirm that the customary corporate engagement process of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment of our denomination is the proper vehicle for achieving this goal” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 944.)

Ecumenical Activities

The MRTI continued its work with considerable time devoted to fostering ecumenical cooperation on engagement. To that end, an informal table called the Ecumenical Action Group: Investment for a Just Peace in Israel /Palestine (EAG) was created. As a result, corporate dialogues were expanded to include participation by representatives of other Protestant denominations and Roman Catholic religious orders. These have included the Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church (General Board of Global Ministries, General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Pensions and Benefits, and the New England Conference), United Church of Canada, Mercy

Asset Management, the Passionists, Ursuline Sisters, and the Dominican Sisters. Also participating has been KAIROS Canada and the World Council of Churches.

In October 2007, the World Council of Churches convened a meeting of U.S., Canadian, and European churches working on corporate engagement. As a result, there has been increased sharing of research, and broader participation in dialogues and shareholder resolutions. United States and Canadian churches continue to cooperate in the EAG.

In Europe, churches in the Netherlands reported on engagements with a Dutch company that subsequently moved its facilities out of the West Bank and back into Israel. Swedish churches were instrumental in convincing Assa Abloy, a locksmithing company, to move its facility out of the Barkan settlement in the West Bank to the other side of the Green Line. This ecumenical cooperation has helped identify several European and other companies with extensive ties to the Occupation including Veolia, AIG, Ahava, and Alstom.

Corporate Engagement

Additional dialogues were held with Motorola and Citigroup. These dialogues were the first step of the corporate engagement mandated by the 216th and 217th General Assemblies (2004 and 2006). Corporate engagement is a deliberate process outlined in the basic policies of the General Assembly on socially responsible investment, dating to 1971, 1976, and 1984. Elements of this process include research, correspondence, dialogue, proxy voting, and the possible filing of shareholder resolutions. Only after all other options fail to achieve the desired results, the committee on MRTI, through the GAMC, may recommend to the GA divestment from particular corporations.

Citigroup: The Citigroup dialogue was highly productive. The primary concern with Citigroup involved an allegation that Citigroup had provided insufficient controls to prevent the transfer of funds to Palestinian organizations supporting violence. In conversation with MRTI representatives, the company provided assurance that the bank had robust controls in place to monitor and prevent questionable money transfers. There have been no subsequent reports alleging inappropriate funds transfers by Citigroup. In addition, Citigroup expressed willingness to assist the religious community with exploring how to increase microcredit lending in the region to address the lack of adequate investment opportunities in Palestine. Therefore, in June 2007, MRTI removed Citigroup from its focus list of companies for corporate engagement.

Motorola: The dialogue focused on human rights standards and conventions, and explored the company's involvement in the occupation through sales of military communications products, fuses for bombs, security technology for Jewish Israeli settlements on the West Bank, and operating a cell phone business in the West Bank. Motorola denied that any of its activities implicate it in the Israeli occupation, or raise human rights concerns. A shareholder resolution addressing broader human rights issues was filed by several religious shareholders in the fall of 2007. In response, Motorola requested a follow-up meeting, which occurred in January 2008. The company indicated its intent to review and amend its policies but would not specify the particular changes under consideration and made clear that its human rights policies would not be applied to their business relationships with foreign governments. This lack of clarity and limited scope led the religious investors, including MRTI representatives, to decline to withdraw their resolution, which went to a vote at the annual shareholders meeting on May 5, 2008. It received more than 12 percent of the shareholder vote, enough to be resubmitted in 2009. Although the conversation with Motorola has been less productive than hoped, religious shareholders agree that more in-depth dialogue on corporate social responsibility and human rights might potentially create a more productive arena for analyzing the Israel-Palestine conflict and other world situations and ought to be continued.

Caterpillar: The resolution at Caterpillar requested the board of directors to review the company's human rights policies and amend them where applicable. Caterpillar also received a resolution on foreign military sales from a coalition of shareholders including several Roman Catholic religious orders and Jewish Voice for Peace.

There were two developments at Caterpillar. First, several religious shareholders sent a letter to the company requesting a meeting to discuss nonmilitary sales of company products in Israel and Palestine. The company replied by letter on December 13, 2007. While not responding to the request for a meeting, the company said for the first time that "As an industry leader, Caterpillar advocates responsible use of our equipment. We expect our customers to use the products they purchase from us in environmentally responsible ways and consistent with human rights and requirements of international humanitarian law."

Secondly, the resolution submitted by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Dominican Sisters produced a dialogue on January 30, 2008. Caterpillar representatives reviewed their Worldwide Code of Business Conduct. Discussion focused on the human rights dimensions of the code, what it included or omitted, and who beyond the company's employees it affected or not. Religious shareholders, including MRTI representatives, raised the need to address the end-use of company products, particularly in countries with human-rights challenges. After further discussions, the shareholders agreed to withdraw the resolution from consideration at the 2008 annual meeting in exchange for an ecumenical dialogue with the company on human rights and the end use of Caterpillar products.

The dialogue was held in July 2008 on the subject of the end-use of Caterpillar products in light of the company's statement on its expectations for the use of its products. The dialogue included the Episcopal Church, Mercy Asset Management, United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and three Boards of the United Methodist Church. The

discussion focused on human rights and humanitarian law and conventions, and the company's expectation that its customers would abide by these standards. The company considers its dealers as its customers. While it meets with its dealers regularly, and would terminate this relationship if it learned that a dealer was offering bribes, it has no mechanism for enforcement of its human rights expectations. The church representatives also requested information from Caterpillar on the customers of its Israeli dealer, particularly major construction companies that are involved in building the illegal settlements and Israeli-only roads in the Occupied Territories, the construction of the separation barrier, and the demolition of Palestinian homes. Caterpillar did say it had retained a consultant to advise them in making philanthropic grants in the region.

ITT Industries: The resolution at ITT Industries requested a report on foreign military sales. On March 4, 2008, religious shareholders, including MRTI representatives, met with ITT Industries. The company wanted to discuss its new corporate ethics program rather than foreign military sales. ITT's position is that it will not disclose its foreign military sales claiming that all the information is publicly available. ITT had challenged the resolution at the Securities and Exchange Commission. The SEC's decision upholding the shareholders was announced later in March. The resolution was voted on at the ITT Industries annual meeting on May 13, 2008, receiving more than 7 percent of the proxy vote.

United Technologies: The resolution to United Technologies requested that ethical criteria be applied to foreign military contracts, and, with the Episcopal Church as the primary filer, was supported by 23.8 percent of shareholders voting at the annual meeting; a very strong showing, considering resolutions of this nature submitted to major defense contractors routinely receive 3 to 5 percent of the shareholder vote. The vote was sufficient to qualify the resolution for automatic reconsideration at next year's annual meeting. The Episcopal Church had a brief phone conversation with company officials, and received a commitment to a dialogue on developing a human rights policy.

2008 General Assembly

Regular reports on the corporate engagement process were made to the GAMC. The 218th General Assembly (2008) received a comprehensive report on MRTI work that included the committee's belief that more engagement was the appropriate course of action at that time. It also called upon corporations doing business in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank "... to confine their business activity solely to peaceful pursuits, and refrain from allowing their products or services to support or facilitate violent acts by Israelis or Palestinians against innocent civilians, construction and maintenance of settlements or Israeli-only roads in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory, and construction of the Separation Barrier as it extends beyond the 1967 "Green Line" into Palestinian territories" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1223).

The GA also directed MRTI "to continue the corporate engagement process, and report on its status with any recommendations to the 2010 General Assembly" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1223).

2008–2010

In accordance with this directive, the corporate engagement process continued in late 2008 and 2009.

Caterpillar: A second dialogue was held on September 10, 2009, to continue the discussion of the previous year. Additional information had become public that was added to the agenda for discussion. An article in *Haaretz*, an Israeli newspaper, dated March 11, 2009, reported on the close relationship between Caterpillar's Israeli dealership and the Israeli military. This includes selling the Caterpillar D-9 bulldozers to the Israeli Defense Forces who has them weaponized by an Israeli company. The article notes that the IDF has used these bulldozers from the mid 1980s, and has hundreds of them in its arsenal. After that, the Caterpillar dealer provides maintenance work. The dealership's mechanics provided maintenance in the recent Gaza war (These dealership employees maintained and serviced Caterpillar equipment during the Gaza War of January 2009, when more than 1,300 civilians were killed and the entire civilian infrastructure of the territory was destroyed) and the Second Lebanon War. The dealership noted publicly its close working relationship with the Israeli Defense Forces, according to *Haaretz* in an article dated March 17, 2009, the IDF also "is planning to draft civilian bulldozer-maintenance personnel for reserve duty, marking the first time the army will be conscripting the staff of a private firm in wartime."

The dialogue clarified several issues, but did not produce any progress. Company officials made it clear that the company took no responsibility for the use of its products even by its dealers (the only party considered to be a customer), had no procedure in place for monitoring or ensuring compliance with Caterpillar's stated expectations even in a situation with a documented historic pattern of the equipment being used in human rights violations, and no desire to develop such a procedure. Further, they indicated that Caterpillar, although a global company doing business in virtually every country except where prohibited by U.S. law, had no capacity to evaluate whether particular actions are in accord with human rights conventions or international humanitarian law. Finally, Caterpillar did not provide information on whether its dealership was selling equipment to major construction companies building the illegal settlements, the separation barrier, or the Jewish Israeli-only roads in the occupied territories as requested. It also did not provide an update on the effort to expand its philanthropic activities as announced at the 2008 meeting.

Meanwhile, a shareholder resolution requesting a report on foreign military sales was refiled by Jewish Voice for Peace and several Roman Catholic religious orders for consideration at the 2009 stockholders meeting in June. The resolution garnered slightly less than six percent of the shareholder vote, and failed to requalify automatically for the 2010 meeting. Whether they will switch to another resolution is unclear. (Note: A new CEO has been appointed to take office at Caterpillar, July 22, 2010.)

Motorola: A shareholder resolution similar to the one from 2008 was filed with Motorola requesting that the company amend its human rights policies “to conform more fully with international human rights and humanitarian standards...” The resolution was co-filed by the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church, Mercy Investment Program, and the Episcopal Church. The company did not respond to a request in the filing letter for a meeting to discuss the resolution. When the filers tried to set one up following the annual meeting, the company declined, but offered to answer written questions. The stockholder meeting was held on May 4, 2009. Speaking in support of the resolution, which received 9.7 percent of the vote, were representatives of the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Meanwhile, the involvement of Motorola in the occupation has lessened in some important ways. The sale of armaments work by Motorola Israel means that it no longer makes bomb fuses for the Israeli military, or the wide area sensing surveillance system being deployed around the illegal settlements. Motorola also announced its intention to sell its Israeli cell phone company, and has sought bids from potential buyers. The company supplied cell phones to the Israeli soldiers operating in the Occupied Territories, and built cell towers in the illegal settlements.

ITT Industries: The company has supplied the Israeli military with night-vision and communications equipment. Following up on the resolution from last year, an updated version was filed requesting a report on the company’s foreign military sales (ITT Industries derived 46 percent of its fiscal 2007 revenue from military business). The resolution was co-filed by the Dominican Sisters of Hope, the Mercy Investment Program, and the Episcopal Church. A meeting was held on March 4, 2009, at the company’s offices. The company was represented by its senior corporate counsel, the counsel for its defense division, and its public affairs official. The MRTI staff was joined by a representative of the Presbytery of Hudson River and Sr. Valerie Heinonen of the Mercy Investment Program. ITT Industries continues to maintain, however, that it cannot discuss specific sales, even in countries with serious human rights challenges. However, as the company is currently barred from military contracts unless a special exemption is given, there does not appear to be recent sales to the IDF. ITT Industries is interested in developing a more specific human rights policy, but has ruled out that it would stop future sales to the IDF.

The resolution received nearly 7 percent of the shareholder vote at the May 2009 annual meeting. It can be refiled for the 2010 meeting.

United Technologies: The Episcopal Church filed a resolution with United Technologies asking for a report on the ethical criteria for its foreign military sales. The company agreed to develop the report, and a meeting was held on August 17, 2009, to discuss how the report and a policy on sales would be implemented. This was the first meeting with company officials, and was a productive session according to the participants.

Hewlett-Packard: On March 5, 2009, several religious shareholders were scheduled to hold a conference call with Hewlett-Packard, and had submitted a detailed list of questions for the discussion. The company then cancelled the call saying it would respond in writing, and only then consider a meeting. The shareholders reviewed the company’s written answers, and noted that they were vague or incomplete. The General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church contacted the company to renew the request for a dialogue. Hewlett-Packard again declined saying they would only respond in writing. Two rounds of letters produced only vague answers to the shareholders’ questions.

The company sells hardware to the Israeli Navy that is used for its operational communications, logistics, and planning including the ongoing naval blockade of the Gaza Strip. This blockade has included interdicting humanitarian supplies by attacking or turning back international vessels carrying the supplies, and attacks on Palestinian fishermen. The company also is involved through its ownership of Electronic Data Systems in providing electronic biometric identification scanning equipment to monitor Palestinians at several checkpoints inside the West Bank.

Soldiers in the IDF are issued a Tadiran Communications ruggedized personal digital assistant (RPDA) based on the Hewlett-Packard IPAQ . This RPDA has been selected for Israel’s Anog soldier modernization program. Its use enforces the occupation. In July 2009, HP won a contract for the installation of software products in a three-year IDF virtualization tender offer valued at an estimated \$15 million, with a two-year option to extend. Further, Hewlett-Packard’s HP Invent subsidiary outsources information technology services to Talpiot, a subsidiary of Matrix. Talpiot’s main outsourcing center is in the illegal West Bank settlement of Modi’in Illit. By using Talpiot’s services, clients of the company are profiting from the company’s relationship with an illegal settlement, and are helping solidify the occupation. Finally, as with Motorola Israel, HP’s Israeli subsidiary does not disclose its equal employment opportunity record of its hiring practices.

A shareholder resolution was developed requesting a review of HP’s human rights policies, and a report on their implementation. It was filed by the PC(USA), United Methodist General Board of Pensions and Benefits, and four Roman Catholic religious orders. The filing letters requested an opportunity for dialogue, and prompted a positive response by the company.

On October 28, 2009, several religious participants met with company officials by conference call. The discussion reviewed HP's policies and procedures, and identified issues of concern for further discussion. Participants were grateful for the positive atmosphere, and willingness to cooperate. As the company agreed to initiate a board of directors level review of its human rights policy, and committed to positive follow-up to the issues identified in the dialogue, the shareholders decided to withdraw the resolution.

Summary: While progress might not be as complete or as rapid as we might hope, the committee believes there has been progress in our dialogues with four of the five current companies we have been intentionally engaging in the process that began six years ago:

1. Motorola has taken positive steps, though some of these steps were likely motivated by business decisions rather than engagement with investors. In any case, the effort has seen positive results as the company has reduced its involvement in obstacles to a just peace.

2. ITT has seen a decrease in sales to conflicted regions, largely due to restrictions on sales to the U.S. Department of Defense. The company has been willing to meet with MRTI, and local Presbyterians have contributed in positive ways to establishing opportunities for dialogue. Continued engagement would focus on the company's human rights practices.

3. United Technologies was always less involved in the region than some others, with most of their involvement coming as a subcontractor for companies with larger financial stakes. The company is open to further conversation.

4. HP had expressed some hesitation about meeting with ecumenical investors but following the filing of a shareholder resolution has apparently received the dialogue with openness and sincerity. The company has committed to continued conversations.

The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment is deeply disappointed that the dialogue between the Caterpillar corporation and our committee (together with ecumenical partners) has not borne more fruit. Caterpillar continues to accept no responsibility for the end use of their products. Over many years, the company has not indicated a willingness to review its policies for distribution or sales in conflicted areas like Israel/Palestine, and does not acknowledge a responsibility for its dealers' adherence to human rights law in these areas.

Caterpillar's own high standards of global citizenship are being undermined by its unwillingness to critically self-assess its own conduct in Israel/Palestine. It is the conclusion of MRTI that further efforts to engage Caterpillar through ordinary means (including shareholder resolutions, and written and oral communications) are unlikely to be successful.

While not all of Caterpillar's operations are involved in non-peaceful pursuits, a significant portion of them are. Thus, the company does not measure up to the General Assembly's stated position that the church's investments in companies doing business in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank be in companies involved in only peaceful pursuits.

The committee calls upon all potential customers and investors to carefully review the human rights records of Caterpillar and any other companies doing business in the region as they make their own decisions as consumers and investors. The committee stands ready to take whatever steps going forward as the assembly may direct.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 14-03 calls for the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI)'s Report on Its Engagement with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 14-03 with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“3. b. ... we seek to fulfill this calling by [~~continued engagement with Caterpillar in accordance with the~~] [completing six years of corporate engagement efforts through the public witness of divesting all Caterpillar, Inc. securities and requesting church investment bodies to refrain from re-investing until the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is satisfied that Caterpillar no longer profits from the non-peaceful uses of its equipment, as described in] the following policy statement of the 219th General Assembly (2010)...

“...This injustice undermines Caterpillar's own stated commitment to human rights and positive global citizenship.

“[On the basis of Christian principles and as a matter of social witness, the 219th General Assembly (2010) strongly denounces Caterpillar’s continued profit making from non-peaceful uses of a number of its products. We call upon Caterpillar to carefully review its involvement in obstacles to a just and lasting peace in Israel/Palestine, and to take affirmative steps to end its complicity in the violation of human rights. We hope that, by God’s grace, Caterpillar will come to exercise its considerable power and influence in the service of a just and lasting peace in Israel/Palestine.]”

“[As a Reformed Christian body, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to engage with and not withdraw from the world, and hence seeks to apply Christian principles of integrity, justice, and solidarity in its life as a community, including its investments. This focused action of divestment is a positive, non-violent act of solidarity with Palestinian Christians and Muslims in the quest for justice, peace, and equal human rights for both Palestinians and Israelis. It is a matter of integrity that the church’s words and actions be consistent; thus this act of divestment does not claim purity for the church, but recognizes that a more effective witness for justice at this time can be achieved by standing with those who suffer rather than with those who profit from a situation of suffering. This act of divestment says that there is a limit to how much endurance we ask of others. This is a way to give voice to those long silenced; and it says, no investment is an idol.]”

“[The 219th General Assembly (2010) commends the Committee on MRTI for its sustained engagement with Caterpillar and other firms described in supporting documents, and recommends continued corporate engagement with other corporations significantly involved in the maintenance of or profit from the occupation of Palestine, with appropriate ecumenical and interfaith engagement and dialogue. Similarly, MRTI should continue to monitor church investments to ensure that no support is given to terrorism by any party, affirming that just economic activity should not support violence in any form. Corporations involved in the continued militarization of all countries in the region, democratic and non-democratic, are to be addressed in consultation with the U.S. government (which authorizes foreign military sales) and directly with companies involved, in accordance with the recommendations of the Report of the Middle East Study Committee, “Breaking Down the Walls.” In accordance with the distinction made in that policy statement, this action is not to be construed as divestment from Israel, but rather an action focused on the occupation and its enforcement.]”

“[In conclusion, we call upon Caterpillar and all corporations doing business in Palestine and Israel to review carefully their involvement in obstacles or possible obstacles to a just and lasting peace, and to take affirmative steps as necessary to end complicity in any violation of human rights. We look forward to a time when the situation in Israel/Palestine no longer requires corporate engagement, but with this action indicate that such engagement necessarily includes the possibility of divestment when significant ethical matters are at stake.]”

“[4. Direct the Stated Clerk to inform our ecumenical partners of this action along with the Middle East Study Committee Report, both nationally and globally—particularly within Israel and Palestine—encouraging them to hear this witness and consider their own application of social responsibility and human rights criteria to companies represented in their financial portfolios with operations in Israel/Palestine, and to communicate this action to appropriate officials of the United States government, the United Nations, Caterpillar, Inc and other corporations named in this action.]”

Rationale

Commissioners face a basic question: is the MRTI Committee’s recommendation of “denouncement” enough of a response to what they describe as an effective refusal by Caterpillar management to reconsider its full scope of engagement with the Israeli government. Denouncing Caterpillar’s unrestricted sales of armored bulldozers is in fact part of any act of divestment, but divestment gives substance to the mere words of denunciation. The General Assembly, since the 1970’s, has in fact phased out the term, “pronouncement,” as statements without actions were seen as weakening the church’s voice rather than strengthening it. The terms policy statement and resolution are terms that involve recommendations for action that shape the church’s life. Thus to focus on denouncing Caterpillar’s activity is at best half of the task before the church as an ethical investor.

Three developments since MRTI’s recommendation back in November support the moral logic of divestment at this time: the call by a brave and very ecumenical group of Palestinian Christians for economic pressure to end the occupation, and the decision of Caterpillar to end sales in Iran, based on political considerations, short of official sanctions. Whether the sale of unarmored bulldozers to Iran would actually be illegal, it was also learned that in Israel Caterpillar employees maintain the armored bulldozers in combat and have official recognition by the Israeli military. Thus the role of Caterpillar is not neutral or at a distance in aiding Israeli government policy.

In 1984, the General Assembly approved a theological and ethical study of divestment in relation to trusteeship, *The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria*, accompanied by the study paper, *The Divestment Strategy: Ethical and Institutional Context*. This policy has been followed carefully by MRTI. Its criteria include all of the steps MRTI has taken with Caterpillar, plus an analysis of the importance of the ethical issue and the objective sought by this form of non-violent economic pressure, an end to the occupation. Clearly the financial impact of divestment by any single investor are limited, but

the witness impact of the action is effective—as in the case of South Africa—and as understood by the opponents of divestment.

The commissioners will already be aware of the controversy and criticism that would be attached to their action. This is why the ethical focus needs to be on the realities of occupation and the danger to the Christian community in the Palestine (including East Jerusalem). Divestment of securities in Caterpillar is due to the company's de facto support for the occupation and its enforcement, which is oppressive on all Palestinians, illegal under international law, injurious to US security, and is accelerating the disappearance of Christians in the Middle East. This action does not threaten the security of Israel, nor is it a denial that Israel has genuine security concerns, though we believe that many of these are integrally related to the continued occupation. The PC(USA) reiterates its commitment to two nations of Israel and Palestine, secure, at peace, and respecting full human rights, with internationally recognized borders.

The fact that an action is controversial does not make it any less timely, courageous, or necessary for the integrity of the church itself, given the careful process in which MRTI has engaged for six years, during which the situation for Palestinians has worsened, particularly in Gaza. Clearly, the people at Caterpillar do many good things, but in this case the primary corporate goal of profitability conflicts with the aspirations for freedom, dignity, security, and hopes for a two-state solution.

The last recommendation, that this action be publicized with the Middle East Study Committee report, would complete the treatment of investment issues that committee itself left undone. Here is what it said, as part of its discussion of "A Moment of Truth:" "While Kairos Palestine calls for divestment and boycott of everything produced by the occupation as an act of conscience and a method of nonviolent resistance, it lifts this up as part of the Christian affirmation of speaking truth in love. We struggle with its call for solidarity in this area and confess we have not fully answered it" (Item 14-08).

By approving this overture, the General Assembly would more fully answer the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant communities in Palestine with, "Yes, we stand with you. We do not wish to profit from the bulldozers that demolish your homes."

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

Item 14-03 is the report from GAMC from its committee MRTI, Mission Responsibility through Investment, on its engagement with corporations involved in Israel, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 14-03 be approved.

Rationale

The ACREC commends the committee's work over a six-year period of corporate engagement with U.S. companies involved in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. According to this report, of the four companies on the original list from 2004, Caterpillar, Inc., is the only one that has not been willing to change its corporate practices when it comes to human rights failures. The report states that the committee is "deeply disappointed" that their talks with Caterpillar did not bear "more fruit" and says they "stand ready to take whatever steps going forward as the assembly may direct."

The ACREC is disappointed that MRTI has not called for divestment when Caterpillar's own Chairman, Jim Owens, is reported to have said in a shareholder meeting on June 16, 2009, that "If you don't like how we do business, you don't have to hold your shares." When MRTI takes corporate engagement as far as it can go but does not take the final step of recommending divestment, it does two things:

1. The MRTI limits its future power to change corporate behavior by demonstrating that it will not in fact recommend divestment from companies that continue human rights abuses.
2. The MRTI fails to live up to its own definition of faith-based investing: "God's call for justice, compassion and humility requires Presbyterians to respond. We believe a faithful response requires the whole of our lives, including our financial investments. It is more than a practical question. It gets to the very essence of our faith."¹

This failure to go all the way "with the whole of our lives" weakens MRTI's and the PC(USA)'s position for future corporate engagement.

Endnote

1. www.pcusa.org/mrti.

Item 14-04

[The assembly answered Item 14-04 by the action taken on Item 14-08 with comment. See pp. 51, 54.]

[Comment: While we are deeply concerned with the policies implemented by Israel in relation to the Palestine territories and Palestinians under its jurisdiction, we believe that dialogue is hampered by words like “apartheid.”]

On Recognition that Israel’s Laws, Policies, and Practices Constitute Apartheid against the Palestinian People—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

Recognizing that Israel’s laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid against the Palestinian people, the Presbytery of San Francisco overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to send this overture to the United Nations, encouraging them to find that the state of Israel is committing the crime of apartheid and to take the appropriate actions.
2. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to communicate this information to the president and the Congress of the United States.
3. Urge its members, congregations, presbyteries, and national staff units, including the Office of Interfaith Relations, to study this matter and to seek appropriate ways to bring an end to Israeli apartheid.
4. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to prepare study resources, and urge presbyteries to provide opportunities for study and discussion to further educate church members about the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Rationale

Although only individuals can be convicted of the crime of apartheid, Articles I and II of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 30, 1973, are instructive as to what constitutes apartheid. These articles of the Apartheid Convention are included in Appendix A of this document. The rationale for the above recommendation is that the laws, policies, and practices of the state of Israel towards Palestinians constitute the crime of apartheid as defined by the United Nations. After a short discussion of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) resolutions and positions on the Israel-Palestine conflict, this rationale section gives examples of how Israel is committing apartheid in eleven areas specifically identified by the U.N.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Positions on the Israel-Palestine Conflict

Since 1948 the PC(USA) has passed resolutions strongly supporting the right of Israel to exist within the internationally recognized pre-1967 borders and emphatically condemning violence against civilians by all parties. The church affirms that Israel and all nations have the right to provide security for their citizens by taking appropriate measures that are consistent with international law.

The PC(USA) has also, through resolutions, strongly supported the right of Palestine to be an independent and sovereign state within the pre-1967 borders, the right of return to refugees or a negotiated compensation, the removal of all illegal Israel settlements in occupied Palestinian territories or a 1:1 swap of land, a shared Jerusalem, an end to Israel’s military occupation of Palestinian territories, either the total removal of the Separation Wall or the removal of those portions of the wall that are on Palestinian land, and equal rights for Palestinians who are citizens of Israel.

Presbyterian Beliefs Relevant to this Recommendation

We believe in God, Creator of the universe and of humanity. We believe in a good and just God, who equally loves each one of God’s creatures. We believe that every human has dignity that is derived from the dignity of the Almighty One. We believe that this dignity is one and the same in all of us.

We believe the new reality revealed in Jesus Christ is the new humanity, a new creation, and a new beginning for human life in the world in which sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.

We believe the prophetic mission of the church is to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly, and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily life. Following the example of Jesus, the church is called to stand alongside the oppressed to help bring about justice, peace, and reconciliation.

As a living church we are called to bear witness to the goodness of God and the dignity of human beings. We are called to pray and to make our voice heard when we see injustice and oppression in the world. The communion of love says to every believer in spirit and in truth: if my brother or sister is a prisoner, I am a prisoner; if my neighbor’s home is destroyed, my home is destroyed; when my brother or sister is killed, then I too am killed.

Why the PC(USA) Should Declare that Israel Is Committing the Crime of Apartheid

The PC(USA) resolutions on Israel and Palestine are consistent with U.N. resolutions regarding the Israel- Palestine conflict and with international law. To date, resolutions and words have had no effect on Israel's occupation of Palestine. Nor have they changed Israel's disregard for international law in the occupied territories.

Each year the ordeals and injustices suffered by the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel continue. Land is expropriated, homes are demolished, and freedom of movement is restricted. The combination of Israeli settlement colonies on Palestinian land, the bypass roads connecting these settlements, and the Separation Wall creates a network of barriers that confine Palestinians to live in separate reserves and ghettos. The rights to work, education, freedom from arbitrary arrest, peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression granted under international law are restricted or denied.

For many years many prominent political, social, and religious leaders have looked at Israeli laws, policies, and practices in occupied Palestine and have asserted that they constitute the crime of apartheid. The PC(USA) has not been one of those voices. It is time to end our silence and give a name to injustices already condemned by many PC(USA) resolutions. In response to the urgent call from our Palestinian Christian sisters and brothers, now is the time for the PC(USA) to declare that Israel is committing the crime of apartheid against the Palestinian people.

Israel Is Committing the Crime of Apartheid

Israel's laws, policies, and practices towards Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem establish and maintain the domination of one ethnic group of persons over another ethnic group through systematic discrimination and oppression in violation of the U.N. International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. Israel has created a system where one ethnic group, Israeli Jewish nationals, have a superior status and another ethnic group, non-Jewish Arabs living in Palestine and Israel, have an inferior status. This overture highlights the following eleven areas in which the state of Israel is violating the Apartheid Convention adopted and ratified by the United Nations.

1. *Israel's laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid through the expropriation of landed property belonging to Palestinians* (Article II.d., U.N. Convention on Apartheid) (see Attachment A. Table 1 and Figure 1, p. 1003).

Israeli laws, policies, and practices systematically distinguish, exclude, dominate, and oppress Palestinians on the grounds of ethnicity. Among these laws, policies, and practices are numerous acts of population transfer developed by the state of Israel to transfer, both internally and externally, Palestinians from Israel or the Occupied Territories and prevent the return of those who have been displaced. Israel allows and funds the construction of settlement colonies built on the expropriated land in violation of international law. The net result is that the state of Israel systematically and continually expropriates the landed property of Palestinians.

- Under the 1947 United Nations Palestine Partition Resolution 181, 56 percent of the land area of Palestine was designated for a Jewish state and 44 percent for an Arab state. This resolution stipulated that the equal rights of minorities within each state must be protected. However, in the war that followed Israel's declaration of independence in May 1948, Israel occupied 78 percent of the land, thereby expropriating all of the land within its military control that had been designated by the United Nations for an independent Arab state.¹

- In 1947–48, 750,000 non-Jewish residents of land designated by the U.N. for the Jewish state and an Arab state were either forcibly removed from their landed property or not allowed to return to their homes, in defiance of international law.² The land was expropriated by Israel for Jewish housing, farms, roads, and businesses.

- Israel passed a series of measures called the Absentees Property Laws in beginning in 1948, the law of return in 1950, and later the Land Acquisitions Act. These, and other measures, served to expropriate land from Palestinians. Palestinians were prevented from returning to their land, their land was confiscated because they were absent from it, and offered to Jewish refugees.

- In June 1967, East Jerusalem was occupied by the Israeli military. Twenty-seven square miles of East Jerusalem were annexed to Israel. More than 30 percent of the land in East Jerusalem has been expropriated to build new settlements where approximately 190,000 Israelis reside³ in 46,978 units of housing.⁴

- Between 1967 and 2009, vast areas of West Bank land have been expropriated to allow 121 recognized settlements and 100 unrecognized settlements for Jewish residents.⁵ Nearly half a million settlers now live in the occupied West Bank, including 190,000 in East Jerusalem.⁶

- A separation wall is constructed on land in the West bank and will expropriate an additional 11.9 percent of Palestinian land in the West Bank when complete.

- The agricultural Jordan Valley area, about 30 percent of the West Bank, is now off limits to most Palestinians.

- In 1998, Ariel Sharon, as Israeli Foreign Minister (later to become prime minister) made the following statements about Israeli settlement of the West Bank:⁷

- “Everybody has to move, run and grab as many [Palestinian] hilltops as they can to enlarge the [Jewish] settlements because everything we take now will stay ours ...”

- “It is the duty of Israeli leaders to explain to public opinion, clearly, and courageously, a certain number of facts that are forgotten with time. The first of these is that there is no Zionism, colonization, or Jewish State without the eviction of the Arabs and the expropriation of their lands.”

2. *Israel’s laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid by denying the right to freedom of residence to Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem* (Article II.c, U.N. Convention on Apartheid).

Israeli laws, policies, and practices systematically prevent Palestinians from freedom of residence through the demolition of Palestinian housing and denial of building permits for the construction of Palestinian housing. In those areas of the West Bank and East Jerusalem where Palestinian housing is destroyed or denied, homes for Jewish settlers are permitted and constructed and only Jewish people can live in the settlement colonies.

- Between 1967 and the end of 2001, almost no Palestinian housing units were given construction permits in East Jerusalem. In that same time period, 46,978 housing units were built for Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem.⁸

- Since the Annapolis peace talks began in November 2007, nearly 5,500 new Jewish only settlement housing units have been submitted for approval.⁹

- In 1967, the population of East Jerusalem was almost entirely Palestinian. Today there approximately 190,000 Jewish settlers. Palestinians now constitute one-third of the East Jerusalem’s population.

- Between 1999 and 2008, 688 Palestinian houses were demolished in East Jerusalem alone.¹⁰

- From June 1967 to June 2009, over 24,000 Palestinian homes have been demolished in the occupied territories.¹¹

3. *Israel’s laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid by denying Palestinians “... the right to freedom of movement ...” in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem* (Article II.c, U.N. Convention on Apartheid).

Israeli laws, policies, and practices systematically deny Palestinians the right to movement. Israel uses a number of means to restrict Palestinian movement in the West Bank including: permanent and temporary checkpoints, physical obstructions, the Separation Wall, forbidden roads or roads with restrictions on Palestinian use, and the movement-permit regime. By implementing these means, Israel has split the occupied territories into six geographical areas: North, Center, South, the Jordan Valley and northern Dead Sea, the enclaves resulting from the Separation Wall, and East Jerusalem, which is an integral part of the West Bank for Palestinians. Movement between the sections and within each section has become, in recent years, hard, slow, and sometimes impossible. Israel almost completely forbids the movement of Palestinians between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and impedes Palestinians from entering Israel and from going abroad:

a. *Checkpoints* (see Attachment A, Figure 2, p. 1004)

- Israel has set up more than 600 checkpoints and road-blocks in the occupied West Bank. Fixed and random temporary checkpoints restrict movement between Palestinian cities and villages.¹²

- Checkpoints restrict Palestinians’ freedom of movement to their homes, businesses, schools, jobs, hospitals, and farms.

- Palestinians routinely suffer indeterminate waiting, humiliating treatment, uncertainty, and denial of access at checkpoints. Often, the end result is that the army denies Palestinians the ability to cross the checkpoint.

- These restrictions significantly affect the daily lives of Palestinians in commerce, in access to medical treatment and educational institutions, and in conducting social activities. Simple actions such as going to work in a nearby town, marketing farm produce, obtaining medical treatment, and visiting relatives entail bureaucratic procedures and great uncertainty.

- Restrictions on the freedom of movement prevent Palestinians from practicing other rights such as those set forth in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Among these are the right to work, peacefully assemble, health, education, protection of family life, and an adequate standard of living.¹³

- Israel’s restriction on freedom of movement for non-Jewish Palestinians is discrimination based on ethnic origin since these restrictions apply only to Palestinians. Jewish residents are permitted to enter and leave settlements without restriction.

- Israel claims that checkpoints and roadblocks are needed for the security of Israel. However, since only a handful are located on the border between Israel and the West Bank, the purpose appears to be the affliction of such hardship on Palestinians to force them to leave their lands and homes and emigrate from Palestine.

b. *Bypass Roads* (see Attachment A, Figure 3, p. 1004)

- Bypass roads link settlement colonies with one another and with Israel, circumventing Palestinian built-up areas. These roads include a buffer zone that is fifty to seventy-five meters wide, in which no construction or planting is allowed.¹⁴

- Bypass roads, often constructed on expropriated Palestinian land, carve up the West Bank into isolated ghettos and often deprive Palestinians of vital agricultural land and the income from it. As of August 2008, 493 miles of bypass roads were in use.¹⁵

- Bypass roads are restricted to Israelis with yellow license plates on their vehicles. Palestinian vehicles, identified by green license plates, are not allowed on these roads without a permit. Permits are difficult or impossible to obtain and expensive. These roads cut off Palestinians from their schools, hospitals, markets, and extended families.

- Palestinian transportation is relegated to inferior, secondary, sometimes unpaved roads that are, themselves, restricted by checkpoints and roadblocks.

c. *Separation Wall* (see Attachment A, Figure 4, p. 1004)

- In the West Bank, much of the Separation Wall is constructed between Palestinian homes and their farmland, businesses, schools, hospitals, and the homes of family and friends. In East Jerusalem the Separation Wall is constructed through the middle of a once contiguous city, much like the Berlin Wall. The wall has brought untold hardships to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. The suffering has been particularly acute for those who depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

- When completed, the 722 kilometer length of the wall will be more than twice the 315 kilometer length of the Green Line, which is the internationally recognized border separating Israel and the West Bank.¹⁶

- Only Palestinian land, most of it privately owned, is being confiscated for the building of the wall. Land owned by Jews is unaffected.¹⁷

- The Separation Wall cuts deeply into the West Bank in several locations. There is creeping confiscation of land in the areas between the Green Line and the wall, where severe movement restrictions continue to result in the inability of Palestinian land owners to farm their land. Along this zone, thousands of Palestinians on both sides of the wall are being driven into poverty by restrictions on residency, lack of access to farm lands, inability to market their crops, and outright confiscation of land.

4. *Israel's laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid by "... [dividing] the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos ..."* for Palestinians (Article II.d, U.N. Convention on Apartheid) (See Attachment A, Figure 5, p. 1004).

Israeli laws, policies, and practices systematically create separate reserves or ghettos for Palestinians. The settlement colonies, the bypass roads that connect them, and the Separation Wall imprison Palestinians into isolated enclaves, eviscerate the Palestinian economy, and prevent the creation of a viable, contiguous, sovereign, and independent Palestinian state. Many thousands of acres around settlements are closed to Palestinian entry.

- In the occupied territories, the combination of Israeli land expropriation, bypass roads that cannot be crossed by Palestinians, and severe curtailment of Palestinian movement has confined the Palestinian people into ever-shrinking ghettos or reserves.

- The International Court of Justice, a number of United Nations human rights treaty bodies, independent experts, and the International Committee of the Red Cross have concluded that the construction of the wall causes forced displacement and amounts to population transfer.

- The number of settlements and bypass roads increased during the Oslo peace negotiations more than at any other point in history, slicing the West Bank into countless disconnected areas reserves or ghettos in which Palestinians are confined.

5. *Israel's laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid by denying Palestinians "the right to a nationality"* (Article II.c, U.N. Convention on Apartheid).

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations adopted Resolution 181 (II): Future Government of Palestine, a partition plan for Palestine that divided the League of Nation's British Mandate of Palestine. It stated that "... Independent Arab and

Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem, set forth in Part III of this Plan, shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948...” (United Nations Resolution 181, p. 1) In this partition plan, 44 percent of the land was allocated for an Arab state and 56 percent was allocated for the Jewish state. While Israel did become an independent state in 1948, the independent Arab state did not come into existence because the land designated as an independent Arab state was militarily occupied.

- Between 1948–2009, the state of Israel has systematically occupied or annexed all of the land within its military control that had been designated by the United Nations for an independent Palestinian state. In doing so, Israel has denied the Palestinians a right to a nationality.

- The 1952 Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law which limits eligibility for Israeli citizenship to only those Palestinian non-Jews who were present in the territory of Israel between 1948 and 1952 and their descendents. This law excludes and de facto de-nationalizes Palestinian refugees who were displaced in 1947–1948 by the Israeli military.

- In 1967, Israel annexed East Jerusalem in violation of international law.

- Between 1967–2009, Israel has controlled the rural undeveloped part of the West Bank, called Area C in the Oslo Peace agreement. Through the construction of settlement colonies, bypass roads, the Separation Wall, buffer zones, and the creation of land reserves, Israel has left Palestinians in control of only 13% of the land area of the former British mandate of Palestine.

- Israel has failed to implement the November 22, 1967, United Nations resolution 242 requiring Israel to withdraw its forces from the West Bank and Gaza.

- In 1978, Israeli Menachem Begin signed the Camp David Accords, which stated that “the Israeli military government and its civilian administration will be withdrawn as soon as a self-governing authority has been freely elected by [its] inhabitants ...” (*Camp David Accords*, p. 2) By not implementing this agreement to end its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel has denied the Palestinians right to a nationality.

- In Israel-Palestinian negotiations in Madrid (1991), Oslo (1993), Wye River (1998), Camp David (2000) and Annapolis (2007), Israel has insisted that it will not implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 and that Palestinians must recognize certain Israeli facts on the ground. By not implementing U.N. resolutions or peace accords regarding the Palestinians, Israel has denied Palestinians the right to a nationality since 1948.

6. *Israel’s laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid “... by arbitrary arrest and illegal imprisonment of ...” Palestinians (Article II.a, U.N. Convention on Apartheid).*

Israel’s use of administrative detention violates international standards. Israel holds Palestinians in prolonged detention without trial and without informing them of the charges against them. While detainees may appeal the detention, neither they nor their attorneys are allowed to see the evidence.

- Administrative detention is detention without charge or trial, authorized by administrative order rather than by judicial decree. International law has placed rigid restrictions on the application of administrative detention because of the high potential for abuse. The Israeli government does not conform to international legal standards in its use of administrative detention. Israel has never defined the criteria for what constitutes “state security,” and routinely detains Palestinians for political or other reasons.¹⁸

- In 2007, Israel held a monthly average of 830 administrative detainees, which was one hundred higher than in 2006. As of October 31, 2009, there are forty-one detainees under sixteen and 269 detainees between the ages of sixteen and eighteen.¹⁹

7. *Israel’s laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid by denying Palestinians “... the right to education” (Article II.c, U.N. Convention on Apartheid).*

In Israel, the 400,000 Palestinian school children are in a public school system wholly separate from the 1.2 million Jewish students. The Palestinian schools differ significantly in quality from their Jewish counterparts. Palestinian schools are often overcrowded and understaffed, poorly built, badly maintained, or simply unavailable. Schools for Palestinian children offer fewer facilities and educational opportunities than are offered other Israeli children.

- Palestinian children attend schools with larger classes and fewer teachers than do those in the Jewish school system, with some children having to travel long distances to reach the nearest school. Palestinian schools also frequently lack basic learning facilities like libraries, computers, science laboratories, and even recreation space.²⁰

- Israeli Education Ministry authorities have acknowledged that the ministry spends less per student in the Palestinian school system than in the Jewish school system. The Israeli schools also receive additional state and state-sponsored private funding for school construction and special programs through other government agencies. The gap between Israeli and Palestinian schools is enormous on every criterion measured by Israeli authorities.²¹

- The Israeli government has acknowledged that its Palestinian educational system is inferior to its Jewish education system when it reported to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2001 that “[t]here is a great deal of variance in the resources allocated the education in the Arab versus the Jewish sector. These discrepancies are reflected in various aspects of education in the Arab sector, such as physical infrastructure, the average number of students per class, the number of enrichment hours, the extent of support services, and the level of education of professional staff.”²²

- Neglect of the physical infrastructure of the public educational system in East Jerusalem has worsened over the years until it has reached the crisis point. Today it is necessary to build thousands of additional classrooms overnight in order to accommodate the needs of residents. The situation has deteriorated even further as a result of construction of the Separation Wall in East Jerusalem.

- Thousands of Palestinian students in East Jerusalem are being denied access to free public education, although they are entitled to it by Israeli law. In East Jerusalem there is a shortage of over 1,350 classrooms.²³

- The Israeli High Court of Justice ruled that the Ministry of Education and the Jerusalem Municipality must build hundreds of classrooms for the Palestinian students in East Jerusalem. However, the classrooms have not been built, and the classroom shortage has steadily worsened.²⁴

- Every year the Jerusalem Municipal Education Administration rejects a large number of Palestinian children from East Jerusalem who want to register for the public education system, due to lack of space in the educational institutions. This defies the law as well as the regulations of the Director General of the Ministry of Education.

- By the year 2007, only about half of the Palestinian children in East Jerusalem, about 39,400 out of about 79,000 students, were enrolled in the municipal school system.

8. *Israel’s laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid by “deliberate imposition ... of living conditions calculated to cause [the] physical destruction [of Palestinians] in whole or in part ...”* (Article II.b, U.N. Convention on Apartheid).

The physical well being of any people is determined in large part by their access to adequate housing, drinking water, agricultural irrigation water, food, agricultural areas, utilities, employment, education, and wastewater treatment. The laws, policies, and practices of Israel systematically deprive many Palestinians adequate living conditions in some or all of the above areas. Israeli practices deliberately impose on Palestinians living conditions calculated to make life intolerable. Israel exploits Palestinian natural water and land resources through restricting water supply to Palestinians, not investing in infrastructure for economic development, uprooting olive and fruit trees of Palestinian farmers, and preventing the freedom of commerce for Palestinian farmers and workers.

- More than one and a quarter million olive and fruit trees and thousands of acres of farmland have been destroyed in Palestinian territories since 1967. Nearly 465,000 olive trees were uprooted between 2000 and 2005.²⁵

- Since the beginning of the occupation in 1967, Israel’s strict control of the water sector in the occupied territories has prevented development to meet Palestinian water needs, caused shortages, and created a water-quality crisis.²⁶

- Israel has neglected construction of infrastructure to connect the Palestinian rural population to a running water network as well as proper maintenance of existing networks. In 2008, 227,500 Palestinians in 220 towns and villages were not connected to a water network. Another 190,000 Palestinians are only partially served.²⁷

- Of the water available from West Bank aquifers, Israel uses 83 percent, (10 percent for illegal Israeli settlers in the West Bank and 73 percent for residents in Israel). West Bank Palestinians use the remaining 17 percent.²⁸

- Israel generally restricts Palestinians’ water use to the municipal and limited commercial and industrial sectors by limiting the extraction of groundwater for agricultural irrigation purposes.²⁹

- In the West Bank, about fifty groundwater wells and more than 200 cisterns have been destroyed or isolated from their owners by construction of the Separation Wall, affecting the domestic and agricultural needs of more than 122,000 people.³⁰

- The sole aquifer that provides 96 percent of water consumed in the Gaza Strip has become polluted and salinated due to over-extraction and penetration of untreated sewage and agricultural runoff.³¹

- Only 7 percent of the water in the Gaza Strip meets World Health Organization standards.³²
- West Bank Palestinian water consumption is forty liters per day less than the minimum global standards set by the World Health Organization.³³
- Israel has severely restricted the already limited authority of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the Palestinian Territory. Israel's destruction of ministerial buildings, arrests of PNA officials and unlawful withholding of PNA tax revenues, have rendered the PNA unable to pay the full salaries of its civil servants and carry out its basic functions. These factors have weakened the PNA's ability to uphold law and order.
- Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem pay taxes, but receive few benefits. The municipality has failed to invest significantly in infrastructure and services (such as roads, sidewalks, and water and sewage systems) in East Jerusalem's Palestinian neighborhoods.

9. *Israel's laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid by denying Palestinians "... the right to work"* (Article II.c, U.N. Convention on Apartheid).

The destruction of farming as a source of livelihood has forced more and more Palestinians to seek work outside the agricultural sector and has provided Israeli employers with a cheap and vulnerable labor pool. Israeli employers of Palestinian workers in the West Bank directly benefit from employing people under conditions of occupation. Restrictions on Palestinian movement limit the workers' employment choices. Workers must get permits to work in Israel and these permits can have severe restrictions, be rescinded, or be denied. Dependency on permits makes organizing almost impossible.

- Because Palestinian workers are effectively prevented from changing employers, organizing, or suing for their rights, there is great potential for exploitative employment.³⁴
- Palestinian workers have no effective legal redress and labor laws are not enforced.
- Reports document companies in the Israeli industrial zones that have paid sub-standard wages, forced Palestinians to work overtime for no pay, employed workers in hazardous conditions, or denied them of adequate social benefits.³⁵
- Thirty percent of West Bank Palestinians are out of work and average earnings in the territory are little more than half Israel's minimum wage.

10. *Israel's laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid by enacting "... legislative measures and other measures calculated to prevent [Palestinians] from participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country ..."* (Article II.c, U.N. Convention on Apartheid).

Israeli laws, policies, and practices systematically take actions to prevent Palestinians from participating in the political, social, economic, and cultural life of their country. The expropriation of Palestinian land; restrictions on the freedom of movement and residence; confinement to ghettos; arbitrary arrest and imprisonment; and the restriction or denial of rights to work, education, peaceful assembly, and religious practices are all part of Israeli measures calculated to prevent Palestinians from full participation in the economic, environmental, and social life of their country. This discriminatory system benefits Israeli Jews and causes irreparable harm to non-Jews both in Israel itself and in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In May 2009, The Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa analyzed Israeli practices towards the Palestinians and concluded that Israel practices the following "three pillars" of apartheid in the occupied territories. These Israeli practices are calculated to prevent Palestinians from participation in the political, social, and cultural life of their country.

- Israeli laws and policies establish Jewish identity for purposes of law and afford a preferential legal status and material benefits to Jewish people over non-Jewish people.
- Israel's policies and practices fragment the Occupied Palestinian territories and ensure that Palestinians remain confined to the reserves designated for them. While Israeli Jews are prohibited from entering those reserves, they enjoy freedom of movement throughout much of the Palestinian territory. This policy is evidenced by Israel's extensive appropriation of Palestinian land, which continues to shrink the territorial space available to Palestinians; the hermetic closure and isolation of the Gaza Strip from the rest of the Palestinian Territories; the deliberate severing of East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank; and the appropriation and construction policies serving to carve up the West Bank into an intricate and well-serviced network of connected settlements for Jewish-Israelis and an archipelago of besieged and non-contiguous enclaves for Palestinians.
- Israel invokes the need for "security" to impose sweeping restrictions on Palestinian rights to freedom of opinion, expression, assembly, association, and movement. The true underlying intent is to suppress dissent to its system of domination and maintain control over Palestinians as a group.

11. *Israel's laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid "... by inflict[ing] ... serious bodily or mental harm, ... [and] inhuman or degrading treatment ..."* on Palestinians (Article II.a, U.N. Convention on Apartheid).

The previous ten examples of Israeli apartheid portray many ways in which Israeli laws, policies, and practices result in degrading treatment of Palestinians. In the West Bank, there are also many examples where Israel inflicts serious bodily or mental harm on Palestinians. However, the most egregious commitment of this crime took place during the December 2008–January 2009 war on Palestinians in Gaza. Since 2007, Israel has laid siege to Gaza, depriving the Gaza Strip of food, purified water, medicines, building supplies, and most other necessities, and creating what the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem calls "the largest out-door prison in the world." During the Gaza invasion, Israel attacked it with F-16 fighter-bombers, Apache helicopter gunships, phosphorous bombs, tanks, armored D-9 Caterpillar tractors, and ground troops. The statistics are telling:³⁶

- 1,400 Palestinians killed, including at least 850 civilians, 350 children, and 110 women; over 5,000 wounded
- Fourteen Israelis killed, including four civilians; 330 wounded
- More than 4,000 homes destroyed, over 40,000 damaged
- 215 factories and 700 private businesses destroyed or seriously damaged
- Fifteen hospitals and forty-three primary health care centers destroyed or damaged
- Twenty-eight government buildings and sixty police stations destroyed or damaged
- Thirty mosques destroyed, twenty-eight damaged
- Ten schools destroyed, 168 damaged
- Three universities or colleges destroyed; fourteen damaged
- Fifty-three United Nations properties damaged along with the food and medicines warehoused within them.
- Much of the economic infrastructure (power generators, water and sewage treatment plants, roads, and farmland) was also destroyed or damaged

This invasion demonstrates Israel's vastly disproportionate use of force against Palestinians resulting in the unnecessary infliction of serious bodily or mental harm on the Palestinian people and the creation of living conditions that are inhuman and degrading to the Palestinian people.

Endnotes

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3. "Enduring the Occupation: Palestinians under Siege," Amnesty International, 2007.
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5. "Land Expropriation and Settlements," B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, <<http://www.btselem.org/English/Settlements>>.
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Appendix A

International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification by General Assembly resolution 3068 (XXVIII) of 30 November 1973, *entry into force* 18 July 1976, in accordance with article XV.

The States Parties to the present Convention ... have agreed as follows:

Article I. 1. The States Parties to the present Convention declare that *apartheid* is a crime against humanity and that inhuman acts resulting from the policies and practices of *apartheid* and similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination, as defined in article II of the Convention, are crimes violating the principles of international law, in particular the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and constituting a serious threat to international peace and security.

2. The States Parties to the present Convention declare criminal those organizations, institutions and individuals committing the crime of *apartheid*.

Article II For the purpose of the present Convention, the term “the crime of *apartheid*”, which shall include similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practiced in southern Africa, shall apply to the following inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them:

- a. denial to a member or members of a racial group or groups of the right to life and liberty of person:
 - (i) by murder of members of a racial group or groups;
 - (ii) by the infliction upon the members of a racial group or groups of serious bodily or mental harm, by the infringement of their freedom or dignity, or by subjecting them to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
 - (iii) by arbitrary arrest and illegal imprisonment of the members of a racial group or groups;
- b. deliberate imposition on a racial group or groups of living conditions calculated to cause its or their physical destruction in whole

or in part;

c. any legislative measures and other measures calculated to prevent a racial group or groups from participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country and the deliberate creation of conditions preventing the full development of such a group or groups, in particular by denying to members of a racial group or groups basic human rights and freedoms, including the right to work, the right to form recognized trade unions, the right to education, the right to leave and to return to their country, the right to a nationality, the right to freedom of movement and residence, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association;

d. any measures, including legislative measures, designed to divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the members of a racial group or groups, the prohibition of mixed marriages among members of various racial groups, the expropriation of landed property belonging to a racial group or groups or to members thereof;

e. exploitation of the labour of the members of a racial group or groups, in particular by submitting them to forced labour;

f. persecution of organizations and persons, by depriving them of fundamental rights and freedoms, because they oppose *apartheid*.

From the International Convention on Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, <<http://www.icc-cpi.int/NR/rdonlyres/6C2AB560-3E9D-401D-ACD8-A6F7C3AA7F6E/248661/372818.PDF>>.

Attachment A

Table 1

Year	Event	Palestinian land ownership or control
1923 ¹	British mandate	97%
1947	U.N partition	44%
1948-1967	Israel independence	22%
2009 ²	West Bank occupation	13%

Figure 1

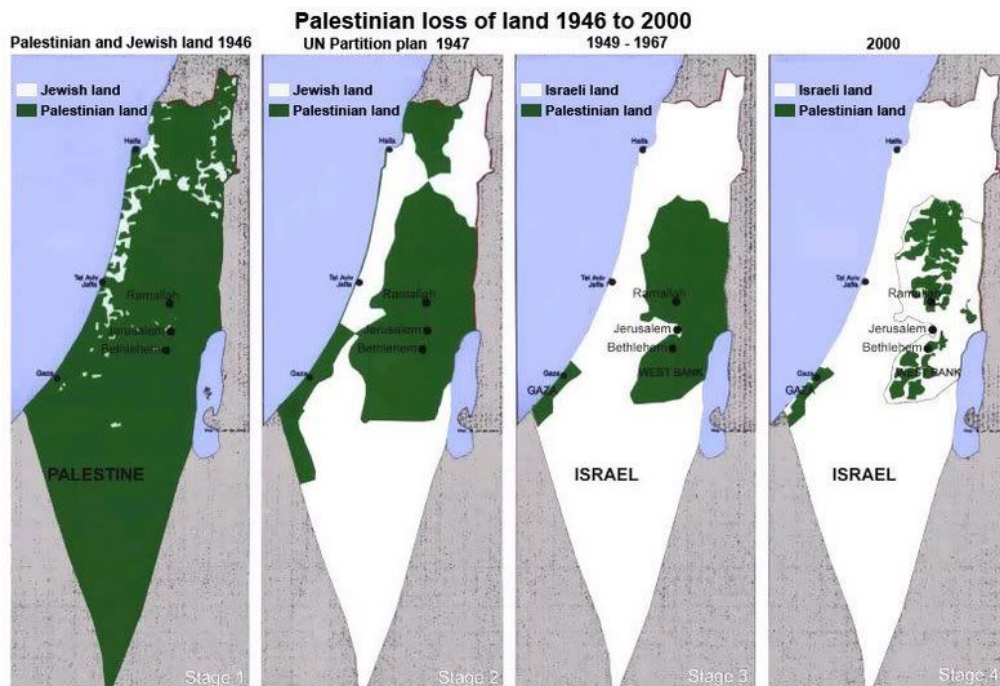


Figure 2: Location of major fixed checkpoints

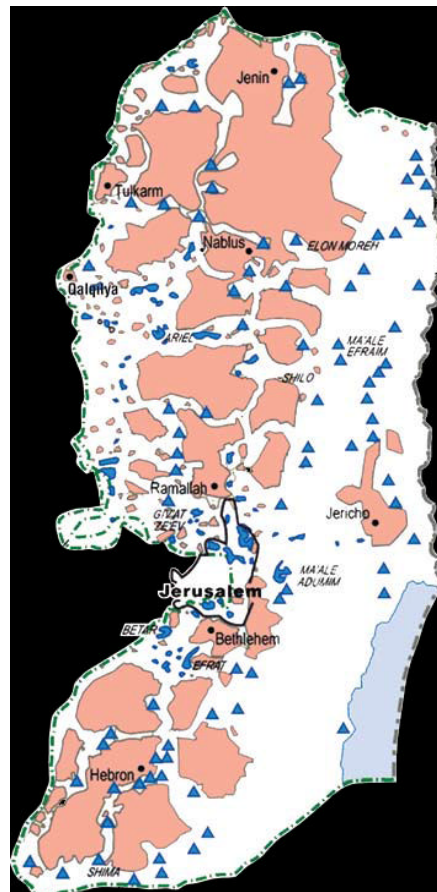


Figure 4: The Separation Wall (the blue line on west side of map). Rather than being constructed on the internationally recognized boundary between Israel and Palestine, large swaths of Palestinian territory are on the "Israel side" of the wall.

Figure 3: Bypass roads that link settlement colonies in the West Bank with Israel allow unrestricted settler movement but allow limited or no access to Palestinians.



Figure 5: Reserves or ghettos (in pink on map) slice the West Bank into 64 isolated and totally surrounded canton-like reserves in the West Bank.



Endnotes for Table 1

1. “Ruling Palestine,” Center on Housing Rights and Evictions and Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights, May 14, 2005, <<http://www.badil.org/en/documents/category/35-publications?start=60>>.
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Maps are from the resource *Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace*, Israel/Palestinian Mission Network, and used by permission. All rights are reserved.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 14-04 calls upon the General Assembly to recognize that Israeli law, policies and practice constitute apartheid against Palestinians.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) counsels the 219th General Assembly to consider the following information.

The Presbytery of San Francisco has sponsored as many tours and study groups to the Middle East as any other presbytery in the PC(USA), if not more. ACSWP also notes that

- the word *apartheid* is sometimes used and quoted in parts of the Israeli population and press to describe the predicament of Palestinians in the occupied territories.
- Israel’s former Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, warned that Israel risked being compared to South Africa if it did not move toward a viable two state solution.
- the overture’s assessment of the impact of Israel’s laws, policies and practices corresponds to the findings of numerous Presbyterian and human rights groups that have studied and travelled in the Middle East.

The ACSWP encourages the assembly to receive the narrative in this overture as a credible and incisive assessment of the deteriorating situation of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Since 2006, however, it has been the general practice of PC(USA) employees and agencies not to use the word *apartheid* in our engagement with Israel and the American Jewish community. While that practice is not binding on the General Assembly, it has opened up avenues for conversation. ACSWP is not certain that this is the time to change our practice. The committee hopes that it will be more productive to press the points raised in the report of the Middle East Study Committee, *Breaking Down the Walls*, and the plea of Palestinian Christians in the Kairos Document.

The ACSWP endorses the comment of the General Assembly Mission Council that invites commissioners to judge for themselves whether using this term advances the search for a just peace in the region; agrees that the problems of the Middle East call us to prayer, study, advocacy, and serious engagement with all parties; reiterates Presbyterian support for the existence of the State of Israel within its internationally recognized pre-1967 borders; and encourages Presbyterians travelling to Israel and Palestine to invite Jewish neighbors to visit the occupied territories with Palestinians to investigate jointly the impact of Israel’s policies on their communities.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 14-04 be approved.

Rationale

Israel uses the Hebrew word “hafrada,” meaning “separation” to describe the twenty-five foot concrete security wall (known in Israel as the Hafrada Wall or Separation Barrier). Israel applies this word to their official policy of separation of Jews and Palestinians. Likewise, “apartheid” also means “separation.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, April 2010:

I have been to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and I have witnessed the racially segregated roads and housing that reminded me so much of the conditions we experienced in South Africa under the racist system of Apartheid. . . . True peace must be anchored in justice and an unwavering commitment to universal rights for all humans, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin or any other identity attribute. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/desmond-tutu/divesting-from-injustice_b_534994.html)

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 14-04

Comment on Item 14-04—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

This overture accurately describes many of the current policies, actions and laws of the Israeli government and their impact on Palestinians.

No previous statements of the General Assembly relevant to Israel/Palestine use the term “apartheid.” Commissioners will have to judge whether this label in itself advances our church’s understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian situation, or the search for its just resolution. Some GAMC members are concerned about the use of the word “apartheid.”

In any case, the situation itself cries out for deeper and more serious engagement (with both those who disagree with us and others), study, prayer and advocacy.

Recommendation 4 of this overture directs the General Assembly Mission Council to prepare study resources, and urge presbyteries to provide opportunities for study and discussion to further educate church members about the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

The role of the General Assembly Mission Council is changing in response to trends in mission engagement and funding throughout the denomination. The focus of our ministry is to inspire, equip, and connect Presbyterians as they engage in ministry.

We are moving away from:

- creating offices at the denominational level to coordinate every area of specialized ministry, and
- producing our own resources where good resources exist from other sources.

This ministry focus for the GAMC is consistent with the available funding streams and the broad range of ministry support that Presbyterians expect.

We invite Presbyterians with a passion for specialized ministries to form ministry networks for collaboration and coordination. The PC(USA) Web site provides tools for these networks to form and for synergies to emerge. New features are being added to the Web site to improve that capability. These varied ministries are vital for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and we will continue to seek ways to foster connections and collaboration to join in expanding partnership in God’s mission and to grow Christ’s church deep and wide.

Item 14-05

[The assembly answered Item 14-05 by the action taken on Item 14-08. See pp. 51, 54.]

On Commending “A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith and Hope from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering” as an Advocacy Tool—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

The Presbytery of San Francisco overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to

1. receive “A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith and Hope from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering,” commending it to use by our presbyteries and congregations as an advocacy tool;
2. call on the Interfaith Office to include in its discussions with American Jewish and Muslim groups a careful study of the Palestinian Christian Kairos document.

Rationale

This is the first time we have a common voice from the grassroots Christians in Palestine asking us to help them get rid of the occupation through concrete acts: theological debates on occupation as sin, and boycott, divestment, and sanctions campaigns.

Appendix A (From the Web site of the Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), <http://www.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org/resources/kairos.pdf>)

South Africa’s transition to a multi-racial democracy was unexpectedly peaceful due, in large part, to international economic, political, and diplomatic pressure. This process was aided by a call from South African Christian leaders who challenged the legitimacy of the official “state theology” called Apartheid. Palestinians are also facing a de facto (official) state theology that delegitimizes their rights as children of God in the land of their ancestors. Christian leaders in Palestine and Israel are now calling for a similar international response of boycotts, divestment, and sanctions to help end

the occupation and achieve a just peace in the Holy Land. Their call, Kairos Palestine, is based on a serious theological commitment to the prophetic challenge belonging to all three monotheistic faiths: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It is also based on the conviction that without international Christian awareness and solidarity, the indigenous Christian Church in Palestine and Israel may cease to exist.

—Steering Committee
The Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

KAIROS PALESTINE | 2009

A moment of truth:

A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering

Introduction

We, a group of Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in our country, under the Israeli occupation, with a cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God ever vigilant, in God's divine providence for all the inhabitants of this land. Inspired by the mystery of God's love for all, the mystery of God's divine presence in the history of all peoples and, in a particular way, in the history of our country, we proclaim our word based on our Christian faith and our sense of Palestinian belonging—a word of faith, hope, and love.

Why now? Because today we have reached a dead end in the tragedy of the Palestinian people. The decision-makers content themselves with managing the crisis rather than committing themselves to the serious task of finding a way to resolve it. The hearts of the faithful are filled with pain and with questioning: What is the international community doing? What are the political leaders in Palestine, in Israel, and in the Arab world doing? What is the Church doing? The problem is not just a political one. It is a policy in which human beings are destroyed, and this must be of concern to the Church.

We address ourselves to our brothers and sisters, members of our Churches in this land. We call out as Christians and as Palestinians to our religious and political leaders, to our Palestinian society and to the Israeli society, to the international community, and to our Christian brothers and sisters in the churches around the world.

1. The reality on the ground

1.1 *"They say: 'Peace, peace' when there is no peace"* (Jer. 6:14). These days, everyone is speaking about peace in the Middle East and the peace process. So far, however, these are simply words; the reality is one of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, deprivation of our freedom and all that results from this situation:

1.1.1 The separation wall erected on Palestinian territory, a large part of which has been confiscated for this purpose, has turned our towns and villages into prisons, separating them from one another, making them dispersed and divided cantons. Gaza, especially after the cruel war Israel launched against it during December 2008 and January 2009, continues to live in inhuman conditions, under permanent blockade and cut off from the other Palestinian territories.

1.1.2 Israeli settlements ravage our land in the name of God and in the name of force, controlling our natural resources, including water and agricultural land, thus depriving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and constituting an obstacle to any political solution.

1.1.3 Reality is the daily humiliation to which we are subjected at the military checkpoints, as we make our way to jobs, schools, or hospitals.

1.1.4 Reality is the separation between members of the same family, making family life impossible for thousands of Palestinians, especially where one of the spouses does not have an Israeli identity card.

1.1.5 Religious liberty is severely restricted; the freedom of access to the holy places is denied under the pretext of security. Jerusalem and its holy places are out of bounds for many Christians and Muslims from the West Bank and the Gaza strip. Even Jerusalemites face restrictions during the religious feasts. Some of our Arab clergy are regularly barred from entering Jerusalem.

1.1.6 Refugees are also part of our reality. Most of them are still living in camps under difficult circumstances. They have been waiting for their right of return, generation after generation. What will be their fate?

1.1.7 And the prisoners? The thousands of prisoners languishing in Israeli prisons are part of our reality. The Israelis move heaven and earth to gain the release of one prisoner, and those thousands of Palestinian prisoners, when will they have their freedom?

1.1.8 Jerusalem is the heart of our reality. It is, at the same time, symbol of peace and sign of conflict. While the separation wall divides Palestinian neighborhoods, Jerusalem continues to be emptied of its Palestinian citizens, Christians and Muslims. Their identity cards are confiscated, which means the loss of their right to reside in Jerusalem. Their homes are

demolished or expropriated. Jerusalem, city of reconciliation, has become a city of discrimination and exclusion, a source of struggle rather than peace.

1.2 Also part of this reality is the Israeli disregard of international law and international resolutions, as well as the paralysis of the Arab world and the international community in the face of this contempt. Human rights are violated and despite the various reports of local and international human rights' organizations, the injustice continues.

1.2.1 Palestinians within the State of Israel, who have also suffered a historical injustice, although they are citizens and have the rights and obligations of citizenship, still suffer from discriminatory policies. They too are waiting to enjoy full rights and equality like all other citizens in the state.

1.3 Emigration is another element in our reality. The absence of any vision or spark of hope for peace and freedom pushes young people, both Muslim and Christian, to emigrate. Thus the land is deprived of its most important and richest resource—educated youth. The shrinking number of Christians, particularly in Palestine, is one of the dangerous consequences, both of this conflict, and of the local and international paralysis and failure to find a comprehensive solution to the problem.

1.4 In the face of this reality, Israel justifies its actions as self-defense, including occupation, collective punishment and all other forms of reprisals against the Palestinians. In our opinion, this vision is a reversal of reality. Yes, there is Palestinian resistance to the occupation. However, if there were no occupation, there would be no resistance, no fear, and no insecurity. This is our understanding of the situation. Therefore, we call on the Israelis to end the occupation. Then they will see a new world in which there is no fear, no threat but rather security, justice, and peace.

1.5 The Palestinian response to this reality was diverse. Some responded through negotiations: that was the official position of the Palestinian Authority, but it did not advance the peace process. Some political parties followed the way of armed resistance. Israel used this as a pretext to accuse the Palestinians of being terrorists and was able to distort the real nature of the conflict, presenting it as an Israeli war against terror, rather than an Israeli occupation faced by Palestinian legal resistance aiming at ending it.

1.5.1 The tragedy worsened with the internal conflict among Palestinians themselves, and with the separation of Gaza from the rest of the Palestinian territory. It is noteworthy that, even though the division is among Palestinians themselves, the international community bears an important responsibility for it since it refused to deal positively with the will of the Palestinian people expressed in the outcome of democratic and legal elections in 2006.

Again, we repeat and proclaim that our Christian word in the midst of all this, in the midst of our catastrophe, is a word of faith, hope, and love.

2. A word of faith

We believe in one God, a good and just God

2.1 We believe in God, one God, Creator of the universe and of humanity. We believe in a good and just God, who loves each one of his creatures. We believe that every human being is created in God's image and likeness and that everyone's dignity is derived from the dignity of the Almighty One. We believe that this dignity is one and the same in each and all of us. This means for us, here and now, in this land in particular, that God created us not so that we might engage in strife and conflict but rather that we might come and know and love one another, and together build up the land in love and mutual respect.

2.1.1 We also believe in God's eternal Word, His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God sent as the Savior of the world.

2.1.2 We believe in the Holy Spirit, who accompanies the Church and all humanity on its journey. It is the Spirit that helps us to understand Holy Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, showing their unity, here and now. The Spirit makes manifest the revelation of God to humanity, past, present, and future.

How do we understand the word of God?

2.2 We believe that God has spoken to humanity, here in our country: *"Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days God has spoken to us by a Son, whom God appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds"* (Heb. 1:1–2).

2.2.1 We, Christian Palestinians, believe, like all Christians throughout the world, that Jesus Christ came in order to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, and in his light and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we read the Holy Scriptures. We meditate upon and interpret Scripture just as Jesus Christ did with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. As it is written in the Gospel according to Saint Luke: *"Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures"* (Luke 24:27).

2.2.2 Our Lord Jesus Christ came, proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was near. He provoked a revolution in the life and faith of all humanity. He came with “*a new teaching*” (Mark 1:27), casting a new light on the Old Testament, on the themes that relate to our Christian faith and our daily lives, themes such as the promises, the election, the people of God, and the land. We believe that the Word of God is a living Word, casting a particular light on each period of history, manifesting to Christian believers what God is saying to us here and now. For this reason, it is unacceptable to transform the Word of God into letters of stone that pervert the love of God and His providence in the life of both peoples and individuals. This is precisely the error in fundamentalist Biblical interpretation that brings us death and destruction when the word of God is petrified and transmitted from generation to generation as a dead letter. This dead letter is used as a weapon in our present history in order to deprive us of our rights in our own land.

Our land has a universal mission

2.3 We believe that our land has a universal mission. In this universality, the meaning of the promises, of the land, of the election, of the people of God open up to include all of humanity, starting from all the peoples of this land. In light of the teachings of the Holy Bible, the promise of the land has never been a political program, but rather the prelude to complete universal salvation. It was the initiation of the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

2.3.1 God sent the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles to this land so that they might carry forth a universal mission to the world. Today we constitute three religions in this land, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Our land is God’s land, as is the case with all countries in the world. It is holy inasmuch as God is present in it, for God alone is holy and sanctifier. It is the duty of those of us who live here, to respect the will of God for this land. It is our duty to liberate it from the evil of injustice and war. It is God’s land and therefore it must be a land of reconciliation, peace, and love. This is indeed possible. God has put us here as two peoples, and God gives us the capacity, if we have the will, to live together and establish in it justice and peace, making it in reality God’s land: “*The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it*” (Ps. 24:1).

2.3.2 Our presence in this land, as Christian and Muslim Palestinians, is not accidental but rather deeply rooted in the history and geography of this land, resonant with the connectedness of any other people to the land it lives in. It was an injustice when we were driven out. The West sought to make amends for what Jews had endured in the countries of Europe, but it made amends on our account and in our land. They tried to correct an injustice and the result was a new injustice.

2.3.3 Furthermore, we know that certain theologians in the West try to attach a biblical and theological legitimacy to the infringement of our rights. Thus, the promises, according to their interpretation, have become a menace to our very existence. The “good news” in the gospel itself has become “a harbinger of death” for us. We call on these theologians to deepen their reflection on the Word of God and to rectify their interpretations so that they might see in the Word of God a source of life for all peoples.

2.3.4 Our connectedness to this land is a natural right. It is not an ideological or a theological question only. It is a matter of life and death. There are those who do not agree with us, even defining us as enemies only because we declare that we want to live as free people in our land. We suffer from the occupation of our land because we are Palestinians. And as Christian Palestinians we suffer from the wrong interpretation of some theologians. Faced with this, our task is to safeguard the Word of God as a source of life and not of death, so that “the good news” remains what it is, “good news” for us and for all. In face of those who use the Bible to threaten our existence as Christian and Muslim Palestinians, we renew our faith in God because we know that the word of God can not be the source of our destruction.

2.4 Therefore, we declare that any use of the Bible to legitimize or support political options and positions that are based upon injustice, imposed by one person on another, or by one people on another, transform religion into human ideology and strip the Word of God of its holiness, its universality, and truth.

2.5 We also declare that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is a sin against God and humanity because it deprives the Palestinians of their basic human rights, bestowed by God. It distorts the image of God in the Israeli who has become an occupier just as it distorts this image in the Palestinian living under occupation. We declare that any theology, seemingly based on the Bible or on faith or on history, that legitimizes the occupation, is far from Christian teachings, because it calls for violence and holy war in the name of God Almighty, subordinating God to temporary human interests, and distorting the divine image in the human beings living under both political and theological injustice.

3. Hope

3.1 Despite the lack of even a glimmer of positive expectation, our hope remains strong. The present situation does not promise any quick solution or the end of the occupation that is imposed on us. Yes, the initiatives, the conferences, visits and negotiations have multiplied, but they have not been followed up by any change in our situation and suffering. Even the new U.S. position that has been announced by President Obama, with a manifest desire to put an end to the tragedy, has not been able to make a change in our reality. The clear Israeli response, refusing any solution, leaves no room for positive expecta-

tion. Despite this, our hope remains strong, because it is from God. God alone is good, almighty, and loving and His goodness will one day be victorious over the evil in which we find ourselves. As Saint Paul said: *“If God is for us, who is against us? ... Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all day long” ... For I am convinced that (nothing) in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God”* (Rom. 8:31, 35, 36, 39).

What is the meaning of hope?

3.2 Hope within us means first and foremost our faith in God and secondly our expectation, despite everything, for a better future. Thirdly, it means not chasing after illusions—we realize that release is not close at hand. Hope is the capacity to see God in the midst of trouble, and to be co-workers with the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in us. From this vision derives the strength to be steadfast, remain firm, and work to change the reality in which we find ourselves. Hope means not giving in to evil but rather standing up to it and continuing to resist it. We see nothing in the present or future except ruin and destruction. We see the upper hand of the strong, the growing orientation towards racist separation, and the imposition of laws that deny our existence and our dignity. We see confusion and division in the Palestinian position. If, despite all this, we do resist this reality today and work hard, perhaps the destruction that looms on the horizon may not come upon us.

Signs of hope

3.3 The Church in our land, her leaders and her faithful, despite her weakness and her divisions, does show certain signs of hope. Our parish communities are vibrant and most of our young people are active apostles for justice and peace. In addition to the individual commitment, our various Church institutions make our faith active and present in service, love, and prayer.

3.3.1 Among the signs of hope are the local centers of theology, with a religious and social character. They are numerous in our different Churches. The ecumenical spirit, even if still hesitant, shows itself more and more in the meetings of our different Church families.

3.3.2 We can add to this the numerous meetings for inter-religious dialogue, Christian-Muslim dialogue, which includes the religious leaders and a part of the people. Admittedly, dialogue is a long process and is perfected through a daily effort as we undergo the same sufferings and have the same expectations. There is also dialogue among the three religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as different dialogue meetings on the academic or social level. They all try to breach the walls imposed by the occupation and oppose the distorted perception of human beings in the heart of their brothers or sisters.

3.3.3 One of the most important signs of hope is the steadfastness of the generations, the belief in the justice of their cause and the continuity of memory, which does not forget the “Nakba” (catastrophe) and its significance. Likewise significant is the developing awareness among many Churches throughout the world and their desire to know the truth about what is going on here.

3.3.4 In addition to that, we see a determination among many to overcome the resentments of the past and to be ready for reconciliation once justice has been restored. Public awareness of the need to restore political rights to the Palestinians is increasing, and Jewish and Israeli voices, advocating peace and justice, are raised in support of this with the approval of the international community. True, these forces for justice and reconciliation have not yet been able to transform the situation of injustice, but they have their influence and may shorten the time of suffering and hasten the time of reconciliation.

The mission of the Church

3.4 Our Church is a Church of people who pray and serve. This prayer and service is prophetic, bearing the voice of God in the present and future. Everything that happens in our land, everyone who lives there, all the pains and hopes, all the injustice and all the efforts to stop this injustice, are part and parcel of the prayer of our Church and the service of all her institutions. Thanks be to God that our Church raises her voice against injustice despite the fact that some desire her to remain silent, closed in her religious devotions.

3.4.1 The mission of the Church is prophetic, to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly, and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily events. If she does take sides, it is with the oppressed, to stand alongside them, just as Christ our Lord stood by the side of each poor person and each sinner, calling them to repentance, life, and the restoration of the dignity bestowed on them by God and that no one has the right to strip away.

3.4.2 The mission of the Church is to proclaim the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice, peace, and dignity. Our vocation as a living Church is to bear witness to the goodness of God and the dignity of human beings. We are called to pray and to make our voice heard when we announce a new society where human beings believe in their own dignity and the dignity of their adversaries.

3.4.3 Our Church points to the Kingdom, which cannot be tied to any earthly kingdom. Jesus said before Pilate that he was indeed a king but *“my kingdom is not from this world”* (John 18:36). Saint Paul says: *“The Kingdom of God is not*

food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). Therefore, religion cannot favor or support any unjust political regime, but must rather promote justice, truth, and human dignity. It must exert every effort to purify regimes where human beings suffer injustice and human dignity is violated. The Kingdom of God on earth is not dependent on any political orientation, for it is greater and more inclusive than any particular political system.

3.4.4 Jesus Christ said: *"The Kingdom of God is among you"* (Luke 17:21). This Kingdom that is present among us and in us is the extension of the mystery of salvation. It is the presence of God among us and our sense of that presence in everything we do and say. It is in this divine presence that we shall do what we can until justice is achieved in this land.

3.4.5 The cruel circumstances in which the Palestinian church has lived and continues to live have required the church to clarify her faith and to identify her vocation better. We have studied our vocation and have come to know it better in the midst of suffering and pain: today, we bear the strength of love rather than that of revenge, a culture of life rather than a culture of death. This is a source of hope for us, for the Church and for the world.

3.5 The Resurrection is the source of our hope. Just as Christ rose in victory over death and evil, so too we are able, as each inhabitant of this land is able, to vanquish the evil of war. We will remain a witnessing, steadfast, and active Church in the land of the Resurrection.

4. Love

The commandment of love

4.1 Christ our Lord said: *"Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another"* (John 13:34). He has already showed us how to love and how to treat our enemies. He said: *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Matt. 5:45-47). Saint Paul also said: *"Do not repay anyone evil for evil"* (Rom. 12:17). And Saint Peter said: *"Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called"* (1 Pet. 3:9).

Resistance

4.2 This word is clear. Love is the commandment of Christ our Lord to us and it includes both friends and enemies. This must be clear when we find ourselves in circumstances where we must resist evil of whatever kind.

4.2.1 Love is seeing the face of God in every human being. Every person is my brother or my sister. However, seeing the face of God in everyone does not mean accepting evil or aggression on their part. Rather, this love seeks to correct the evil and stop the aggression. The aggression against the Palestinian people which is the Israeli occupation, is an evil that must be resisted. It is an evil and a sin that must be resisted and removed. Primary responsibility for this rests with the Palestinians themselves suffering occupation. Christian love invites us to resist it. However, love puts an end to evil by walking in the ways of justice. Responsibility lies also with the international community, because international law regulates relations between peoples today. Finally responsibility lies with the perpetrators of the injustice; they must liberate themselves from the evil that is in them and the injustice they have imposed on others.

4.2.2 When we review the history of the nations, we see many wars and much resistance to war by war, to violence by violence. The Palestinian people have gone the way of the peoples, particularly in the first stages of its struggle with the Israeli occupation. However, it also engaged in peaceful struggle, especially during the first Intifada. We recognize that all peoples must find a new way in their relations with each other and the resolution of their conflicts. The ways of force must give way to the ways of justice. This applies above all to the peoples that are militarily strong, mighty enough to impose their injustice on the weaker.

4.2.3 We say that our option as Christians in the face of the Israeli occupation is to resist. Resistance is a right and a duty for the Christian. But it is resistance with love as its logic. It is thus a creative resistance for it must find human ways that engage the humanity of the enemy. Seeing the image of God in the face of the enemy means taking up positions in the light of this vision of active resistance to stop the injustice and oblige the perpetrator to end his aggression and thus achieve the desired goal, which is getting back the land, freedom, dignity, and independence.

4.2.4 Christ our Lord has left us an example we must imitate. We must resist evil but he taught us that we cannot resist evil with evil. This is a difficult commandment, particularly when the enemy is determined to impose himself and deny our right to remain here in our land. It is a difficult commandment yet it alone can stand firm in the face of the clear declarations of the occupation authorities that refuse our existence and the many excuses these authorities use to continue imposing occupation upon us.

4.2.5 Resistance to the evil of occupation is integrated, then, within this Christian love that refuses evil and corrects it. It resists evil in all its forms with methods that enter into the logic of love and draw on all energies to make peace. We can

resist through civil disobedience. We do not resist with death but rather through respect of life. We respect and have a high esteem for all those who have given their life for our nation. And we affirm that every citizen must be ready to defend his or her life, freedom and land.

4.2.6 Palestinian civil organizations, as well as international organizations, NGOs and certain religious institutions call on individuals, companies, and states to engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation. We understand this to integrate the logic of peaceful resistance. These advocacy campaigns must be carried out with courage, openly [and] sincerely proclaiming that their object is not revenge but rather to put an end to the existing evil, liberating both the perpetrators and the victims of injustice. The aim is to free both peoples from extremist positions of the different Israeli governments, bringing both to justice and reconciliation. In this spirit and with this dedication we will eventually reach the longed-for resolution to our problems, as indeed happened in South Africa and with many other liberation movements in the world.

4.3 Through our love, we will overcome injustices and establish foundations for a new society both for us and for our opponents. Our future and their future are one. Either the cycle of violence that destroys both of us or peace that will benefit both. We call on Israel to give up its injustice towards us, not to twist the truth of reality of the occupation by pretending that it is a battle against terrorism. The roots of “terrorism” are in the human injustice committed and in the evil of the occupation. These must be removed if there be a sincere intention to remove “terrorism.” We call on the people of Israel to be our partners in peace and not in the cycle of interminable violence. Let us resist evil together, the evil of occupation and the infernal cycle of violence.

5. Our word to our brothers and sisters

5.1 We all face, today, a way that is blocked and a future that promises only woe. Our word to all our Christian brothers and sisters is a word of hope, patience, steadfastness, and new action for a better future. Our word is that we, as Christians, carry a message, and we will continue to carry it despite the thorns, despite blood and daily difficulties. We place our hope in God, who will grant us relief in His own time. At the same time, we continue to act in concord with God and God’s will, building, resisting evil and bringing closer the day of justice and peace.

5.2 We say to our Christian brothers and sisters: This is a time for repentance. Repentance brings us back into the communion of love with everyone who suffers, the prisoners, the wounded, those afflicted with temporary or permanent handicaps, the children who cannot live their childhood, and each one who mourns a dear one. The communion of love says to every believer in spirit and in truth: if my brother is a prisoner I am a prisoner; if his home is destroyed, my home is destroyed; when my brother is killed, then I too am killed. We face the same challenges and share in all that has happened and will happen. Perhaps, as individuals or as heads of churches, we were silent when we should have raised our voices to condemn the injustice and share in the suffering. This is a time of repentance for our silence, indifference, lack of communion, either because we did not persevere in our mission in this land and abandoned it, or because we did not think and do enough to reach a new and integrated vision and remained divided, contradicting our witness and weakening our word. Repentance for our concern with our institutions, sometimes at the expense of our mission, thus silencing the prophetic voice given by the Spirit to the churches.

5.3 We call on Christians to remain steadfast in this time of trial, just as we have throughout the centuries, through the changing succession of states and governments. Be patient, steadfast, and full of hope so that you might fill the heart of every one of your brothers or sisters who shares in this same trial with hope. *“Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you”* (1 Pet. 3:15). Be active and, provided this conforms to love, participate in any sacrifice that resistance asks of you to overcome our present travail.

5.4 Our numbers are few but our message is great and important. Our land is in urgent need of love. Our love is a message to the Muslim and to the Jew, as well as to the world.

5.4.1 Our message to the Muslims is a message of love and of living together and a call to reject fanaticism and extremism. It is also a message to the world that Muslims are neither to be stereotyped as the enemy nor caricatured as terrorists but rather to be lived with in peace and engaged with in dialogue.

5.4.2 Our message to the Jews tells them: Even though we have fought one another in the recent past and still struggle today, we are able to love and live together. We can organize our political life, with all its complexity, according to the logic of this love and its power, after ending the occupation and establishing justice.

5.4.3 The word of faith says to anyone engaged in political activity: human beings were not made for hatred. It is not permitted to hate, neither is it permitted to kill or to be killed. The culture of love is the culture of accepting the other. Through it we perfect ourselves and the foundations of society are established.

6. Our word to the Churches of the world

6.1 Our word to the Churches of the world is firstly a word of gratitude for the solidarity you have shown toward us in word, deed, and presence among us. It is a word of praise for the many churches and Christians who support the right of the Palestinian people for self determination. It is a message of solidarity with those Christians and churches who have suffered because of their advocacy for law and justice. However, it is also a call to repentance; to revisit fundamentalist theological positions that support certain unjust political options with regard to the Palestinian people. It is a call to stand alongside the oppressed and preserve the word of God as good news for all rather than to turn it into a weapon with which to slay the oppressed. The word of God is a word of love for all His creation. God is not the ally of one against the other, nor the opponent of one in the face of the other. God is the Lord of all and loves all, demanding justice from all and issuing to all of us the same commandments. We ask our sister churches not to offer a theological cover-up for the injustice we suffer, for the sin of the occupation imposed upon us. Our question to our brothers and sisters in the churches today is: Are you able to help us get our freedom back, for this is the only way you can help the two peoples attain justice, peace, security, and love?

6.2 In order to understand our reality, we say to the churches: come and see. We will fulfill our role to make known to you the truth of our reality, receiving you as pilgrims coming to us to pray, carrying a message of peace, love, and reconciliation. You will know the facts and the people of this land, Palestinians and Israelis alike.

6.3 We condemn all forms of racism, whether religious or ethnic, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and we call on you to condemn it and oppose it in all its manifestations. At the same time we call on you to say a word of truth and to take a position of truth with regard to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. As we have already said, we see boycott and disinvestment as tools of non violence for justice, peace, and security for all.

7. Our word to the international community

7. Our word to the international community is to stop the principle of "double standards" and insist on the international resolutions regarding the Palestinian problem with regard to all parties. Selective application of international law threatens to leave us vulnerable to a law of the jungle. It legitimizes the claims by certain armed groups and states that the international community only understands the logic of force. Therefore, we call for a response to what the civil and religious institutions have proposed, as mentioned earlier: the beginning of a system of economic sanctions and boycott to be applied against Israel. We repeat once again that this is not revenge but rather a serious action in order to reach a just and definitive peace that will put an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and will guarantee security and peace for all.

8. Jewish and Muslim religious leaders

8. Finally, we address an appeal to the religious and spiritual leaders, Jewish and Muslim, with whom we share the same vision that every human being is created by God and has been given equal dignity. Hence the obligation for each of us to defend the oppressed and the dignity God has bestowed on them. Let us together try to rise up above the political positions that have failed so far and continue to lead us on the path of failure and suffering.

9. A call to our Palestinian people and to the Israelis

9.1 This is a call to see the face of God in each one of God's creatures and overcome the barriers of fear or race in order to establish a constructive dialogue and not remain within the cycle of never-ending maneuvers that aim to keep the situation as it is. Our appeal is to reach a common vision, built on equality and sharing, not on superiority, negation of the other or aggression, using the pretext of fear and security. We say that love is possible and mutual trust is possible. Thus, peace is possible and definitive reconciliation also. Thus, justice and security will be attained for all.

9.2 Education is important. Educational programs must help us to get to know the other as he or she is rather than through the prism of conflict, hostility, or religious fanaticism. The educational programs in place today are infected with this hostility. The time has come to begin a new education that allows one to see the face of God in the other and declares that we are capable of loving each other and building our future together in peace and security.

9.3 Trying to make the state a religious state, Jewish or Islamic, suffocates the state, confines it within narrow limits, and transforms it into a state that practices discrimination and exclusion, preferring one citizen over another. We appeal to both religious Jews and Muslims: let the state be a state for all its citizens, with a vision constructed on respect for religion but also equality, justice, liberty, and respect for pluralism and not on domination by a religion or a numerical majority.

9.4 To the leaders of Palestine we say that current divisions weaken all of us and cause more sufferings. Nothing can justify these divisions. For the good of the people, which must outweigh that of the political parties, an end must be put to division. We appeal to the international community to lend its support towards this union and to respect the will of the Palestinian people as expressed freely.

9.5 Jerusalem is the foundation of our vision and our entire life. She is the city to which God gave a particular importance in the history of humanity. She is the city towards which all people are in movement—and where they will meet in friendship and love in the presence of the One Unique God, according to the vision of the prophet Isaiah: “*In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it ... He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more*” (Isa. 2:2–5). Today, the city is inhabited by two peoples of three religions; and it is on this prophetic vision and on the international resolutions concerning the totality of Jerusalem that any political solution must be based. This is the first issue that should be negotiated because the recognition of Jerusalem’s sanctity and its message will be a source of inspiration towards finding a solution to the entire problem, which is largely a problem of mutual trust and ability to set in place a new land in this land of God.

10. Hope and faith in God

10. In the absence of all hope, we cry out our cry of hope. We believe in God, good and just. We believe that God’s goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and of death that still persist in our land. We will see here “a new land” and “a new human being,” capable of rising up in the spirit to love each one of his or her brothers and sisters.

This document is the Christian Palestinians’ word to the world about what is happening in Palestine. It is written at this time when we wanted to see the Glory of the grace of God in this land and in the sufferings of its people. In this spirit the document requests the international community to stand by the Palestinian people who have faced oppression, displacement, suffering, and clear apartheid for more than six decades. The suffering continues while the international community silently looks on at the occupying state, Israel. Our word is a cry of hope, with love, prayer, and faith in God. We address it first of all to ourselves and then to all the churches and Christians in the world, asking them to stand against injustice and apartheid, urging them to work for a just peace in our region, calling on them to revisit theologies that justify crimes perpetrated against our people and the dispossession of the land.

In this historic document, we Palestinian Christians declare that the military occupation of our land is a sin against God and humanity, and that any theology that legitimizes the occupation is far from Christian teachings because true Christian theology is a theology of love and solidarity with the oppressed, a call to justice and equality among peoples. This document did not come about spontaneously, and it is not the result of a coincidence. It is not a theoretical theological study, or a policy paper, but is rather a document of faith and work. Its importance stems from the sincere expression of the concerns of the people and their view of this moment in history we are living through. It seeks to be prophetic in addressing things as they are without equivocation and with boldness, in addition it puts forward ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and all forms of discrimination as the solution that will lead to a just and lasting peace with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Al-Quds as its capital. The document also demands that all peoples, political leaders and decision-makers put pressure on Israel and take legal measures in order to oblige its government to put an end to its oppression and disregard for the international law. The document also holds a clear position that non-violent resistance to this injustice is a right and duty for all Palestinians including Christians.

The initiators of this document have been working on it for more than a year, in prayer and discussion, guided by their faith in God and their love for their people, accepting advice from many friends: Palestinians, Arabs and those from the wider international community. We are grateful to our friends for their solidarity with us. As Palestinian Christians we hope that this document will provide the turning point to focus the efforts of all peaceloving peoples in the world, especially our Christian sisters and brothers. We hope also that it will be welcomed positively and will receive strong support, as was the South Africa Kairos document launched in 1985, which, at that time proved to be a tool in the struggle against oppression and occupation. We believe that liberation from occupation is in the interest of all peoples in the region because the problem is not just a political one, but one in which human beings are destroyed. We pray God to inspire us all, particularly our leaders and policy-makers, to find the way of justice and equality, and to realize that it is the only way that leads to the genuine peace we are seeking.

With thanks,

His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah
 His Grace Bishop Dr. Munib Younan
 His Eminence Archbishop Atallah Hanna
 Rev. Dr. Jamal Khader
 Rev. Dr. Rafiq Khoury
 Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb
 Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek
 Rev. Dr. Yohana Katanacho
 Rev. Fadi Diab

Dr. Jiries Khoury
 Ms. Cedar Duaybis
 Ms. Nora Kort
 Ms. Lucy Thaljieh
 Mr. Nidal Abu El Zuluf
 Mr. Yusef Daher
 Mr. Rifat Kassis – Coordinator

We hear the cry of our children

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, hear the cry of hope that our children have launched in these difficult times that we still experience in this Holy Land. We support them and stand by them in their faith, their hope, their love, and their vision for the future. We also support the call to all our faithful as well as to the Israeli and Palestinian Leaders, to the International Community, and to the World Churches, in order to accelerate the achievement of justice, peace, and reconciliation in this Holy Land. We ask God to bless all our children by giving them more power in order to contribute effectively in establishing and developing their community, while making it a community in love, trust, justice, and peace.

His Beatitude Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox
 His Beatitude Patriarch Fouad Twal, Latin Church
 His Beatitude Patriarch Torkom Manougian, Armenian Orthodox
 Very Revd Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Custody of the Holy Land
 H.E. Archbishop Dr Anba Abraham, Coptic
 H.E. Archbishop Mar Swerios Malki Murad, Syrian Orthodox
 H.E. Archbishop Paul Nabil Sayah, Maronite
 H.E. Archbishop Abba Mathaios, Ethiopian
 H.E. Archbishop Joseph-Jules Zerey, Greek Catholic
 Bishop Gregor Peter Malki, Syrian Catholic
 Bishop Munib A. Younan, Lutheran
 Bishop Suheil Dawani, Anglican
 Bishop Raphael Minassian, Armenian Catholic

December 15, 2009

[Note: A list of Palestinian Christian institutions and personalities that have signed the Kairos Palestine document and copies of the document in other languages are available at www.kairospalestine.ps. This copy came from the Web site of the Israel/Palestine Mission Network, <http://www.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org/resources/kairos.pdf>.]

Concurrence to Item 14-05 from the Presbytery of San Jose.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 14-05 be approved with the following minor changes in recommendation one. [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strikethrough; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

1. [~~receive~~] [endorse] “A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith and Hope from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering,” commending it to use by our presbyteries and congregations as [~~an advocacy tool~~] [a resource for education, worship, and advocacy for both its theological understanding of sin and hope and its brave call for solidarity in non-violent economic witness for change];

Rationale

The proposed amendment reflects the language of the Middle East Study Committee’s Report, “Breaking Down the Walls,” particularly in recommendation 3.f. and the overture’s specific concern that the call for action in “A Moment of Truth” not be separated from its theology. It is because of the brave support for boycott, divestment, and sanctions focused on the occupation that some have criticized the signers of “A Moment of Truth,” perhaps not knowing of the constant institutional pressure that all church leaders labor under in Palestine. While the spectacle of persons in comfortable locations criticizing the non-violent spirituality of those under military occupation is jarring, the relevance of non-violent strategies found effective in the South African liberation struggle is undeniable. The ecumenical consensus represented by the document’s supporters is also significant.

By taking the name, “Kairos Palestine,” the church leaders are invoking the memory of a South African Kairos statement from 1985, though they are choosing non-violence and do not use the word “apartheid” in the document. (South African church leaders, responding to “A Moment of Truth,” use the word and analyze the occupation from that angle; see <http://www.oikoumene.org/gr/resources/documents/other-ecumenical-bodies/south-african-response-to-kairos-palestine-document.html>.) What is less known is that the term kairos gained currency in the Kairos Circle of 1930’s Germany where theologian Paul Tillich and other Christians worked with Jews in resisting totalitarian forces.

The second part of the overture, if approved, may help Palestinian Christians not be mischaracterized as supersessionists (seeing Christianity as superior and replacing Judaism,) or linked to fundamentalism in their understandings of land or peoplehood. As a document, “A Moment of Truth” includes emphasis on the dignity of adversaries and self-criticism. But above all, “A Moment of Truth” cannot fairly be termed hateful or anti-Semitic in its legitimate criticism of Israeli government policies and constant effort to look forward to a reconciled future that involves two peoples and three faiths at peace. In “endorsing” this text, the General Assembly would be pointing to its value as a witness for both resistance and reconciliation, understanding it as the self-description of besieged Christians at a crucial moment.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 14-05 be approved.

Rationale

This report should be received by the PC(USA) because it is critical to hear from all voices, including Palestinian Christians. The ACREC believes that whenever and wherever our brothers and sisters in faith justly call out for solidarity in a time of challenge when they are resisting occupation, we must heartily support them with the love that Jesus taught. “... Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn. 15:12).

This call from the Palestinian Christians makes a moral claim on us to which we cannot turn our backs; our response will determine the integrity of the church. If some doubt persists, we must ask ourselves if this call for solidarity were from any other part of the world, would we hesitate to give our support? The ACREC is persuaded that nothing trumps God’s call for justice. “... What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic. 6:8).

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 14-05

Comment on Item 14-05—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

Known as “Kairos Palestine,” this statement comes to us from the anguished hearts of our partners in Israel and Palestine. These are the Christians with whom our church has been engaged in mission and witness for many decades: Evangelical Lutherans and Reformed, Episcopalians, Orthodox and Catholics. It has been supported by our wider circle of Christian partners in the region, all four families of churches.

The document reflects a theological, spiritual, and missiological stance, and reaches out from the community’s profound chronic pain and tenacious affirmation of love. It communicates the truth they live, the hope they breathe, and the faith that sustains them.

First, we thank our Christian brothers and sisters for sharing their cry with us, and affirm our relationship and the church’s solidarity with them in their struggle for a just peace.

In the spirit of partnership that frames our mission relationship and our witness to truth, faith, and hope, Presbyterian World Mission commends “Kairos Palestine” to Presbyterians across the church for study, and draws the attention of the 219th General Assembly (2010) commissioners and delegates to the report of the Middle East Study Committee titled “Breaking Down the Walls” (Item 14-08), especially to the references made to this Kairos document.

Item 14-06

[The assembly answered Item 14-06 by the action taken on Item 14-08. See pp. 51, 54.]

On Middle East Peacemaking—From the Presbytery of San Joaquin.

The Presbytery of San Joaquin overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to answer all overtures concerning Israel and Palestine with the following actions:

1. That the 219th General Assembly (2010) approves the following statement:

The Arab-Israeli conflict presents an unprecedented level of complexity amid constantly changing political conditions in the region. Thus the best course of action for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is to defer from taking positions or making policy statements that appear to favor either side in the conflict.

We call upon the leadership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to use our limited resources and influence to direct our specific involvement as peacemakers to:

- offer our prayers to God for the success of all peaceful efforts;
- support peacemakers who encourage tolerance and reconciliation;
- advocate for the process of establishing a step-by-step, negotiated, two-state Israel/Palestine solution;
- condemn all acts of terrorism and unwarranted violence;
- provide humanitarian assistance to innocent victims of the conflict.

As we witness for peace in this manner, we will defer from taking actions or making statements that align the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with unilateral support for any of the specific parties involved in the struggle.

2. The 219th General Assembly (2010) also instructs the General Assembly Mission Council to ensure that staff, council members, entities, affiliated organizations, and networks abide by these directives.

3. The 219th General Assembly (2010) urges the church to pledge its constant prayers and conscientious support for the overall welfare of all the peoples in the Middle East, and indeed for the world.

Rationale

The 217th General Assembly (2006) overwhelmingly approved an approach to Middle East peacemaking that singled out neither the Palestinian Authority nor Israel for condemnation.

The 217th General Assembly (2006) resolution, as approved, rejected a process of divestment that singled out the State of Israel. Instead, it encouraged affirmative investment and engagement as the most constructive means to achieve “positive outcomes” for peace and stability in the region.

The goal, as approved, would result in the “... creation of a socially, economically, geographically, and politically viable and secure Palestinian state, alongside an equally viable and secure Israeli state, both of which have a right to exist” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 945, section 3.c.).

The resolution delegated to the church’s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee the task of implementing some aspects of this policy, in full recognition of the complexities and the difficulties confronting peacemakers on both sides in a rapidly evolving situation in the region.

Since then, Hamas and Hizbollah continue to advocate the destruction of Israel and continue to reject a two-state solution advocated by, among others, the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Fatah. The prospect for an early peace in the region greatly deteriorated with tragic consequences in both Israel and Lebanon following the initiation of military combat operations by Hizbollah from its base in Lebanon, the continuation of military operations of Hamas and Fatah in Gaza against each other, and military operations of Hamas against the Israelis, the latter primarily in the form of thousands of increasingly destructive rocket attacks on Israeli cities and towns.

The cumulative effect has been one of an escalation of violence in the region, further isolation of the Gaza Strip by Israel, military retaliation strikes by Israel against terrorists, an increase of internecine Palestinian fighting, and the creation of a humanitarian and health crisis for the residents of the region. There has also been a concomitant increase in risk of life for Palestinian Christians residing in the Gaza Strip.

Any statement of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy or action by its entities that has the appearance of unilateral alignment or support of either side in the Arab/Israeli conflict will be counter-productive to achieving the positive peacemaking results we all desire. It may, instead, set back the efforts of those committed to working for lasting peace in the region.

Therefore, by this action the 219th General Assembly (2010) seeks to provide continued encouragement for all peacemakers and persons of good will who desire and support constructive efforts to achieve a negotiated peace.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 14-06 be disapproved.

Rationale

The overture's call for prayer, support for peacemakers, continued condemnation of all acts of terrorism and unwarranted violence, and humanitarian assistance are laudable and affirm existing policies of the General Assembly. It is not clear, however, that the Arab-Israeli conflict presents an unprecedented level of complexity, nor is it clear that the political conditions in the region are subject to greater change than other parts of this troubled world. More problematic is the possibility that adopting the statement proposed in this overture risks alienating or even abandoning partner churches in the Middle East who turn to the PC(USA) regularly for advice and support on questions of justice and peace in the region. Furthermore, this statement implies that the church should turn a blind eye to violations of U.S. and international laws that protect non-combatants. Ultimately, the failure to advocate for the protection of non-combatants is to back away from our commitment to be peacemakers.

Item 14-07

[The assembly approved Item 14-07 with amendment. See pp. 50, 51–52.]

On Iraq—From the Presbytery of Providence.

The Presbytery of Providence respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

A. Pray for

1. the churches in Iraq—the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches in Basrah, Baghdad, Mosul, and Kirkuk; the Chaldean Catholic, the Armenian Orthodox and Catholic, the Assyrian, and the Greek Orthodox Churches—as they strive to survive and witness during the chaotic period of rebuilding their nation and their churches;

2. all who grieve, both Iraqis and internationals, because of lost loved ones and those who have suffered from the hostilities;

3. all Iraqis that they may rebuild a nation that promotes the highest potential of all its citizens and responds to the continuing special needs of those who are displaced or refugees from warfare;

4. all refugees, both internally and externally displaced, who have often been forced from their homes by fear and threats of violence, that they may soon be able to resume their lives in safety and health.

B. Commend

1. the agencies of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) for making available members of our partner churches in Iraq to inform us about their churches' life and witness, at national gatherings such as the Big Tent and the Presbyterian Women's Triennium, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program's International Peacemakers, and the Iraq Partnership Network; and we urge the GAMC to use these and other means to continue to inform us about the life and witness of our partners in Iraq, the ways in which we may support them, and ways in which our partners may help us better understand our mission; *

2. Commend the practical and proactive initiatives of the Iraqi churches to serve their neighbors and contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq and Presbyterian Women for designating the Kirkuk Church Kindergarten and Child Care Center as a recipient of the 2010 Birthday Offering grant helping to provide education for children in Iraq;

3. Congregations and individuals that have special ministries with Iraqi refugees, recognizing the connection between spiritual and other human needs.

C. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to empower and equip presbyteries and congregations as they respond to the spiritual and material needs of Iraqi refugees arriving in the United States, including increased collaboration between Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the office of Middle Eastern Congregational Support to provide a holistic approach to this outreach ministry; and also direct the GAMC to work proactively with our regional partners as they respond to the ongoing needs of Iraqi refugees in the host countries in the Middle East. *

D. Urge the GAMC to continue to provide spiritual and psychological services for those now or previously in military service related to Iraq, as well as to those who now or previously resisted military service in Iraq for reasons of conscience. *

~~[E. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to study and report back to the General Assembly the relationship between the expenditures for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the economic conditions in the U.S.,~~

~~including those who benefit from these expenditures, those sectors that are disadvantaged, and providing a theological and practical discussion from the Reformed perspective.*]~~

[*These assume no additional budget is needed, and that the activities will reflect the priorities of the General Assembly.]

~~[F-]~~ [E.] Direct the Stated Clerk to call upon the church, its congregations and presbyteries to:

1. pray for the effectiveness of our national leaders in making peace;
2. encourage presbyteries to develop linkages between their congregations and agencies that assist in the relocation of Iraqi refugees in the United States;
3. commend the U.S. government for ~~[taking necessary steps to protect noncombatant Kurdish and other civilians in Northern Iraq from Turkish and Iranian military action that has resulted in damage to property and persons in that region.]~~

[a. responding to the massive Iraqi refugee situation;

[b. taking steps to return troops from combat;

[c. giving support to returned troops and their families;

[d. giving political and economic support toward rebuilding Iraq as an independent nation.]

4. urge the U.S. government to maintain its commitments to:

- a. withdraw all U.S. combat troops from Iraq by August 31, 2010;
- b. withdraw all U.S. armed forces and defense contractors from Iraq no later than December 31, 2011;
- c. ensure that the U.S. not establish permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq;
- d. make available sufficient U.S. funds for the repatriation and resettlement of Iraqi refugees and for the postwar reconstruction of Iraq;
- e. reduce the time that it takes to process refugees coming to the U.S.; ~~and]~~
- f. ensure that sufficient funds are provided for medical and psychological treatment of returning military personnel~~[-]~~ [;]

[g. protect civilian populations from harm, particularly in the northern part of Iraq, due to long-standing hostilities among militant, governmental, economic, ethnic, and religious groups; and carry out its stated policy of engaging all sides involved in a conflict by following that policy in order to find peaceful ways to resolve their differences.]

~~[G-]~~ [E.] Direct the Stated Clerk to send this overture to the synods, presbyteries, and churches in the most practical manner as soon as possible, requesting their concurrence and active participation in these ministries, especially in association with ecumenical and interfaith partners.

Rationale

“Greetings from [Iraq] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Thank you for your concern and follow-up on our church situation in [Iraq], and also I would like to thank all brothers in faith who support us and pray for our safety. ... Due to the occupation of Iraq in 2003 which resulted in loss of security, our country is considered [to have] the highest in number of orphans. ... We need your prayers, so that God may give us enough strength to stand with these difficult circumstances.”

This is typical of the greetings from Iraqi Presbyterians, who live in the spirit of Paul’s words: “... as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything” (2 Cor. 6:9–10). We note with sadness that killing has taken place. One elder was deliberately killed and another, who had been deliberately shot and later threatened, fled the country. Half of Iraqi Christians have become internally displaced or refugees; they are among several million Iraqis whose lives have been terribly disrupted.

Those that remain persevere with worship in their sanctuaries where possible or in their homes. They continue programs for children, youth, and women, and with community activities such as prison visitation, kindergartens for children with families and for orphans, a radio station, and a medical clinic.

The suffering includes other Christian churches, all other Iraqis, and those who have served with the military forces. Concern for those who grieve and for those who will spend their lifetimes with painful memories and physical and psychological challenges will need to be expressed as long as we live.

The refugees, who languish in host countries in the Middle East and those who find new beginnings in the United States, will continue to need our attention to their spiritual, psychological, and physical needs for a long time. Greater coordination among GAMC offices, presbyteries, and congregations will increase the caring and advocacy ministries that we are committed to provide, both in the host countries and in the U.S.. Because processing refugees takes from eight to eighteen months, whatever we can do to encourage the government to speed up the process is helpful.

Previous studies related to Iraq, most recently “To Repent, to Restore, to Rebuild, and to Reconcile: A Study Paper on Lessons Learned and Directions Toward Peace in Iraq,” received by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and commended for study, have a solid basis in Reformed theology and practice, citing, for instance, the linkage between peace and justice in the Confession of 1967 (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp.1203–19). To bring these up to the present, a study relating U.S. expenses for war to economic justice would be very helpful.

Commitments and agreements with Iraqis have been made during the previous and current U.S. administrations; on behalf of both the Iraqi and the U.S. military forces, public support is advisable and necessary.

At the end of 2009, of the \$52.8 billion allocated for reconstruction, \$39.54 billion had been spent, with half of that going for security needs, not reconstruction or development. As this funding is anticipated to end by 2014, it is appropriate to call for a level of funding that will overcome much of the destruction caused by the war, similar to the Marshall Plan following WWII.

This overture brings up-to-date the overture on Iraq approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Item 11-10), which states, for instance, in paragraph five: “Call upon the United States government to develop and implement a lasting peaceful solution, responsibly bringing the troops home, and reaffirm the call of the 216th General Assembly (2004) for the United States government to engage with the international community through the United Nations and other international agencies to cooperate with the government of Iraq in providing security, peacekeeping forces, and funding the rebuilding of the country” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1159).

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 14-07 be approved with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“E. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to study and report back to the [220th] General Assembly [(2012) on the costs and related impacts of the Iraq War, including] the relationship between the expenditures for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the economic conditions [in the U.S.] [of the United States], [including those who benefit from these expenditures, those sectors that are disadvantaged, and providing a theological and practical discussion from the Reformed perspective.] [which sectors benefited from war expenditure and which were disadvantaged by it, along with a Reformed theological, ethical and practical summary assessment.]

“G. Direct the Stated Clerk to send this overture to the synods, presbyteries, and churches in the most practical manner as soon as possible, requesting their concurrence and active participation in these ministries, especially in association with ecumenical and interfaith partners [and, in coordination with the Washington Office, to communicate particularly the content of section F.4. to the President of the United States and appropriate government agencies and representatives].

Rationale

Providence Presbytery calls for a thorough list of actions appropriate to the range of relationships with and needs of the Iraqi people, praying and caring for the Christian community and other minorities, remembering the refugees and internally displaced to be resettled—more in the U.S., and including the needs of U.S. military veterans wounded in the war and occupation. It encourages a holistic ministry response that includes theological reflection and practical analysis of the impact of the long-running and very costly conflict. The overture’s rationale shows a careful reading of previous policy on the Iraq war and an awareness of the church’s mission capabilities and experience. There is no doubt but that the elders and pastors leading the remaining Presbyterian churches in Iraq deserve our prayer and admiration for their bravery and sacrifices.

On the particular section that calls for a study by the ACSWP, the overture assumes that such work will be done with no additional monies. While the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy can prepare the study requested, it would be done without the appointment of a separate study committee but could involve consulting with one or more economists. This

work would complement a larger updating of peace thinking in the church (see the Advice and Counsel on Items 13-11, 13-07, and others) and, if that larger participatory process is approved, it may be that economists who have studied the war's impact can be found in academic institutions involved in that process.

GAMC COMMENT ON 14-07

Comment on 14-07—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

Recommendation B.1. of Item 14-07 "... urge[s] the GAMC to use these and other means to continue to inform us about the life and witness of our partners in Iraq, the ways in which we may support them, and ways in which our partners may help us better understand our mission" (Item 14-07).

Presbyterian World Mission is pleased that the Rev. Haitham Jazrawi, Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Kirkuk and Moderator of the Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church of Iraq, plans to attend the 219th General Assembly as an "Ecumenical Representative," if he is granted a United States visa. This should be an important opportunity for the Commissioners, Advisory Delegates, and guests of the assembly to greet our partner, and to hear first-hand about the opportunities and challenges the Presbyterians and other churches of Iraq are facing. World Mission has also facilitated an invitation to an Iraqi Presbyterian to spend a month with the Synod of the Covenant in October 2010, as part of the Synod's "Mission to the U.S.A." program.

The latter half of Recommendation C asks that the General Assembly "... also direct the GAMC to work proactively with our regional partners as they respond to the ongoing needs of Iraqi refugees in the host countries in the Middle East" (Item 14-07).

In the wake of the Iraq War, in 2003, Presbyterian World Mission (at that time known as Worldwide Ministries Division) established an extra commitment opportunity (ECO) account, #E051722, as the "Peace Fund for Solidarity with the Churches of Iraq." The fund, which has so far elicited a significant response approaching \$200,000 over seven years, has continued to be used to support the life and ministry of our partner churches in Iraq. That ministry included, among other programs, a variety of ways to assist families and individuals displaced in the country, and for many who had to flee.

Portions of the "Peace Fund for Solidarity" were forwarded to the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon to provide a variety of ministries to Iraqi refugees who ended up in Syria and Lebanon. Similarly, contributions were forwarded to the Middle East Council of Churches, Jordan Liaison Office, to serve the needs of Iraqi refugees in that country. A few Presbyterian families have also landed in Western European countries, where partner churches were contacted for help.

The World Mission-related Iraq Partnership Network (IPN) adopted as one of its priorities the support of the church's work with Iraqi refugees, for which it raised some funds. In the fall of 2008, twenty-two members of the IPN traveled to Syria and met with leaders from the churches of Iraq and some Iraqi refugee families, to consult on how best to continue in ministry with them. This overture captures the inspiration of that encounter, and urges the PC(USA) to help share in a ministry of support to displaced families, with the aim of helping as many refugees as possible to return to a secure and stable homeland, and to a thriving church.

Recommendation C also asks that the General Assembly "[d]irect the [GAMC] to empower and equip presbyteries and congregations as they respond to the spiritual and material needs of Iraqi refugees arriving in the United States, including increased collaboration between Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the office of Middle Eastern Congregational Support to provide a holistic approach to this outreach ministry ..." (Item 14-07).

The Office of Middle Eastern Congregational Support assists presbyteries in establishing worshipping communities, including Bible Study Fellowships and New Church Developments (NCDs), in order to meet the spiritual needs of immigrants from the Middle East, including refugees from Iraq. Many of these Presbyterian worshipping communities in the United States lack the capacity to provide material assistance to the influx of Iraqi refugees. There are about fifty such fellowships, NCDs, and congregations in the PC(USA).

Item 14-08

[The assembly approved Item 14-08 with amendment. See pp. 50, 52.]

"Breaking Down the Walls"—From the Middle East Study Committee.

In service to its ever-linked concerns for peace and justice in Palestine and Israel, and its concern for the enduring integrity and witness of the Christian Church there and in the United States, the Middle East Study Committee recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following recommendations:

1. *Affirmation of Human Rights & Moral Principles*

In accordance with past policy statements and the theological-ethical bases of our confessions, the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms the following human rights, moral principles, and goals guiding its recommendations:

- a. The human right to self-determination through free elections and the rule of law, including the right to enjoy such basic freedoms as those of speech, press, and assembly.
- b. The human right to religious freedom, including full access to religious sites and freedom from all discriminatory practices based on religious identity.
- c. Those additional rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights conventions, including the principle of universal jurisdiction.
- d. The moral principle of applying humanitarian laws regarding warfare to all nations. These laws protect civilians and nonmilitary facilities prohibit such internationally recognized violations as the use of anti-personnel weapons and weapons of mass destruction, the assassination of political opponents, collective punishment, detention without due process, and the torture or abuse of prisoners.
- e. The moral principle of applying these same humanitarian laws regarding warfare to nongovernmental combatants as well. These laws prohibit such practices as suicide bombing, kidnapping, shelling civilian populations, and torturing or abusing prisoners.
- f. The moral principle of granting to Red Cross, Star, or Crescent inspection teams access to all prison facilities.
- g. The moral principle that all refugees have an individual right to return or to adjudicate or negotiate compensation for the loss of home and homeland, wherever those may be.
- h. The moral goal for nations to create a nuclear-free world and, toward that goal, to sign and comply with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other relevant treaties.
- i. The moral goal of demilitarizing conflict situations to levels consistent with a state's or people's right to self-defense.
- j. The moral principle of respecting United Nations observers and peacekeeping forces and imposing disciplinary sanctions when nations or entities target UN facilities and personnel.
- k. The moral principle of nonintervention in, noninterference with, and non-destabilization of other countries.

2. *Affirmation of Previous General Assembly Policies & Statements*¹

Given the daunting and mounting obstacles to the viability of a "two-state solution," and following from the above principles, the 219th General Assembly (2010) affirms with greater urgency our historic Presbyterian stances with specific regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, calling for

- a. an immediate cessation of all violence, whether perpetrated by Israelis or Palestinians;
- b. the reaffirmation of Israel's right to exist as a sovereign nation within secure and internationally recognized borders in accordance with United Nations resolutions.
- ~~b.~~ c. the end of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and diversion of water resources;
- ~~c.~~ d. an immediate freeze both on the establishment or expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and on the Israeli acquisition of Palestinian land and buildings in East Jerusalem;
- ~~d.~~ e. the relocation by Israel of the Separation Barrier to the 1967 border;
- ~~e.~~ f. the withholding of U.S. government aid to the state of Israel as long as Israel persists in creating new West Bank settlements;
- ~~f.~~ g. continuing corporate engagement through the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment with companies profiting from the sale and use of their products for non-peaceful purposes and/or the violation of human rights;

~~[g-]~~ [h.] a shared status for Jerusalem;

~~[h-]~~ [i] equal rights for Palestinian citizens of the state of Israel;

~~[i-]~~ [j] the cessation of systematic violation of human rights by any party, specifically, practices of administrative detention, collective punishment, the torture of prisoners and suspects, home demolitions and evictions, and the deportation of dissidents;

~~[j-]~~ [k.] the immediate resumption by Israel and Palestine of negotiations toward a two-state solution.

3. *For the Witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

The 219th General Assembly (2010):

a. Directs the General Assembly Mission Council to set 2010–2012 as a time of Presbyterian prayer and action for the Middle East, including: travel opportunities with a particular emphasis on visits with the Christian communities, study of Reformed theological understandings of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and of historical understandings that encompass various narratives and verifiable sources, itineration throughout the U.S. by Middle Eastern Christian partners, local dialogues and shared projects with American Jews and Muslims, participation in the ecumenical accompaniment program (EAPPI) in Palestine and Israel of the World Council of Churches, and robust publicity and promotion of these activities.

b. Authorizes the creation of a Monitoring Group on the Middle East for the next two years that will consist of ~~[the members of this study committee]~~ [seven people appointed by the current and immediately past Moderators in consultation with the GAMC staff persons responsible for global mission in the Middle East and for Interreligious Affairs] to assist the appropriate General Assembly Mission Council offices and the Middle East staff team in monitoring progress and guiding actions to ensure adequate implementation of policy directions approved by this General Assembly, given the growing complexity and interrelatedness of issues in the region. (It is the understanding that the group would be convened, as necessary and helpful, via teleconferencing or other means incurring minimal expense.) [This committee shall be appointed by the end of August 2010. The monitoring group shall include at least one but no more than two members of the existing Middle East Study Committee (MESOC). New appointees shall be chosen on the basis of demonstrated experience with and knowledge of the complex dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the larger concerns of the Middle East, and shall together comprise an authentic balance representing the fullness of the spectrum of commitments within the PC(USA) toward the people and issues in the region.]

c. Strongly denounces Caterpillar's continued profit-making from non-peaceful uses of its products and presses Caterpillar to review carefully its involvement in obstacles to a just and lasting peace in Israel-Palestine and to take affirmative steps to end its complicity in the violation of human rights.

d. Calls on denominational agencies and entities, presbyteries, congregations, and individual members to invest positively, after due vetting, in sustainable economic development projects for the West Bank and Gaza (that do not support the occupation) sponsored by Palestinians or jointly by Palestinians and Israelis in equitable partnership

e. Urges a visit to Israel/Palestine by a high-level joint delegation of Presbyterians (including representatives from the Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Foundation, and the General Assembly Mission Council) and appropriate counterparts in the American ecumenical, Jewish, and Muslim communities, with costs shared among the participating faith groups, for the purpose of identifying opportunities for positive investment, with a report back to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

f. ~~[Endorses the Kairos Palestine document ("A Moment of Truth") in its emphases on hope for liberation, nonviolence, love of enemy, and reconciliation; lifts the document up for study and discussion by Presbyterians; and directs the creation of a study guide for the document through the appropriate channel of the General Assembly Mission Council.]~~ [Commends for study the Kairos Palestine document ("A Moment of Truth"), and endorses the document's emphases on hope for liberation, nonviolence, love of enemy, and reconciliation. We lift up for study the often neglected voice of Palestinian Christians. We direct the monitoring group for the Middle East to create a study guide for the document].

g. Promotes contributions to Extra Commitment Opportunities for the support of Christian educational institutions throughout the region, especially in Lebanon and Iraq.

h. Encourages Presbyterians to travel to the region, especially Israel/Palestine, and when doing so to worship and visit with ~~[fellow]~~ [Palestinian] Christians, support Christian businesses, ~~[seek to understand the range of narratives]~~ [engage Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs, and Palestinian Muslims], and spend dedicated time in Israel and Palestine.

4. *Urgent Actions Toward Justice and Peace in Israel, the Occupied Territories of Palestine, and Jerusalem*

The 219th General Assembly (2010):

- a. Advocates the immediate resumption of good faith negotiations to address comprehensively the issues of occupation, refugees, borders, shared status of Jerusalem, release of prisoners and detainees, and security, based on UN Security Council resolutions.
- b. Calls on the U.S. government to exercise strategically its international influence, including ~~[the possible withholding of military aid as a means of bringing Israel to]~~ [making U.S. aid to Israel contingent upon Israel's] compliance with international law and peacemaking efforts.
- c. Calls upon Israel to release, without any further delay, withheld Palestinian tax moneys to the Palestinian National Authority.
- d. ~~[Calls on the Israeli government to end immediately its blockade of Gaza, and on the U.S. government to end any support it is giving to the blockade, and also calls on the Egyptian government to facilitate the passage of humanitarian supplies into Gaza as well as consumer goods from the strip.]~~ [Calls on the Israeli and Egyptian governments to limit their blockade of Gaza solely to military equipment/devices and to guarantee adequate levels of food, medicine, building supplies, and other humanitarian items, and to allow free commercial exchange in and out of Gaza, and calls on the U.S. government to end any support for the blockade that interferes with the adequacy of such items or such exchange.]
- e. Urges the main Palestinian political parties (Fatah and Hamas) to set aside their differences, to pursue an ideology of nonviolence, to reconcile immediately, and to work for peace with each other and with their neighbor, Israel, for the sake of their people, and also calls on the U.S. government to offer support for such reconciliation.
- f. Supports the establishment of an international council for Jerusalem to ensure the nondiscriminatory treatment of all Jerusalemites, including fair allocation of housing and family unification permits, free movement of religious workers of all faiths, fair provision of city services in exchange for taxes, protection of all religious and historic sites, international scientific review of all archeological sites and labeling of historic sites, and equitably accessible mass transit from both Israeli and Palestinian areas and links to the West Bank and Gaza.
- g. Encourages the participation of Palestinian and Israeli religious leaders (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Druze) to participate in the peace process and to lead efforts at reconciliation among both peoples, without governmental interference.
- h. Calls for Bethlehem to be a free and open city accessible to all people.

5. *Urgent Actions for a Comprehensive Peace with Justice in the Middle East*

The 219th General Assembly (2010) does the following:

- a. Calls on all parties in the Middle East, including Iran and Israel, to refrain from nuclear arms proliferation and to work actively and constructively toward a nuclear-free world especially in the Middle East, and calls on the U.S. to offer support for such a process.
- b. Calls on all parties in the Middle East to cease rhetoric and actions that demonize others, whether that takes the form of anti-Semitism or Islamophobia, as well as rhetoric and actions that threaten the well-being of another nation or people. This includes threats by Iranians and members of Hamas and Hezbollah against Israel, sponsorship by Iran of Holocaust-denial conferences, Israeli efforts to deny the Nakba and threats of a mass transfer (expulsion) of the Palestinians into Jordan or elsewhere, and the perpetuation of maps and textbooks that deny the existence of internationally recognized borders, states, and occupied territories.
- c. Commends as a model to all nations in the region the joint efforts of Bethlehem, Syracuse, and Tel Aviv universities to examine current Israeli and Palestinian government textbooks for existing biases and inaccuracies and encourages the application of the same examination to textbooks used in private religious schools, be they Christian, Jewish, or Muslim.
- d. Condemns, as a matter of principle, the interference of one government in the internal politics of another country, such as Iranian support for Hamas and Hezbollah, American complicity in the Israeli occupation, Syrian interference in the Lebanese political process, and Egyptian collaboration in the enforcement of the blockade of Gaza.
- e. Calls on the Lebanese government to address immediately the plight of Palestinian refugees living within its borders, providing them with access to work and the democratic process.

f. Calls on the Syrian and Israeli governments to resume negotiations toward a resolution of the Golan Heights occupation and security issues and calls upon the governments of the U.S. and Turkey to support these negotiations.

g. Commends the bravery and courage of Iranians who have taken to the streets peacefully to demand their democratic rights and calls on the Iranian government to cease its repression of democratic and religious freedoms.

h. Calls on the U.S. government to exercise strategically its international influence and the withholding of financial, economic, and military aid to countries other than Israel, as we might with Israel, until such a time as the civil, religious, and other freedoms of their peoples are fully exercised; and to end U.S. taxpayer support for regimes that perpetuate inequality and popular frustration.

i. Supports an accelerated shift of Iraq occupation activities to effective reconstruction, and the allocation of significant ongoing monetary reparations to help resettle refugees and those internally displaced, compensate victims and survivors of violence, and restore economic sovereignty and productivity to its oil industry.

6. *Addressing Our Own Government*

For U.S. government policy to fulfill its “honest broker” aspirations and honor a region-wide human rights agenda, the 219th General Assembly (2010):

a. Calls on the U.S. government to repent of its sinful behavior vis-a-vis the Middle East, including its ongoing war in Iraq, its selectively undermining or supporting the democratic process in such places as Iran and the Palestinian National Authority, its continuing support of nondemocratic regimes for the sake of oil or leverage over oil, or its involvement with security services and contractors who engage in torture, surveillance, and other human rights violations.

b. Calls on the U.S. government to eliminate existing loopholes in tax codes that permit its citizens to make donations to organizations that support human rights violations and breaches of international law and UN Security Council resolutions—particularly those loopholes that allow tax-deductible donations that financially support the Israeli settlement enterprise on occupied territory or Palestinian militant groups.

c. Calls on the U.S. government to give a thorough accounting to its citizenry as to the amounts of its foreign aid to countries in the Middle East that have been used by the recipient nations to finance human rights violations, breaches of international law and UN Security Council Resolutions; ; and to redirect adequate allocations of aid toward (1) the rebuilding of Gaza and humanitarian assistance for its people, and (2) Palestinian reuse or dismantling of the remaining settlement infrastructure following the establishment of a Palestinian state.

d. Calls on the U.S. government to work with other governments to provide reconstruction aid with assurances that there would be no further destruction of infrastructure provided by this aid.

e. Call on the U.S. government to pursue the goal of guaranteeing continued security for Israel from an atmosphere of fear of rocket attacks or other forms of violence, while the U.S. also addresses the Palestinian needs for security and a just resolution of the conflict with Israel.

7. *Concerning Christian Presence in the Middle East*

For tolerance of religious pluralism, freedom of worship, and protection of Christian communities and in line with principles stated above, the 219th General Assembly (2010):

a. Views with respect the integrity of the religious faiths of Jews, Muslims, and other peoples, the value of noncoercion in religious life, and the benefits of public toleration of religious diversity to diminish extremism, discrimination, and bigotry.

b. Recognizes the current role Christian communities play in helping preserve cultural diversity, historical awareness, and political freedom.

c. Expresses its alarm at increasing waves of Christian emigration thus diminishing Christian presence and witness in the Middle East, and cites as positive counter-examples the inclusion and fuller participation of Christians in Syrian and Jordanian societies.

d. Calls on the government of Iraq to strengthen the protection of minority communities, especially Christian communities under threat, within contexts of increasing protection for all citizens.

e. Recognizes the efforts made by the Egyptian government and civil society to ease the growing climate of tension between the country's Christians and Muslims, and urges that the root causes of fear, anger, and the growing incidence of violent outbreaks be addressed, in order to restore mutual trust and to enable all citizens to enjoy their full and equal rights.

f. Urges the government of Israel to honor family reunification of Christians and others, to provide permits for home construction and improvement without discrimination for all its citizens and those Christians and Muslims under its occupation, to apply the 1967 Protection of Holy Sites law equitably, and to extend religious freedoms described in Recommendation IV.f. throughout Israel without discrimination and prejudice against non-Jews.

8. *Engaging This Report*

The 219th General Assembly (2010):

~~[a. Approves Part One of the report (Introduction; Letters to Our Church, Partners, and Engaged Parties; Biblical Theological Reflections; 'What We Have Seen and Heard').~~

~~[b. Receives Part Three (I. Notes from a Humanistic, Liberal Zionist: A Personal Narrative; II. A Plea for Justice: A Historical Analysis; and the Appendixes) and commends it to the church for study.~~

~~[c. Authorizes the creation of a study guide by the monitoring group (see Recommendation 3.b.).]~~

[a. Receives Part One of this report (Introduction; Letters to Our Church, Partners, and Engaged Parties; Biblical Theological Reflections; 'What We Have Seen and Heard') as rationale for recommendations only, not as policy.

[b. Delete Part Three, Items A and B (A. Notes from a Humanistic, Liberal Zionist: A Personal Narrative; B. A Plea for Justice: A Historical Analysis), and replace with a series of eight narratives of comparable length, four arising from the range of authentically Palestinian perspectives (including both Christian and Muslim), and four arising from the range of authentically Israeli perspectives, along with an annotated bibliography for additional understanding about the breadth and depth of both authentically Palestinian and Israeli spectrum of perspectives but above all authentically pro-justice and pro-peace. These narratives and the bibliography will be collected and approved by the Monitoring Group on the Middle East.]”

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2008 Referral: Item 11-28. Appoint a Nine-Member Committee to Prepare a Comprehensive Study, with Recommendations, That Is Focused on Israel/Palestine within the Complex Context of the Middle East and Report Back to 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 1226).*

The mandate for this study is the action of the 218th General Assembly (2008): “to prepare a comprehensive study, with recommendations, that is focused on Israel/Palestine within the complex context of the Middle East” (*Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 1226*). The complex context includes two, ongoing wars, one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan and the northwest border regions of Pakistan, wars that, like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, involve issues of U.S. involvement, a use of force, an occupation, and religious tension. The context also includes ongoing struggles within particular nations: between religious and ethnic groups in Iraq and to a lesser extent in Lebanon; between the rulers and the ruled in Egypt and several other Arab countries; between the native-born and the guest workers in the Gulf region; between political factions in Palestine; between Israelis and Palestinians in Israel; between the ideals of democracy and theocracy in Iran, Israel, and Palestine; and between forces of modernization and tradition in all countries. The undue influence of outside forces continues a history of colonial interference throughout the Middle East. Yet most expert observers and popular opinion polls confirm that the Israeli-Palestinian struggle is playing a central role in exacerbating region-wide grief and grievance.

Even as this is a statement addressed first to Presbyterians and to the government of our own nation, the United States, it is also an invitation to respectful and frank conversation addressed to other Christians, to Jews, and to Muslims both here and abroad, and to persons of every nation who seriously seek peace. Still because religious faith is to be lived out in an obedience of thoughts and deeds, our study does recommend to Presbyterians specific policies and particular actions.

To summarize at the outset our principal concerns, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to strengthen its past positions on behalf of peace between Israelis and Palestinians and the cessation of violence by all parties, and its opposition to Israel's ongoing expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and its continuing occupation of those territories. We also call upon the various Palestinian political factions to negotiate a unified government prepared to recognize Israel's existence. We proclaim our alarm and dismay: both over the increasingly rapid exodus of Christians from Israel/Palestine caused by anti-Palestinian discrimination and oppression, the growth of Islamic and Jewish fundamentalism, and the occupation-related absence of economic opportunity; and also over the exodus of Christians from other parts of the

region caused by various military, economic, religious, and cultural factors. And we oppose the government of Iran's nuclear ambitions, its sponsorship of international guerilla warfare, and the threat these pose both to Israel and to Arab states.

We deeply value our relationships with Jews and Muslims in the United States, Israel, and the predominantly Muslim countries of the Middle East. Yet the bonds of friendship must neither prevent us from speaking nor limit our empathy for the suffering of others. Inaction and silence on our part enable actions we oppose and consequences we grieve. We recognize how great a burden past misguided actions by our government have placed on Christians throughout the Muslim world. We recognize that massive amounts of U.S. tax money are feeding the various conflicts in the Middle East—including two current wars of arguable necessity and Jewish settlements in Palestine.

We also recognize that our concern to end support for both violence in all its forms and the ongoing occupation and settlement of Palestine places demands of integrity on how the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) uses its own resources and investments. Let us be clear: we do affirm the legitimacy of Israel as a state, but consider the continuing occupation of Palestine (West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem) to be illegitimate, illegal under international law, and an enduring threat to peace in the region. Furthermore, we recognize that any support for that occupation weakens the moral standing of our nation internationally and our security.

Given the complexities of the issues of the Middle East and the diversity of this study committee, it was inconceivable that we achieve unanimity on all the details of the report's recommendations. However, every good faith effort has been made to negotiate differences, honor majorities, and come to consensus without forsaking our deepest convictions.

Breaking Down the Walls

Part One: We Bear Witness

A. Introduction

Increasingly, we find that we are living in a world with numerous walls and barriers. These are walls that force us to live in sometimes small and isolated compartments. These walls and the resulting compartments often prevent us from seeing and understanding the lives of others who live in different compartments or on the other side of the wall from us. These walls are leading many to live in fear, isolation, and poverty; therefore, preventing all parties from living in peace.

This is no more obvious than with the conflict in Israel and Palestine. Ideological, theological, political, economic, and even physical walls have been erected that are preventing the establishment of a just peace in the Middle East.

Our Presbyterian confessions clearly affirm God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ and the church's mission of reconciliation as being the heart of the gospel. Since Christ "... has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us,"² we are entrusted as "ambassadors of Christ" with this "message of reconciliation."³ We are called to be those who work to break down these walls that stand in the way of the realization of God's peaceful and just kingdom.

The Middle East Study Committee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which was mandated by our 218th General Assembly (2008) and appointed by our current and two previous Moderators, has taken seriously this gospel mandate of seeking to break through these walls of hostility and to envision appropriate steps that we recommend which our church, our nation, and the other parties involved in this conflict take.

Our voice is one, which is priestly, prophetic, and pastoral. The first voice that will be heard in this report is a priestly voice speaking of our theological understanding of justice, Zion, the land, and reconciliation. The next voice is both prophetic and pastoral. Prophets and pastors are called first and foremost to truth telling. From the vast experiences and study of the members of this committee, from numerous meetings with people and leaders of diverse communities throughout the Middle East (including Iraqi and Iranian church leaders), from meetings with political and religious leaders in Washington and New York with a wide spectrum of perspectives, from debating and challenging one another, and from traveling together for two weeks in the Middle East⁴, we strive in this report to tell the truth as we see it and understand it. Based on this, we are compelled to speak pastorally to ourselves as a denomination and our partners in the region, and prophetically to other powers engaged in this ongoing conflict.

Our voice is one that has a definite sense of urgency. The time for action from all parties is now. We are witnessing a rapidly closing window of opportunity for action. Events are happening every day now in Israel and Palestine and the Middle East that are making it increasingly difficult to bring about this just peace for which we all pray. If we do not act now, our fear is that we will all look back with deep regret and shameful guilt. Our spirit, though, is not one of fear, but rather of hope. We do believe that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will once again speak with a clear, priestly, prophetic, and pastoral voice.

Our prayer is that the 219th General Assembly (2010) and our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will seriously and prayerfully discuss and approve the contents of this report, embrace the recommended actions, and recommit our church to being an agent of reconciliation—to being a church that will wholeheartedly work to break down the ideological, theological, econom-

ic, and political walls that stand in the way of a just peace. It is also our prayer that the whole church will then engage in a thoughtful and prayerful study of this report with a view to taking significant actions toward fulfilling God's vision of peace for all peoples.

B. *Letters to Our Church, Partners, and Engaged Parties*

Each of the following eight letters is addressed to one of the various parties with whom we are engaged in this discussion of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The letters are written primarily with a pastoral voice in the hope that each of these parties will continue to be fully engaged with us in our common struggle for a just peace.

1. *Presbyterian Brothers and Sisters in Christ*

Letter to Our Presbyterian Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We come to this work hoping that we have brought Reformed theology, historical Presbyterian positions, and the present realities together in a way that gives honor and glory to Christ. This work is for his sake, and is intended to strengthen the conversation within the family. And we have been grateful to so many of you who have prayed for us and our ministry in this endeavor.

The Moderators of the 216th, 217th, and 218th General Assemblies (2004, 2006, and 2008) appointed us to "prepare a comprehensive study, with recommendations, that is focused on Israel/Palestine within the complex context of the Middle East" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1226) and to report back to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

There is much in our work that commends you to engagement with the issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the context of the broader Middle East. Above all, we want you to share our alarm at the continuing decline of the Christian community in the region. Through our work as a committee, we have had the gift of visiting with our partner churches and organizations. And we have grown in our appreciation for what the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has done through the centuries to encourage, nurture, and strengthen these ancient communities who are our spiritual forebears. The time is critical, however, to continue that strong tradition for the sake of the gospel in the region of its birth.

There is much more in our report, however. And this work has been done with careful research, deliberation, and prayer. We hope that it will invite you in, that it may be an entry for your own study of the Middle East. And in our recommendations, we have offered tools that we think will assist us all in this endeavor. To the best of our ability, we have striven to bring a balance between the pastoral, priestly, and prophetic roles of our church's calling.

We are also aware that our recommendations have a much wider audience beyond the membership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who will be scrutinizing our work and ready to interpret it for their own means. Because of this, we have written other introductory letters that have a focus toward those constituencies. We are aware that such constituencies are far more diverse than any one letter could summarize. Even so, we hope that you will assist us by sharing these letters with those in your community to whom they are addressed. Our primary concern is that, no matter what the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) might say about the situation in the Middle East, we remain committed to a common cause toward justice and security for both sides, and breaking down dividing walls, even when we do not see eye-to-eye on matters of policy and practice.

May we continue to work together for the sake of all of God's children.

2. *American Brothers and Sisters in the Ecumenical Community*

Letter to Our American Brothers and Sisters in the Ecumenical Community,

For many years, we have partnered with you through the National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches in matters of common concern in the Middle East. It is our hope that we can continue to do so. We are aware that our polities and structures are different. And while we do not always agree on details, we know that we share a common passion for the region and for the justice with peace.

Our practice has been to focus on those things that unite us; this not only makes sense practically, but also theologically. Now, with a regional situation that is so critical, and with a rapidly disintegrating hope for a two-state solution in Israel/Palestine, we think the time has come for us to study more closely those places where we might have different approaches so that we might challenge and encourage one another and grow in our unity for the sake of Christ our Lord. We also know, within your own polities, you continue to study the issues and make recommendations as well. There are subtle differences between our conclusions. And unfortunately, where we have disagreed on matters of practice and policy, this has become an opportunity for those who do not share our concern for all parties in the region to divide us and even to manipulate one denomination's policy to criticize another denomination's approach. Let us be of one voice.

In addition to what we in the United States have to say, there are the voices of our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Middle East. In our regional travels, we have been encouraged by their steadfastness, distressed by their challenges, and moved by their diversity, but also their unity. As their ecumenical voices have spoken, from the Amman Call to the Kairos Palestine document, the Middle Eastern Church has spoken clearly and directly to us. We ignore their voice at our own peril. Let us do all we can to show our oneness with them in Christ.

We know that you have been and continue to be engaged in the Middle East. Our hope is that our work will both encourage and challenge you and your members to deepen that engagement.

3. *American Jewish Friends*

Letter to Our American Jewish Friends,

For decades we have worked side-by-side in innumerable causes in our own nation for the sake of justice and human well-being. And yet, with the introduction of the corporate engagement process in 2004 (and the use of the word “divestment”), this relationship has been seriously tested.

We want to be sure to say to you in no uncertain terms: we support the existence of Israel as a sovereign nation within secure and recognized borders. No “but,” no “let’s get this out of the way so we can say what we really want to say.” We support Israel’s existence as granted by the U.N. General Assembly. We support Israel’s existence as a home for the Jewish people. We have said this before, and we say this again. We say it because we believe it; we say it because we want it to continue to be true.

And, at the same time, we are distressed by the continued policies that surround, sustain, and consolidate the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights, in particular. Many of us come to this work out of a love for Israel. And it is because of this love that we continue to say the things we say about the occupation, the settlement infrastructure, and the absolute death knell it is sounding for the hopes of a two-state solution, a solution that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has supported for more than sixty years.

We also want to make it clear that what we say in moral criticism of policies and actions of the Israeli government should not be used as a battering ram against Israel’s right to membership in the community of nations nor to deepen anti-Semitism or any categorical blame of the Jewish people for the ills of the world. As those whose faith originated in the synagogues of the Fertile Crescent, our love of our common heritage is precious. Anti-Semitism has no place in faithful Christian expression.

Our hope is that we can work together for a more just and secure Israel. We have found this to be possible with local networks more often than with national organizations within the mainstream Jewish community. We are hard-pressed to find statements from such organizations that are willing to oppose the occupation or the settlement policy that has dominated Israel since 1967. Even so, we are hopeful as organizations like J-Street, B’Tselem, Jewish Voice for Peace, and others continue to raise the banner that being pro-Israel and being truly Jewish is not tantamount to complicity in the excesses of Israeli policy. It is our hope that the leadership of mainstream American Jewish organizations will catch up with this growing reality of Jewish identity in the U.S.

We are aware that our report will likely draw such critiques as being “unfair” or “imbalanced.” We believe that our report, however, is quite fair. Our analysis, both through careful research and through our experience of being in the Middle East, is that Israel is the most powerful party to the conflict. Therefore, Israel has both the responsibility and the ability to reverse the course of the current precipitous decline throughout the region.

May we continue to pray, and work, for the peace of Jerusalem, the Middle East, and our world.

4. *American Muslim Friends*

Letter to Our American Muslim Friends,

Our relationship in the Western Hemisphere is a more recent one than that of our connection with our Jewish neighbors. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has worked through the years for increased interfaith understanding in Muslim-Christian relations, and will continue to do so. Our sponsorship of the Interfaith Listening Program, bringing Christian and Muslim leaders from around the world to the U.S. to model what our society might look like, is evidence of this.

We are also encouraged by the open letter to the Christian churches, “A Common Word Between Us and You.” Our church responded favorably and continues to encourage our members and congregations to explore common ground with our Muslim neighbors.

We have resisted those who have attempted to stoke the fires of cultural conflict. We are aware that American Muslims have come under more scrutiny, pressure, and, indeed, racism since the tragedies of September 11th. Violence is a phe-

nomenon of the human condition, not the exclusive domain of any religion or people group, as our own Christian history attests. We hope that we can continue to explore ways we can work together to bring attention to these injustices and work together for a future in which all of humanity is granted the dignity it deserves.

We also challenge you, especially those of you in the West, to take seriously your call to be bridge builders: both within the Muslim world (e.g. between Shiite and Sunni) and between the East and West. We know that more, much more, can be done. And while we are deeply aware of our own complicity (both for historic Western colonial influence in the Middle East and for more recent American intervention in the region), we are hopeful that more can be done from within the Muslim world to address the ongoing divides that erode our humanity.

We are grateful for American Muslims who continue to decry violence perpetrated in the name of Islam. We want to partner with you in amplifying your voices. And we would like to hear more, including voices from those in the Middle East where, as in our own country, violence, too often, can be a watchword and where religion, too often, can be used as a battering ram. We look to you, as leaders of the Islamic world, to speak and act strongly on behalf of justice for all, including Christians and your fellow Muslims.

We hope that you hear these words of challenge as from those who seek mutual friendship. May the common words between us and you be love, peace, and justice.

5. *Middle Eastern Brothers and Sisters in Christ*

Letter to Our Middle Eastern Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You are the living stones of the Church. You are the salt of the earth, giving flavor to the whole region, despite your numbers or proportions. We have visited with you. You have challenged us. You have welcomed us. And you have taught us immeasurably.

We cannot fully identify with the struggles of being a minority religious community. As American Christians, we are only recently coming to terms with the possibility that we, too, might have to face this reality. And so we have much more to learn from you and your model of faithfulness. And we cannot imagine the land of Christ devoid of the body of Christ. May our ongoing partnership be one that encourages your steadfast witness, not only on behalf of your own flocks, but on behalf of the worldwide body of Christ.

You cherish your national culture. This is a challenging word to us who can act as though the gospel originated in the West. And yet, as part of a society that has confused our culture with our faith at times, we feel that we have something to offer you. Be careful; be faithful. We often fall into the temptation to be more in line with culture. However, we also know that the gospel calls us to faithful obedience, even when facing risk to our own selves on behalf of Christ's truth. But when the wider society advocates violence, or when it seeks to marginalize one group or another, our encouragement to you is to discern the Spirit's call in the face of such circumstances. We pray that you will be led and strengthened in faithfulness.

To our Palestinian brothers and sisters in faith, we particularly want to commend the words above. We also want to commend you to unity. As Presbyterians, we have come to Israel and Palestine as partners; not seeking to establish our own congregations, but to support you in your continued witness. We pray for your unity. We encourage you not to compete over an increasingly shrinking number of Christians or over a decreasingly smaller influence in regional politics. We beseech you to remain focused on preaching Christ and him crucified, and risen. It is your own experience of his suffering that can teach us all. We will do what we can do amplify the word you preach from the heart of suffering, the Kairos Palestine document, and your resurrection hope.

We also know, our dear Palestinian friends, that your suffering is primarily under the weight of occupation. But we also know that this is not the only cause of suffering. At best, your numbers leave you marginalized by the wider Palestinian society and many ignorant of your practices and faith. At worst, there are elements that seek to eliminate the Christian presence from the region altogether. To you, we commend the example of our Lord, who, even faced with the loss of his own life, preferred to be an agent of healing, restoring the centurion's ear in the Garden of Gethsemane. Do not be afraid to speak out against injustice. But do not let temptation to injustice overtake you.

May your witness continue to encourage us; and may we continue to show our debt to you as our spiritual forebears.

6. *Palestinian Friends*

Letter to Our Palestinian Friends,

Our history in the Middle East goes back to the 1820s. For many of us, our personal histories and those of our Presbyterian forebears goes back nearly that far to Israel/Palestine. From 1948, we have made our stance clear on the unjust situa-

tion of Palestinian refugees since the Nakba. Your experience is one of displacement; as a people of faith, we are kinsfolk. Our challenge is to accompany you in exile.

For us, this is not only an issue of sympathy in the midst of suffering. We have come to know Palestinians as our brothers and sisters in our congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Their stories and witness have strengthened us. And yet, we confess, there are many in our own number who remain unaware of this.

Year after year our General Assembly has made our position known to the world, that the Palestinian people deserve justice and the right to their homeland. We have advocated for a two-state solution that affirms the right of return for Palestinian refugees, so long deprived of their home and their dignity. And when we included corporate engagement in these statements in 2004, you rejoiced in this act of solidarity. You let us know how pleased you were.

Because of this, we want to be clear to you: we hold in tension the rights and aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis to have safe and secure lives. We know that there is consensus in the international community around this, and we continue to work for this. Our corporate engagement in Israel/Palestine, reaffirmed by General Assemblies since 2004, focuses attention on companies that profit from the violence of the occupation. Our efforts that focus on Israel are those that focus on unjust policies, not on Israel as a nation.

We still see the occupation as the major obstacle to regional stability, and to the just solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We do not see it as the only obstacle. Being oppressed does not justify using the means of the oppressor; nor does suffering from the breach of international law permit similar breaches, even if smaller in scale. We are alarmed by acts of violence committed by militants and extremists.

We are also alarmed when we hear some Palestinians use anti-Semitic language against Jews and Israelis. We know that you are well-versed in the language of human rights; it has meant the building of a strong civil society in the face of incredible odds and overwhelming oppression of occupation. We hope that this zeal for equality would include all.

We have had experiences and know of Palestinian Christians and Muslims living side-by-side in peaceful coexistence. Yet we are also alarmed by the increase of targeted violence against Palestinian Christian institutions, be they from traditional or evangelical communities. For us, the presence of the Christian community is more than nostalgia for the time of Jesus; it is a vital part of the Palestinian fabric of society alongside their Muslim neighbors.

We commit ourselves both to pray and to work for the day that Palestine will be free and independent. May it come soon!

7. Israeli Friends

Letter to Our Israeli Friends,

Much of what we have said to our American Jewish friends we say to you. We are strong advocates for Israel's secure existence. The fact that we are deeply troubled by Israeli policies should not diminish this advocacy in any way, shape, or form. We continue to speak out against anti-Semitism, knowing that it is an evil which our forbears in faith inflicted upon you and your ancestors. We are fervent in our hope that Israel would continue to be a homeland for the Jewish people.

We say all this because we believe it. And we stand by it in word and in deed. Our corporate engagement process has been handled carefully so as to focus our attention on companies who profit from practices we do not support. We have also encouraged positive investment in the region, including companies whose policies and practices of coexistence within Israeli society's diverse tapestry and between Israelis and Palestinians are ones we can wholeheartedly support.

We grieve when anyone is a victim of violence, but especially civilians, be they Palestinian or Israeli. The number of casualties may give evidence to the imbalance in the conflict; however, each person is created in the image of God. We know that God's heart must be the first to break. Trauma is trauma, no matter who experiences it. They cannot compete with one another; instead, our hope is that trauma may lead to healing across divides, bound by a common humanity.

Our recent trip to the region, and to Israel and the Occupied Territories in particular, was marked by our own heartbreak. The situation on the ground is changing rapidly. The rise of the extremist settler movement within Israel belies the Israel as a nation for all of its citizens we so long to see. The ongoing land expropriation and settlement expansion, in East Jerusalem in particular, continues to undermine, and indeed, destroy the possibility for a just and secure peace for Israelis and Palestinians alike. The Separation Barrier (part wall, part fence) and its route are evidence of this. Beyond this, we are increasingly troubled by the rhetoric and actions that support and facilitate a growing radicalized settler population. Your government cannot credibly claim that the incumbent violence against and dehumanization of Palestinians are happening without their knowledge; indeed, your government is aiding and abetting these basic violations of human rights.

And just as we have spoken and acted against our own society's vision of itself as a nation when it behaved as though it were "above the law," we will do the same for Israel. We both have a place in the community of nations. Let us act as though we do.

We truly yearn for the day when Israel is secure, and when Israel and Palestine live side-by-side in peace and justice and mutual respect. And we will continue to work for that vision. We hope that we can work together in this endeavor.

8. *American Neighbors, Friends, Fellow Citizens, Government Representatives, and Our American Administration*

Letter to Our American Neighbors, Friends, Fellow Citizens, Government Representatives, and Our American Administration:

We are nine Presbyterians who are also American citizens. And while there are many audiences for our work, our hope is that we will also be able to encourage and challenge you to work with us, and allow us to work with you, to seek justice, security, and peace throughout the Middle East.

No doubt some of our words will come across as harsh rebuke; please hear them as our desire to speak the truth in love. We are grateful for the freedoms our nation provides us, and we see them as nothing short of God's grace for us as a nation and as individuals. It is because of this that we speak as bluntly as we do, following Christ's word to confess the log in our own eye before pointing out the speck in our neighbor's. In short, we think our American ideal of the equal dignity afforded each human being is one for which we commendably strive. And when we as a nation fall short of that ideal, we must be honest with ourselves.

Our nation is powerful. As a result, when we act well, our works of good will, opportunity, and equality spread far. By the same token, when we behave badly, the consequences are devastating. It is our hope that, as a nation, we will confess the latter while we strive for the former in relating to the rest of the world. May this especially be true in the Middle East, where our intervention has been, at best, inconsistent, and at worst, destructive.

We have seen in Israel/Palestine, and in the neighboring nations, how governments who receive extravagant benefits of our foreign aid consistently violate the most basic of human rights. This is a fact that should give every American pause and should move us to hold our elected officials accountable.

And to you, those whom we have elected, whether Republican or Democrat, we are tired of partisan politics. We are weary of pronouncements that do nothing to further the cause of peace and actions that obstruct it in the Middle East. It is our foreign aid and political impotence that enable the continued Israeli Occupation, among other regional injustices. We implore you: Hold nations accountable for what they receive from our taxes. And, at the very least, implement existing American laws that would do much to alleviate unconscionable suffering. Our stated policy has supported a two-state solution for decades; the opportunity for that to happen is disappearing rapidly.

We are ready to work with you to bring peace, security, and justice to Palestinians and Israelis alike. And where we believe you are amiss, we will continue to speak truth to power.

C. *Witness of the Scriptures: A Biblical Theological Reflection*

In developing policy statements and actions relating to critical world issues, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has always held it essential to study the biblical and theological concepts that establish an ethical foundation for our positions. As our denomination once again addresses the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, four biblical concepts and their interrelationship require specific examination: Justice, Zion, Covenant and Land, and Reconciliation.

The Middle East is the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and followers devoted to all three religions have continued to live there to this day. In the biblical and theological reflection below, care has been taken to include detailed references to "the Older Testament"⁵—first, because these books are held to be authoritative by both Judaism and Christianity,⁶ and second, because it is there in the Bible that one sees most clearly the struggle of a nation's leaders and people to exercise power with justice. And because the concept of justice is also central to the morality of Islam, references to the Qur'an and the Islamic tradition have been included in the first section immediately below.

1. *Justice*

"Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says: By three things is the world sustained: by justice, by truth, and by peace, as it is said, *Truth and justice and peace judge ye in your gates* (Zech. 8:16)."⁷ This profound interpretation of a verse from the prophet Zechariah, spoken by a rabbi of the second century C.E. living in Roman Palestine, was in turn commented upon with great wisdom some two centuries later by another Palestinian rabbi, Rav Muna. He said, "These three things are actually one. When justice is done, truth is served, and peace is achieved. ... Wherever there is justice there is peace (and wherever there is peace there is justice)."⁸

“Justice” is central to the Older Testament (including Zech. 8:16), the Newer Testament,⁹ and the scripture of Islam, the Qur’an.¹⁰

First, in both testaments of the Bible justice is presented as an essential attribute of God’s own nature as Sovereign of the universe. “For the Lord is a God of justice” (Isa. 30:18c); “... I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth” (Jer. 9:24b); “Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, ... who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry” (Ps. 146:5–7); “If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all injustice” (1 Jn. 1:9); “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter [of straightness (i.e., justice)] is the scepter of your [reign]” (Heb. 1:8b–c); “You are just, O Holy One ...” (Rev. 16:5b); “Just and true are your ways, [Sovereign] of the nations!” (Rev. 15:3c); “[The Mighty One] has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly” (Lk. 1:51–52). And in Islam, one of the ninety-nine “beautiful names” of God is *al-’Adl*, “The Just,” or “Justice” (itself).

Second, based on this identification of justice as central to God’s sovereign role, the Bible also presents justice as essential to the role of human monarchs and of earthly governors in general. “At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for [justice (*mishpat*)]” (Judg. 4:4–5); “So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and equity to all his people” (2 Sam. 8:15); “... For time would fail me to tell of ... David ...—who through faith ... administered justice ... (Heb. 11:32b–33a); “Give the king your justice, O God ... May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice” (Ps. 72:1–2); “... as [Paul] discussed justice, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix [, the Roman governor,] became frightened ...” (Acts 24:25a); “[King] Jehoshaphat ... said to the judges, ‘... Now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take care what you do, for there is no perversion of justice with the Lord our God, or partiality, or taking of bribes’” (2 Chr. 19:4a, 6a, 7). This same extension of the justice of the sovereign God to the role of earthly governments is found in Islam—for example, in this saying of the prophet Muhammad (or, *hadith*): “The Government (*al-Sultan*) is the shadow of God on the earth; all of His servants who are oppressed shall turn to it. When it is just, it shall be rewarded ...”¹¹

Third, the Bible identifies the practice of justice as essential not only for those who govern but also for all of God’s people. “... I have [known Abraham], that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; so that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him” (Gen. 18:19); “Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times” (Ps. 106:3); “... what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Mic. 6:8b–d); “... let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream” (Am. 5:24); “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his [justice], and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt. 6:33); “... justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced ...” (Mt. 23:23c–d); “... in every nation anyone who fears [God] and does what is [just] is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:35); “No longer present your members to sin as instruments of [injustice], but ... present your members to God as instruments of [justice]” (Rom. 6:13a, c); “For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but [justice] and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17); “Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of [justice]” (Eph. 6:14); “You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you” (Deut. 16:19a, 20). In like manner, the Qur’an reads: “O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor...” (Sura 4:135).¹²

Here an all-important question arises: “To whom is due this ‘justice, and only justice’ that, according to Deuteronomy 16:20, must be practiced by all God’s people? Is justice due only to persons of our own ethnicity and/or religion, or is it due as well to others different from ourselves?” How Jesus would answer this question seems altogether clear. For the Gospel of Matthew, drawing upon Isaiah 42:1, describes Jesus in this way: “Here is my servant, whom I[, God,] have chosen, ... and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles” (Mt. 12:18a, d). And within the Jewish tradition, the second-century rabbi already cited above, Simeon ben Gamaliel, is quoted as having said while reflecting on Deuteronomy 16: “Justice must be accorded to non-Jews as to Jews; the former should have the option of seeking judgment before either a Jewish or a pagan court.”¹³ And in Islam, Yusuf Ali cites a case in which the prophet Muhammad ruled in favor of a Jew over against a nominal Muslim, “according to the strict principle of justice,” and resisted communal pressure to do the contrary.¹⁴

Thus, “justice, and only justice, you shall pursue” on behalf of all persons and not just your own people. But what exactly constitutes the “justice” that is due to all? The Bible in general and Jesus in particular answer in this way. Justice is: promoting truth;¹⁵ upholding the cause of the poor, the weak, and the needy;¹⁶ loving those who are “other” and providing for their needs;¹⁷ restoring what has been stolen;¹⁸ humbling the proud;¹⁹ issuing fair and equitable judgments in court;²⁰ ending oppression;²¹ keeping God’s statutes and commandments;²² following God’s will rather than one’s own;²³ fostering peace;²⁴ and not pursuing dishonest gain, not shedding innocent blood, not practicing violence, not trusting in military might.²⁵ In Islam, according to John L. Esposito, “The Quran envisions a society based on the unity and equality of believers, a society in which moral and social justice will counterbalance oppression of the weak and economic exploitation.... Exploitation of the

poor, weak, widows, women, orphans ([Sura] 4:2; 4:12) is vividly condemned... False contracts, bribery, abuse of women, hoarding of wealth to the exclusion of its subordination to higher ends, and usury are denounced.”²⁶

As shall soon be seen, “justice” understood in biblical ways came to underpin ancient Israel’s beliefs about a person’s right to enter the temple precincts of Zion or even to live within the city of Jerusalem.

2. *Zion—and Justice*

The name “Zion” evolved and multiplied in its ancient applications. Originally, it designated the fortress of the pre-Israelite city of Jerusalem captured by David around the year 1000 B.C.E.²⁷ “Zion” then came to designate the rather small “City of David” of which the fortress was a part.²⁸ When the Ark of the Covenant was shifted to the new temple built by Solomon, the name “Zion” was transferred from the confines of David’s city to the new sacred space lying to its northwest—the temple precincts,²⁹ the place on earth where God most fully dwelled,³⁰ the “touchpoint” between heaven and earth.³¹ Next, by metonymy—a figure of speech in which the name of one thing stands for the name of another thing with which it is associated—“Zion” came also to designate the entire city of Jerusalem together with its residents,³² and then, with the destruction of that city in 587 B.C.E., it came also to serve as a name for the whole people of Israel.³³ Then, too, in the developing eschatology of ancient Israel’s prophets and psalmists after 587, “Zion” named the about-to-be rebuilt (or, for somewhat later prophets and psalmists, the recently rebuilt) city of Jerusalem and temple that served as a focus of hope—hope for the restoration of God’s people after exile,³⁴ hope for the advent of peace throughout the world,³⁵ and hope for a renewed covenant with God.³⁶

Persons’ right to enter God’s presence within the temple precincts of holy Zion or even to live within the city of Jerusalem was closely linked to their living justly—that is, to their living in accordance with the demands of covenant law. In the eighth century B.C.E., the prophet Isaiah proclaimed that the people of Zion would be spared from judgment only through repentance and the leading of just lives (Isa. 1:27–28). Since justice and righteousness were divine attributes with which God had filled Zion (Isa. 33:5), justice would be the line and righteousness the plummet by which the people of Zion would be measured and weighed (Isa. 28:16–17). Only those in Zion “who despise the gain of oppression, who wave away a bribe instead of accepting it, who stop their ears from hearing of bloodshed and shut their eyes from looking on evil” would be able to abide in the presence of the God of justice (Isa. 33:14–16; cf. 30:18). A contemporary of Isaiah, the prophet Micah, condemned the rulers and leading citizens, “who abhor justice and pervert all equity” and thereby “build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong” (Mic. 3:9–10). Because of their actions, “Zion shall be plowed as a field” (Mic. 3:11–12). Nearly 100 years later, the prophet Jeremiah called upon the refugees from the former northern kingdom of Israel to repent their evil so that God might again bring them to Zion (Jer. 3:14), and he denounced those of Judah who entered the temple to worship the Lord without having amended their ways and ceased their violations of God’s commandments (Jer. 7:1–15). Two psalms also state explicitly that those who enter the temple precincts—which is to say, Zion—should be persons who practice justice.

“O Lord, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?
Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is [just (*tzedeq*)],
and speak the truth from their heart,
who do not slander with their tongue,
and do no evil to their friends,
nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;
in whose eyes the wicked are despised,
but who honor those who fear the Lord;
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;
who do not lend money at interest,
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.
Those who do these things shall never be moved.”
Ps. 15:1–3, 5c³⁷

“Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,
and do not swear deceitfully.
They will receive blessing from the Lord,
and [a just reward (*tzdaqah*)] from the God of their salvation.”Ps. 24:3–5³⁸

Thus, the Older Testament closely connects the concepts of “Zion” and “justice,” for Zion is the principal earthly dwelling place of the God of justice.

The Older Testament also speaks of Zion as a place to which not only Jews but also other peoples and nations will come both to worship God and to receive God’s teaching. Toward the end of the sixth century B.C.E., the prophet we call Third Isaiah proclaimed to those who had returned from exile in Babylon to the holy mountain that is Zion, “Maintain justice, and do what is right” (Isa. 56:1a). And he proceeded to tell his fellow Jews that what is just and right includes joining God in welcoming to the holy mountain and its sacred precincts those from other lands who love God and strive to keep the commandments, for God’s temple “shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples” (Isa. 56:6–8). And according to Psalm 87,

“Zion is the mother city of all who know the Lord, wherever they are born”—be that Canaan, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia, or any other place.³⁹ Other passages as well share that vision:

“Let this be recorded for a generation to come, ...
so that the name of the Lord may be declared in Zion,
and his praise in Jerusalem,
when peoples gather together,
and kingdoms, to worship the Lord.” (Ps. 102:18a, 21–22)

And:

“In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the hills.
Peoples shall stream to it,
and many nations shall come and say:
‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.’
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of Lord from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more;
but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. (Mic. 4:1–4 [see also Isa. 2:2–4])

Thus, according to the Older Testament, the final effect of the exiles’ return to Zion will be the dawn of an age of peace and a joining with other peoples and nations to worship and study the teachings of the one true God. It is thus noteworthy that while Jerusalem has indeed become a place holy not only for Jews but also for Christians and Muslims⁴⁰ the longed-for age of peace and reconciliation has yet to come.

In the Newer Testament, “Zion” occurs just seven times. Four usages designate not “earthly” Jerusalem but instead “eschatological” Jerusalem. Two of these four arise from quoting the book of Isaiah. According to First Peter, God lays the solid cornerstone of Jesus Christ for all believers in eschatological Zion (1 Pet. 2:6, quoting Isa. 28:16), and from there also, according to Romans, the Deliverer for all of Israel will yet come forth (Rom. 11:26, quoting Isa. 59:21 from one particular manuscript tradition of the Greek Septuagint). Then, too, according to Hebrews, it is to eschatological Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, that Christians have worshipfully “come ... to God, the judge of all, ... and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant” (Heb. 12:22–24a). Finally, a vision in the book of Revelation describes eschatological Zion as the launch point for God’s end-time action to rid the world of evil. The Lamb (Christ) takes his stand on the solid high ground of “Mount Zion,” surrounded by 144,000 righteous faithful (Rev. 14:1), while the dragon (Satan) takes his stand on “the sand of the seashore” (Rev. 12:18), viewing from there the two beasts that are his proxies (symbolizing perhaps Rome’s emperors and priests of the imperial cult, Rev. 13:1–18). This vision of the Lamb on Mount Zion affirms Zion as the seat of justice for the world and anticipates Revelation’s later vision of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9–22).

The other three usages of “Zion” in the Newer Testament do designate “earthly” Jerusalem. Two of these occur in gospel accounts of Jesus’ dramatic entry into that city on “Palm Sunday” (Mt. 21:5, quoting compositely from Isa. 62:11 and Zech. 9:9; and Jn. 12:15, quoting compositely from Zeph. 3:16 and Zech. 9:9). In calling to readers’ minds Zech. 9:9–10, both gospel texts affirm that Zion’s peaceable Messiah is the one who creates true shalom for the nations. The third “earthly” usage occurs in Paul’s Letter to the Romans (Rom. 9:33), where he uses the same prophetic image found in First Peter (Isa. 28:6) but employs it quite differently. Paul, interpreting this Isaian image through the lens of Isa. 8:14, speaks of God’s laying in Zion, earthly Jerusalem, “a stone” that is a stumbling block to Jewish faith—namely, the crucified and risen Christ. All three of these instances of “Zion” arise from quoting books of the prophets.

It appears that during the first century C.E., Christian authors rather fully transferred the locus of God’s concrete presence in the world of space and time from the place of Zion—that is, Jerusalem—to the person of Jesus, who had been crucified and raised from the dead just outside Jerusalem. The Roman destruction of Zion—that is, the temple in Jerusalem—in 70 C.E. doubtless hastened that process. So what do Christians make of the claim that a link endures between God’s covenant with Abraham and the promise of land?⁴¹

3. *Covenant and Land—and Justice*

Nearly ten years ago, four American Jewish scholars offered as a basis for Jewish-Christian dialogue a set of eight propositions entitled “*Dabru ‘Emet*.”⁴² The third of those read, “Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the

land of Israel.” That proposition went on to present as part of its brief rationale this comment: “As members of a biblically-based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised—and given—to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God.”

So, do we Presbyterians—collectively and/or individually—“respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel?” Do we Presbyterians “appreciate that Israel [geographic Israel? biblical Israel? political Israel?] was promised—and given—to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God?”

Any answer to that question will be complicated and will most certainly prove controversial. At least five issues are involved in framing a context for reflecting on “*Dabru Emet*’s” third proposition and its rationale, and all of these issues are ones very much on the minds and hearts of many Presbyterians today.

First, most Presbyterians accept that the promise of offspring and land is in fact found throughout the book of Genesis⁴³ and that that promise is conceptually central to God’s covenant with Abraham.⁴⁴ Yet most Presbyterians also hold that this promise is conditioned by concepts found elsewhere in the first five books of the Bible, such as: (a) the Jubilee theology found in the book of Leviticus, according to which the land belongs fundamentally to God and is a gift from God given to ancient Israel as a *leasehold* (25:23–24, 38); (b) the Sinai-covenant theology found in the book of Deuteronomy, according to which God’s gift of the land is dependent upon the people’s adherence to justice and obedience to the commandments (e.g., 4:40; 16:19–20; 30:15–20)—including the prohibition against subverting the rights of “strangers” and the needy (27:19);⁴⁵ and (c) Genesis’ own warning about the potential loss of the promises through deeds of injustice (18:19).

Thus, most Presbyterians hold that the “land-grant” to Abraham’s offspring described in Genesis is not so much a matter of “rights” as it is a matter of “responsibilities,” that “the land” is a place whose residents God holds responsible for what is being done in and with it, including dealing justly with “the stranger” and the poor.⁴⁶

Second, Presbyterians believe that the boundaries of ancient Israel varied throughout its history—first in the days of the patriarchs and matriarchs, then under the judges and kings, then in the aftermath of exile and diaspora. Furthermore, the boundaries of “Greater Israel” that are described in the book of Exodus (Ex. 23:31), are surely not to be taken literally, for those would extend Israel’s borders from the “Sea of Reeds” in the south—that is, deep into the territory of modern Egypt—to the Euphrates River in the north—that is, deep into the territory of modern Syria. And as the Jewish scholar Nahum Sarna has observed, “At no time in Israelite history, even at the height of the Davidic-Solomonic empire, were these boundaries a reality.”⁴⁷

Thus, Presbyterians believe that one cannot define “the land of Israel” with any kind of religious specificity. The varying boundaries of “the promised land” have always been more a matter of *realpolitik* than of theology.

Third, most modern Presbyterians read not with approval but with something approaching horror the theology of the accounts in Deuteronomistic literature that describe the taking of “the land” from those who had long been dwelling there by means of “holy war.”⁴⁸ One cannot evaluate as “moral” deeds that achieve a concrete realization of “land promise” through extreme “land violence.”⁴⁹ And a number of Jewish scholars agree that the acts of “holy war” described in these biblical narratives are, at the very least, morally problematic. For example, Jon Levenson has written that the narrative tradition in which the Canaanites are demonized and dismissed offers an unsavory parallel in Israel’s sacred texts to the strand of anti-Semitism that runs throughout Christians’ Newer Testament.⁵⁰

Thus, most Presbyterians believe that “land promise” ought not to be realized through “land violence” and that the claiming of “promised land” does not justify the displacement of “the others” who have long lived there.

Fourth, most Presbyterians agree with the apostle Paul (Romans 9–11, esp. 11:26–29) that Jews remain to this day heirs of God’s covenant with Abraham. That, and not supersessionism, is what most hold.⁵¹ Yet many Presbyterians also believe that Jews are not today’s only heirs of that covenant with Abraham—that we Christians, too, are heirs of that covenant. This understanding was stated first and most authoritatively by the apostle Paul, who, in the first century C.E., wrote in his Letter to the Galatians (Gal. 3:29), “... if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.” And in modern times it has been restated this way: “Two vital communities, Judaism and Christianity, claim direct descent from those who lived by and preserved the biblical stories; [and] a third, Islam, treasures the tradition as well.”⁵²

Now, it is true that most Christians at most times and in most places have not strongly linked the concept of our descent from Abraham to the concept of the promise of “the land.” Still, a number of Christians throughout history have made that strong connection, and among them are some who are living in “the land” today—Palestinian Christians. Neither they nor their Palestinian Muslim cousins view themselves as filling the role of the “strangers” or “aliens” mentioned in the Older Testament.⁵³

For at least 300 years, between the fourth and seventh centuries C.E., the majority of those who lived in the Roman province of Palestine were Christians, and the city of Jerusalem, which had been the site of the death and the resurrection of Jesus the Christ, was viewed by these residents as “the Christian city *par excellence*.”

Also, many monks throughout the wider reaches of Christendom were taking to their own hearts God's words to Abram, "Go up ... to the land that I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). Yes, many monks were interpreting these words as a command that God was now directing to them. So a great number of them began to pick up and move to what they were beginning to call "the Holy Land"—where Jesus had been born, had lived, had died, and had been raised from the dead.⁵⁴

Now, "Byzantine Palestine was, for Christians, a Holy Land but [it was] also a *homeland*, a place where men and women tilled the ground and planted orchards, built homes and raised families, bought fish and sold olives, buried parents and grandparents." And "when Jerusalem was captured by the Persians in the seventh century of the Common Era, it was the Christians, not the Jews, who sang a lamentation over the Holy City."⁵⁵

Then shortly after the Persian conquest came the Arab conquest—and Islam. Yet most of the Christians who were indigenous to that region continued to live there—carrying on with their everyday lives, learning to speak Arabic either in addition to or instead of Aramaic and/or Greek,⁵⁶ and continuing to worship the God made known to Abraham and made known in Jesus. Many of today's Palestinian Christians are direct descendants of these for whom Roman Palestine had become both their homeland and their Holy Land, where the central mysteries of their Christian faith had taken place.

So, no matter how many centuries have passed since the end of the Byzantine Christian hegemony over "the land," and no matter in how many other countries the Christian religion has since set down roots, there are in the world Christians who remain strongly wedded to the land that gave birth to both Christ and the Christian religion, and none are more strongly wedded to "the land" than those who are Palestinian Christians.⁵⁷

Then, too, of course, as early as the 6th century some Muslims considered Palestine to be their home, and from the late-7th century onward Muslims constituted the majority of Palestine's population. Indeed, since the end of the 7th century, two of Islam's holiest places have stood in Jerusalem—the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock.⁵⁸

Thus, Presbyterians confront a dilemma. What are Presbyterians to do when Jews and Christians and Muslims find that their continuity to the past is in part dependent upon living in the same land and in the same city, the land and the city in which both Judaism and Christianity are native and Islam has had such a significant presence for more than 1,200 years?

Fifth, Presbyterians believe that God is sovereign over all nations, states, governments, and peoples, and that God calls upon persons of faith to be critical of those governments understood to be violating God's commandments and God's standards for justice and compassion. American Presbyterians believe that God urges us to stand ready to speak "like prophets," to stand ready first and foremost to speak to our own government but also to speak to other governments. For the prophets of ancient Israel addressed their words-in-the-name-of-God not only to their own nation but to other nations as well.

Thus, if American Presbyterians are to speak "like prophets," we must stand ready to speak not only to our own government but to others as well—including the government of the State of Israel and the governments of the Palestinian people.

Throughout the sixty-two years since the British mandate over the territory of Palestine ended, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has spoken out a number of times concerning the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people. Although each of these themes has prompted spirited discussion, there have run throughout these statements four strong commitments:

- To the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign nation within secure and legitimate borders,⁵⁹ borders that are not contended for on the basis of some literal reading of "biblical" geography and that are arrived at through peaceful negotiation with the Palestinians. And accompanying this commitment have been two calls: first, one to Palestinians and other Arabs to recognize Israel's existence within secure borders; and second, one to Israeli Jews to fulfill their "land responsibilities," responsibilities that include the covenant obligation to extend to "others" in their midst—that is, to Israeli Christians and Muslims—a full equality of civil rights and a full measure of justice.⁶⁰

- To the right of Palestinians to self-determination and to have their own separate, contiguous, economically viable, sovereign nation-state within the wider borders of "the land."⁶¹ Arising from this second commitment has been our denomination's steady call for the government of Israel to put an end to its military, political, and economic occupation of Palestinian land after 1967 and its practice of establishing and expanding settlements there.

- To a nonviolent resolution to the conflict.⁶² The PC(USA) has continuously called upon all parties in the Middle East to settle their differences peacefully and also upon both Palestinians and Israelis to end all acts of violence against each other.

- To the concept that Jerusalem, like "the land" as a whole, does not belong to any one people alone, but is rather to be shared by two peoples (Israelis and Palestinians) and three religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).⁶³

In 1987, the 199th General Assembly (1987) also received and commended to our congregations for study and reflection the paper entitled "A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews."⁶⁴ It is the content of this paper that undergirds the paper "Christians and Jews: People of God," which is now also before the 219th General Assembly

(2010). The sixth affirmation of the 1987 paper reads, “We affirm the continuity of God’s promise of the land along with the obligations of that promise to the people of Israel.”⁶⁵

In the explication accompanying that affirmation are these sentences: “because land is God’s to be given, it can never fully be possessed”; “the blessings of the promise were dependent upon fulfillment of covenant relationships”; “those in possession of ‘land’ have a responsibility and obligation to the disadvantaged, the oppressed, and the ‘strangers in their gates’”; “we disavow any teaching which says that peace can be secured without justice through the exercise of violence and retribution”; and “no government at any time can ever be the full expression of God’s will. All, including the State of Israel, stand accountable to God. The State of Israel is a geopolitical entity and is not to be validated theologically.”⁶⁶

In addition, the final draft of the 2010 paper says: “God’s gift of land, and the potential and responsibility that goes with that gift, pertains both to the Jews and to the Palestinian people who live alongside them in what was the ancient, biblical land of promise. Both peoples have claims on the same land. Jews and Palestinians give voice to incompatible historical narratives and political claims, each assumed to be ‘correct’ by its narrators. What is not often clearly said in the midst of the conflict is that both people, in different ways, are recipients of God’s gift and responsibility.”⁶⁷

Finally, the 1987 paper states: “to understand [the] promise [of land] solely in terms of a specific geographical entity on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean is, in our view, inadequate. ‘Land’ is understood as more than place or property; ‘land’ is a biblical metaphor for sustainable life, prosperity, peace, and security. We affirm the rights to these essentials for the Jewish people. At the same time, as bearers of the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we affirm those same rights in the name of justice to all peoples... . Thus we affirm our solidarity with all people to whom those rights of ‘land’ are currently denied.”⁶⁸

We have set forth the biblical emphasis on Zion as a place for all nations and peoples to worship the God of justice and learn war no more and as a place where people’s covenant responsibilities are to be fulfilled and God’s justice is to be practiced toward all persons. We have also highlighted central emphases of our denomination’s past statements and of two of its study papers. We now turn to a consideration of one other biblical concept related to the present Israeli-Palestinian crisis: reconciliation.

4. *Reconciliation—and Justice*

The Newer Testament proclaims that humankind’s alienation from God existed from the primordial time of Eden to the historical time of Jesus. But through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God accomplished a reconciliation with all of humankind—indeed, with the whole of creation. We note these passages, for example: “Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.... And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself’” (Jn. 12:23, 32).⁶⁹ “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10). “For in [Christ] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:19–20).⁷⁰

Furthermore, the Newer Testament proclaims that this reconciliation between God and humankind accomplished through Christ is also the ground and empowering force for reconciliation among humans—between one person and another, between the individual and the group, between one group and another—in fulfillment of the eschatological vision of peace, of shalom, found in both Micah and Isaiah: “[T]hey shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks” (Mic. 4:3b, Isa. 2:4b). Ephesians says, “For [Christ] is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is the hostility between us” (2:14). In its first century context, Ephesians was speaking of Christ’s death having broken down the dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles within the Christian community. But in the twenty-first century, we are led by the Spirit to find in this verse, especially when viewed through the lens of Col. 1:19–20, a wider application—Christ’s death having broken down the dividing wall of hostility between any two peoples or groups within God’s creation.

And Second Corinthians says, “For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation ... ! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the justice of God” (2 Cor. 5:14a, 17a, 18, 21). Interpreting this last passage, J. Paul Sampley writes: “Reconciliation is at the heart of life’s business. If the most important single factor about any of our lives is God’s having reconciled us to God’s very self, then the proper celebration of our reconciliation is to share it with others by fostering reconciliation ... wherever and whenever we can.”⁷¹ It is in light of all this that we can hear afresh Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount: “So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt. 5:23–24). By so reconciling, we do become, as Paul says, “the [justice] of God” (2 Cor. 5:21).

A number of biblical accounts illustrate the processes of human reconciliation—whether frustrated or successful. We will focus here on just two: the narrative of the twins Jacob and Esau (especially Gen. 27:1–45, 33:1–17),⁷² and Jesus’ parable of The Man and His Two Sons (Lk. 15:11–32).

Stolid Esau was his father Isaac’s favorite son, while wily Jacob was his mother Rebekah’s. Jacob had already duped Esau, the first-born twin, into selling his birthright (Gen. 25:27–34). Then, through an ancient version of identity theft, Jacob tricked blind-old Isaac into bestowing on him the paternal blessing Isaac intended for Esau (Gen. 27:1–29). When Esau learned of his lost blessing, he hated Jacob, yet bided his time until the opportune moment to kill him (Gen. 27:35–41). Rebekah warned Jacob of Esau’s plan and sent him away to the home of her brother Laban outside Canaan, far to the northeast in distant Haran (Gen. 27:42–45).

Twenty years passed (Gen. 31:38–41), during which Jacob married first Leah and then Rachel (Gen. 29:1–30), begot eleven sons and a daughter (Gen. 29:31–30:24), and prospered at Laban’s expense (Gen. 30:25–43). Laban’s sons became angry at Jacob, so Jacob started to flee back to his home country of Canaan with his wives, children, and great wealth of livestock (Gen. 31:1–21). Laban chased them down, for one of the party had stolen his household gods (Gen. 31:22–32). Laban never found the gods (Gen. 31:33–35), yet in the end he made a covenant with Jacob that let him depart in peace (Gen. 31:36–55).

Jacob now feared that when he got home Esau would exact revenge; and when Jacob learned that Esau was coming to meet him accompanied by 400 men, he thought the worst and, to appease his twin, sent ahead a huge offering of livestock (Gen. 32:1–21).

That same night, when Jacob was alone, a “man” came and wrestled long and hard with him, finally at daybreak throwing Jacob’s hip out of joint (Gen. 32:22–25). The “man” then bestowed on the exhausted Jacob a new name, Israel, and, after blessing him, departed (Gen. 32:26–29). In the end, Jacob came to believe that the “man” was really God (Gen. 32:30–32).

Jacob next saw Esau and his retinue approaching. He arranged the women and children of his caravan defensively and limped ahead to meet his twin, bowing submissively to the ground seven times as he proceeded (Gen. 33:1–3). “But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept” (Gen. 33:4; compare Lk. 15:20!). Having thus shown his forgiveness of Jacob, Esau greeted the women and children and told Jacob he would not keep his offering, for he already had quite enough livestock (Gen. 33:5–9). Jacob, however, insisted that Esau keep the gift, and Esau at last agreed (Gen. 33:10–11).

Esau, far from harboring bitterness or exacting revenge against Jacob, had initiated a model reconciliation, and it would seem that Jacob had completed it. Jacob, reflecting on his previous night’s wrestling with God, had even said to Esau, “[T]o see your face is like seeing the face of God—since you have received me with such favor” (Gen. 33:10b). Yet in the end Jacob remained characteristically untrusting and wily. In spite of having seen “the face of God” and received a new name, he had had no experience of “new being,” of “new creation.” So when Esau first volunteered to travel onward with him and then offered to lend him some men for help along his way, Jacob refused both offers, preferring that Esau’s future not be linked to his (Gen. 33:12–15). So the two parted and went their separate ways (Gen. 33:16–17).

Thus, Jacob kept Esau out of his future life, and they met only once more—coming together to bury their father Isaac (Gen. 35:28–29). Basically, theirs was but a partial reconciliation, its full success having been frustrated—perhaps by Jacob’s continuing suspicion of Esau, perhaps by his inability to accept Esau’s forgiveness, but most certainly by his insistence on going his separate way.

Family dynamics, sibling rivalry, and offered reconciliation also lie at the heart of Jesus’ parable of The Man and His Two Sons (Lk. 15:11–32). Like all of Jesus’ parables, this one lends itself richly to multiple interpretations. For example, the “man” can be seen variably, and correctly, as either a God-figure or a model human parent. The latter reading is followed here, where the parable is interpreted as a story of both successful human reconciliation (father and younger son) and frustrated human reconciliation (elder brother and younger brother, father and elder son).⁷³

The younger son asked his father prematurely, and insultingly, for his inheritance, yet surprisingly he was given it. He went off to a far country and there wasted it “in dissolute living” (Lk. 15:11–13). So this Jewish lad was reduced to slopping and feeding the hogs, while he himself, in the midst of a famine, had nothing at all to eat (Lk. 15:14–16). Finally, “he came to himself” and realized he would be far better off at home, even as a hired hand. So, feeling quite contrite, he thought through his speech of repentance and headed back to his father (Lk. 15:17–20a).

While this son was still a distance away, his father caught sight of him “and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him” (Lk. 15:20b; compare Gen. 33:4!). The son began his speech of repentance, but the father interrupted him and commanded the servants to bring for this son a robe, ring, and sandals and to prepare a special feast. A joyful celebration followed, completing the reconciliation between father and son, a reconciliation brought about through the son’s humble acts of repentance and truth-telling and the father’s gracious acts of forgiveness and amnesty (Lk. 15:21–24).

But the elder son had received no speech of repentance from his brother. Instead, upon returning from his work in the field, he encountered an unexpected feast of celebration. Puzzled, he learned secondhand of his younger brother's return and restored sonship (Lk. 15:25–27). Angered at the injustice of the whole situation and jealous of what he perceived to be his father's favoritism toward his brother, the elder son refused to enter. So his father came out and pleaded with him. The elder son spoke angry and jealous words to his father, yet the father answered him with words that proclaimed both his enduring constancy toward his elder son and his newborn reconciliation with his younger son (Lk. 15:28–32).

Jesus' parable concludes without any resolution between these two figures but with the ball in the elder son's court, so to speak. Would he remain unreconciled to his father, either resentful forever or leaving the ranch altogether? Would he remain unreconciled to his younger brother, either entering the party sullenly and unforgivingly or turning on his heel and walking away? Then, too, would the younger brother ever have the chance, or the desire, to apologize to his elder brother and tell him the truth? Would the elder brother ever take the opportunity to forgive his brother and, like their father, offer him amnesty? Could a reconciliation between these brothers succeed without "justice" being done, and what would "justice" look like in this situation? Jesus left the answers to all these questions to our imagination—or rather, for our discernment.

It is tempting to apply the first of these two narratives to the present situation in the Middle East by identifying Esau with either the Israelis or the Palestinians and then Jacob with the other. One of the "brothers" has wronged the other, has never asked for forgiveness, and, despite the best overtures of the other, has perpetuated a separation that frustrates reconciliation and the realization of justice. Yet perhaps the real-world complication to such an application is that the historical parties have in fact been continually switching roles, in one instance playing the part of Esau and in the next playing that of Jacob.

Likewise it is tempting to apply the second of these biblical narratives by identifying the younger brother with either the Israelis or the Palestinians and then the elder brother with the other—acknowledging with regret that neither party seems to display the full virtue of the father. One of the "brothers" has wronged the other and has not yet acknowledged that wrong to the other and asked for forgiveness. Meanwhile the other brother is intent on demanding the kind of justice that is retributive rather than restorative. Again, perhaps the real-world complication to such an application is that the historical parties have in fact been continually switching roles, now playing the elder brother and then the younger brother.

Still, these two narratives frame for us ever so importantly the theological elements involved in human reconciliation—the needs for speaking truth, acknowledging wrong, accepting responsibility, asking pardon, offering forgiveness (and even amnesty), finding a just way to live side by side, and becoming "the [justice] of God" (2 Cor. 5:21).

Keeping in mind all four of the biblical and theological emphases studied in this opening section—justice, Zion, covenant and land, and reconciliation—and the relationship of each of the latter three to the first, we will now provide perspectives on the contemporary situation in the Middle East.

D. *Our Witness: "What We Have Seen and Heard"*

1. *Introduction*

The Middle East Study Committee (MESC) was created by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and appointed February 2009 by the current and two previous moderators.⁷⁴ The members of the MESC are: Susan Andrews, Hudson River Presbytery (New York); Frederick Bush, Los Ranchos Presbytery (California); Nahida Gordon, Presbytery of Muskingum Valley (Ohio); John Huffman, Los Ranchos Presbytery (California); Lucy Janjigian, Palisades Presbytery (New Jersey); Rebecca Reyes, New Hope Presbytery (North Carolina); Marthame Sanders, Greater Atlanta Presbytery (Georgia); Byron Shafer, New York City Presbytery (New York); Ron Shive, Salem Presbytery (North Carolina).

Our mandate was "to prepare a comprehensive study, with recommendations, that is focused on Israel/Palestine within the complex context of the Middle East" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1226). The scope of this study is fourfold:

- A description of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s mission and relationships, including an assessment of the future for the Christian presence and witness in the Middle East;
- An overview of the complex interactions among religions, cultures, and peoples that characterize the region;
- An analysis of U.S. policies that impact the area; and
- A [recommendation of] steps to be taken with our partners in the Middle East and the United States to foster justice, improve interfaith relations, and nurture the building of peace toward a secure and viable future for all. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1226)

The methodology for the study has been to engage as many representatives from a spectrum of perspectives on the Israel-Palestinian conflict and to embrace the witness and concerns of our Christian partners in the region. This approach involved conversations both in the United States and in the Middle East; with both Israelis and Palestinians; Jews, Muslims, and Christians. We have worked diligently to listen to the multitude of voices that are crying aloud in the midst of the Middle

East conflict.⁷⁵ We have also consulted the Presbyterian Panel through its August 2009 survey for a sample of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) convictions and attitudes regarding Israel/Palestine, and learned much about the extent to which Presbyterians care about the parties involved in the conflict.⁷⁶ Unfortunately, we must acknowledge that limited time, resources, and other circumstances prevented us from engaging some voices.⁷⁷ This report thus makes only limited observations and recommendations regarding the broader context, and devotes most summary here to the Israel-Palestine struggle. The Presbyterian church has in fact spoken prophetically on matters such as the Iraq war and its refugees and developed policies on just peacemaking that address the larger region. These also include the dynamics of Iran and preemptive warfare and are part of the policy review and application found in Appendix 2. We mention this here because our study, though with new approaches, also acknowledges this very Presbyterian history of social and ethical analysis of the Middle East.

2. *Two Unparalleled Experiences*

One does not have to be in the Middle East long before becoming aware of the two unparalleled traumatic experiences that grip the lives of the people of this region. The horror that both the Jews and the Palestinians have faced is unparalleled and has resulted in a state of psycho-trauma, which grips the lives of both people and results in fear, anxiety, and anger. The Jewish psycho-trauma and the Palestinian psycho-trauma, both of which underlie the region's conflicts, cannot be compared, nor should they be allowed to compete with one another. A competition of traumas will only result in an endless argument over who is the greater victim.

One of these psycho-traumas is the Holocaust in which 6 million European Jews were annihilated at the hands of the Nazi party, its state apparatus and allies. The other trauma is the forced displacement of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948 from their ancestral homeland by the Israel Haganah [the pre-state militant force that was the precursor of the Israel Defense Forces].

Avraham Burg, Former Speaker of the Knesset and Cabinet Minister, speaks of the Jewish psycho-trauma and identifies the pain and power that the Holocaust still plays in the soul of Israelis today. He says,

To many, the Shoah [Holocaust or literally calamity] was and will forever be an incurable wound. To others, the Shoah is the nucleus of their identity. To everyone, the Shoah is a present, tangible experience wherever we go.⁷⁸

Another has described this Jewish trauma well:

To Israelis and most Jews, the Jewish State is a miracle that represents redemption from the unspeakable horrors of the Nazi Holocaust. Israel is an emotional insurance policy against the visceral vulnerability that many Jews still feel, a vulnerability born of centuries of persecution in Europe.⁷⁹

One of the results of this psycho-trauma is that every time the Palestinians, or the Iranians, or any other neighbor offer a threat, the Israeli Jews become engulfed in fear, their perceived vulnerability is heightened, and the question that arises is, "Is a second Shoah on the way?"⁸⁰

The atrocities that the Nazis committed against the Jews and this resulting psycho-trauma has become for many a rationalization to do whatever is necessary to maintain Israel's security. Again, Burg says,

Since those days in Germany, we have been holding on painfully to the little that we have, not letting go. We hold the memories and the traumas and they do not leave us. We cling to the tragedy and the tragedy becomes our justification for everything else.⁸¹

This sense of historical victimization creates for some Israelis a compensatory reflex to choose power and armament; to reject the claims and critique of others; and the adoption of a philosophy that the "end justifies the means," even if that means the loss of human rights, life, and the dignity of others.⁸²

A Vignette: Hostile Walls and Holy People

By Susan R. Andrews

This time I came home depressed and anxious—sobered by the bitterness, the polarization, and the hopelessness that seems to permeate the region. Very different from my last trip to Palestine/Israel, back in 1995 – in between the first and second Intifadas—when Oslo seemed promising, the Palestinian Authority had a strong voice, and Christians and Jews were talking and hoping and building tentative bridges together. But in 2010 the situation is bleak—and the window of opportunity for peace is rapidly closing.

The first six days we met with our Christian partners in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan—soaking in the beauty of these ancient lands, hearing the lament about the rapid diminishment of the Christian voice and presence in the Holy Land, and feeling the urgency of this moment in time. We were heartened by the unity of the Christian voices, increasingly joined by moderate Muslim voices—all crying out for peace with justice. And yet we also heard a clear warning that the conflict in Israel/Palestine is a pervasive disease, poisoning the present and jeopardizing the future of the entire Middle East region—indeed a toxic combination of fear and anger and chronic displacement that is jeopardizing the harmony of the whole world.

Our final eight days were spent in Israel/Palestine—six days in Jerusalem and two days in the Galilee and Jericho. We stayed at a Christian Retreat Center in East Jerusalem, and a kosher Orthodox Jewish hotel in West Jerusalem—literally experiencing the cultural tension of this small, fierce and divided city. We spent a day in Hebron and a day in Bethlehem—and we talked and listened, and talked and listened, and talked and listened with Christians, Muslims, Jews, Israelis, Palestinians, human rights activists, rabbis, government officials, Bedouins, scholars, settlers, and displaced refugees.

Several images have been burned into my soul from our troubled days together. I see the elder-physician from Basra, Iraq, who remains faithful in his devastated city, keeping the doors of the church open, preaching every week, and ministering as a plastic surgeon, reshaping faces and bodies deformed by the bombs and pollution of the war. I hear the pastor from Iran, serving with a quiet joy amidst much pressure and civil unrest, rejoicing that his pews are full each Sunday with inquirers about the faith, in a country where it is illegal to proselytize.

I see the steady march of settlement expansion on confiscated Palestinian land—mammoth development dominating every hillside around Jerusalem—squeezing the Arab populations into valleys of poverty and despair. And I see bypass roads and towering security walls—literally fencing off the reality of the occupation from the Israeli families, many who live in these burgeoning suburban settlements with a 50 percent subsidy from the government

I see and hear the seven rabbis who ate lunch with us—aware of the moral failures of the Israeli government, actively seeking ways to redeem the Israeli people by dismantling the occupation, and yet also fiercely committed to the security of their land and their people. I see the angry settler in Hebron—greeting us with contempt in his voice and a pistol on his hip. And the soldiers who kept us waiting as they cleaned up the early morning blood from a confrontation between a Palestinian resident and an Israel soldier.

I see a church packed with Christians in predominantly Muslim Amman, Jordan—most of them from families displaced by the 1948 invasion of Palestine by Israeli soldiers. I see Angela, a Jewish human rights activist working for the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, who showed us the inequities of roads and houses and schools and freedom between East and West Jerusalem, and who grieves the very loss of the soul of the Jewish people amidst the power politics of the Israeli government. And I feel the joy and the energy of Mitri Raheb, a Lutheran pastor in Bethlehem, who insists on being a resurrection Christian, living with hope amidst the contemporary suffering of his people—pouring all his energies and dreams into empowerment and encouragement of the youth of Bethlehem—giving them imagination and leadership skills through education and the arts.

Two ideas have stuck with me from our conversations in the Middle East. Avraham Burg, a former speaker of the Knesset, now a scholar and peace activist, encouraged us to see the conflict in the Middle East in a new light. It is not only about power politics, it is also about psycho-politics. As he sees it, the conflict is almost cosmic in proportion—a struggle between “competing traumas.” There is the trauma of 1948—and all the horror of violent displacement and the de-legitimization and demoralization of the Palestinian people. And there is the trauma of the Holocaust—the genocide of 6 million people feeding on the historical hatred that has tried to wipe out the Jewish people for more than 5,000 years. These traumas are not just about political conflict. These traumas permeate the very essence of identity and passion and life. And they will not be healed by high-sounding words in a peace agreement. They will only be healed by a global embrace of the radical grace of God.

The second idea that has stuck with me focuses on the mantra we so often hear from our Jewish friends. “Never again” —never again will the world allow the horror and hatred of a holocaust against God’s people. But that mantra can have two meanings—never again will MY people go through such devastation, even if it means oppressing and destroying others in the process. OR, never again will ANY people go through such ugly destruction. And all of us—Christian, Muslim, Jew—must work together to find true shalom in the Middle East and around the world.

I came home hearing a double message from our journey through the Holy Land. The first was a plea from our Christian brothers and sisters to stand with them in solidarity—naming the evil that is the occupation, and doing everything in our power to end it. The second was a plea from our Israeli Jewish brothers and sisters to engage our Jewish partners here in the United States in such a way that they can hear our message—and be transformed into peacemakers with and for the people of both Israel and Palestine. Those two pleas remain in tension as we submit our report as a task force.

My prayer is that God will give the PC(USA) the grace and the clarity to speak the truth in love—and to further God’s reign of peace and justice in the world. And my conviction is that the Living Christ can indeed be our peace, working to break down the dividing walls of hostility that are fragmenting this beautiful and broken world.

May it be so.

[The vignettes in this section of the report were written by individual members of the MESC as they reflected on their experience in the Middle East. Susan R. Andrews is general presbyter of Hudson River Presbytery and has long been involved in interfaith and ecumenical relations.]

The second psycho-trauma that one encounters in the Middle East is the trauma brought by Nakba [The Catastrophe], as the Palestinians call it, or the War of Independence, as the Israelis term the event. The term “Nakba” does not refer to the establishment of Israel itself, but rather the effect that the war had on the Palestinian people. This war resulted in the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948 from their ancestral homeland. This was a violent displacement and is overwhelmingly experienced as a de-legitimization of the Palestinian people. This is described well by Naim Ateek, a Palestinian Anglican priest and the president and director of Sabeel⁸³ in Jerusalem.

On Israel’s Independence Day in 1958 the Israeli military governor had allowed the Palestinian Arabs living in Israel to move around without permits. My father took advantage of this temporary freedom to rent a pickup truck and take all of his children back for the first time to see our home in the town of Beisan, the home from which we had been forced out nine years earlier. Even today I clearly remember how we were not allowed even to look inside our home. The three houses built by my father that made up our home had been divided into smaller units, each occupied now by a Jewish immigrant family. It must have been very difficult for my father to see our house occupied by Jewish immigrants who had come from North Africa while he, the rightful owner, was prevented even from entering them. A few days after this traumatic experience, my father suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered, leaving him unable to walk or speak clearly.⁸⁴

The inexplicable pain of the Nakba creates for some Palestinians a sense of historical victimization, which creates a compensatory reflex to choose violence; to reject the claims and critique of others; and the adoption of a philosophy that the “end justifies the means.”⁸⁵ The awareness of the Nakba is renewed every time a bulldozer knocks down a Palestinian house or uproots an olive tree, posing the constant moral test of how to respond non-violently—as almost all always do.

With both the Israeli Holocaust and the Palestinian Nakba, empathy is weakened, humiliation is remembered, hopelessness and fear increased, and when they confront each other “horns are locked.”

The defensive reaction seen by some in both communities is to move away from democracy and toward fundamentalism, theocracy, and exclusivism. This exclusivism is manifested in two peoples who have often looked at the world around them solely through the lenses of their own trauma, and who thereby fail to see the whole picture. Each people have become compartmentalized, resulting in further misunderstanding and conflict. This compartmentalization prevents each from knowing what is happening to the other and failing to accurately understand the other’s viewpoint. The walls or borders of each compartment become blinders that obscure the reality of the situation.⁸⁶

Compartmentalization also leads to living in isolation, permitting each party to think that their mistreatment of the other is both good and proper. “It is just the way it is.”⁸⁷ This has led some Zionists, who see themselves as an embattled minority, to justify the occupation and the invasion of Gaza because it is for Israel’s security. Likewise, this has led some extremist Arabs, who see themselves as the oppressed, to resort to violent resistance. Either way, “each side sees itself as a victim and the other side as an instigator.”⁸⁸

“The emotional baggage of the Holocaust and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians affect people’s perceptions of the objective reality of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, a reality in which people are being killed. One side may perceive the blowing up a bus or a disco as justified retaliation; the other side may perceive the isolation of Gaza and the killing of far greater numbers of Palestinians with tanks and F-16s as justified retaliation. The objective reality remains the same: people are dying.”⁸⁹

We believe that the one person’s pain does not justify the inflicting of pain on another. We also believe that breaking through the conflict created by both of these psycho-traumas is possible only with the work of outside parties. Both sides are so “locked in horns” that a third party breakthrough is imperative. This “outside-assisted breakthrough” must come from the U.S. government (which is a primary supporter of Israel), American Jewish voices for a just peace, Christian churches both within the Middle East and worldwide, and the many moderate Muslims who embrace a vision for peace.

A Vignette: Like the Lilies of the Field and the Birds of the Air

by Nahida H. Gordon

Like the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, “I am from there”^{*} —Palestine. As we leave Jordan and enter Palestine at the King Hussein crossing, we are greeted by the flag of the government that has denied me my Palestine. My friends, the members of the Middle East Study Committee, are excited at seeing the desert wilderness where Jesus wandered for forty days. One of them begins to sing a hymn. They and I look at the same thing, but see very different realities. Palestine belongs to them in a way that it does not to me. I feel only sadness and loss.

I was born in Jerusalem and lived in Jaffa. My family, which had lived in Palestine for centuries, left Jaffa in May 1948 to flee the Israeli bombing of the business and civilian areas of Jaffa. As the bombs fell on our houses, my father was wounded and the church across the street was partially destroyed. We literally fled for our lives thinking that we could return when the violence abated. We heard about the massacre in Deir Yassin in early April and heard about the trucks with loudspeakers promising that if Palestinians stayed in their homes, they would suffer the same fate as the inhabitants of Deir Yassin, a Palestinian town near Jerusalem. I have a document, circulated in Jaffa by the Hagana (Israeli forces) on May 13, 1948, in which we were promised that they, the Hagana, will honor the Geneva conventions and allow our return to Jaffa. This was a lie, one of many, throughout the years. It is now sixty-one years later, and I am still waiting to return to my home.

As we traveled throughout Palestine, I looked at the birds of the air with envy. They fly about not worrying about checkpoints, earth mounds, Black Hawk helicopters, F16 jets, sulfur bombs, tear gas canisters, sound grenades, bullets, or the myriad variety of armaments that plague Palestinians and suicide bombs that plague Israelis. Birds, it seems, do not need passports or identity cards. Before Israel, we Palestinians were more like the birds—we lived in a multicultural society of Christians, Jews, and Muslims. I had friends who were Jews and Muslims. Why cannot the world allow us to strive for that again?

As we continued to travel throughout the land, we encountered the continuing dispossession of the Palestinians by the Israeli government to make way for Jewish immigrants from many parts of the world, including the United States and Europe. In West Jerusalem, we passed through the neighborhood called Ba’a where my grandmothers’, uncles’, and aunts’ houses still stand—now occupied by Israeli citizens. The sights and sounds of Jerusalem, its sweet breezes, the trees, the song of the morning dove all evoke memories of the past. My family’s dispossession seems complete and brings on a wave of intense sadness. And anger—why were the Palestinians deemed to be an expendable people for the purpose of assuaging the guilt of Western Christianity?

We ended our trip at the Sea of Galilee. Upon arriving, we celebrated communion. So for me, the trip into Palestine ended the same way it began. My friends see the biblical connections and I see the loss and grief. Because of my Christian Palestinian origin, Palestine is lost to me!

I am grateful for those who give of themselves and of their time to consider the question of Palestine and particularly to those who have the courage to speak the truth. Only truth will free Palestine-Israel.

* Title of a poem by Mahmoud Darwish.

[Nahida H. Gordon is a Palestinian American, who grew up in Jaffa, but currently is a professor of Statistics at Case Western Reserve University, and an elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Wooster, Ohio.]

3. *Dwindling Christian Presence and Influence*

The Christian community has maintained an unbroken presence and witness in Jerusalem since Pentecost, gradually spreading throughout Palestine, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean world.⁹⁰ There is continuing concern about the numbers of Christians remaining in the Middle East and particularly in Palestine. This was the message that was clearly heard from our Christian partners, particularly in Lebanon and Israel.

At present it is estimated that 9,246,000 to 16,206,000 Christians live in the Middle East. Currently, Christians have been emigrating from the Middle East, and reasons for the outmigration vary by country. Political upheavals in Lebanon; discrimination in Israel, Egypt, and Iran; the occupation and economic decline in the West Bank and Gaza; and security and discrimination in Iraq are some of the reasons. There are political reasons to try to inflate the numbers; we are told that the actual numbers are closer to the lower ends of each range. Christians in Jordan and Syria appear to experience the least difficulties in the Middle East; however numbers are reported to be declining there as well. The Table below provides estimates by country⁹¹

Country	Estimated Numbers	Percentage of Population	Reasons for Decline
Lebanon	1.35 M ¹ to 1.6 M	34–41%	Political Situation
Israel	144 K ² to 196 K	2.1–2.8%	Discrimination
West Bank and Gaza	40 K–90 K	1.1–2.4%	Occupation, Economic
Egypt	5.8 M–11 M	8–16%	Discrimination
Syria	970K–1.7 M	5.4–9.4%	None given
Jordan	163 K–220 K	3–4%	None given
Iraq	700 K–1 M	2.7–3.5%	Security
Iran	79 K–400K	0.1–0.6%	Discrimination
Gulf States	2,048.9 K to 2,083.9 K		

¹ ‘M’ denotes ‘Million’; ² ‘K’ denotes ‘Thousand’

Although the numbers of Christians in Israel and the Palestinian Territories have remained steady, or may have even increased slightly, they have not kept pace with the normal rate of population growth. Their proportions have declined significantly and their influence greatly diminished. The reduction to the present 1.37 percent in the proportion of Christians⁹² is attributed to lower birth rates and the higher rates of outmigration,⁹³ which result from the occupation with its difficulties for daily life. A further concern of this outmigration is that those able to migrate, either Christian or Muslim, are those with education and whose political views are “liberals or seculars” thus tending to leave behind a greater proportion of those on the extremes in political orientation.⁹⁴

This dwindling presence of Christians in the Middle East is a deep concern due to the role that Christians have played in being a mediating, reconciling presence. Without that presence, we fear a more religiously polarized Middle East, more prone to extremism.

4. *Refugees in the Middle East*

As a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, 750,000 Palestinians became refugees. The 1967 war resulted in an additional 140,000 refugees in Jordan and 240,000 in the West Bank. It is currently estimated that there are 4.7 million registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza. The massive numbers of Palestinian refugees in surrounding countries continues to cause concern, conflict, and anger on the part of our respective partners there. For there to be a just peace, Palestinian refugees must be offered the right to return or compensation for their home and lands. One Jewish

author has poignantly remarked, “Can the United States stop its support of Israel’s military and instead support Israel by offering to help in the repatriation of Palestinian refugees? We can, and we should.”⁹⁵

5. *Increasing Nuclear Threat*

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported on February 8, 2010, the following news.

The IAEA can confirm that it has received a letter from the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) on 8 February 2010, in which the AEOI informed the Agency that production of less than 20 percent enriched uranium is being foreseen at the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant at Natanz for fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor.⁹⁶

The IAEA then reported ten days later that they had extensive evidence of “past or current undisclosed activities” by Iran’s military to develop a nuclear warhead.⁹⁷

That news sent waves of fear through Israelis and fueled their sense of vulnerability and insecurity.

While this growing fear is a deep concern, an equal concern is the number of nuclear warheads that Israel currently stockpiles and thus the growing sense of Iranian vulnerability and insecurity. While Israel will not confirm its possession of nuclear weapons or the number held, it is generally agreed that Israel has stockpiled close to 100 nuclear weapons.⁹⁸

The only just and peaceful solution to this growing concern is to work for a nuclear-free Middle East in both Iran and Israel.

6. *Reality on the Ground in Israel-Palestine*

a. *Violence by Both Extremes*

Inexcusable acts of violence have been committed by both the powerful occupying forces of the Israeli military and the Jewish settlers in the West Bank,⁹⁹ as well as, the Palestinians, of whom a relatively small minority has resorted to violence as a means of resisting the occupation.¹⁰⁰ Violence is not an acceptable means to peace, regardless of its rationale.

b. *The Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza*

As the MESC traveled throughout the region, the overwhelming consensus of all members was that Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is a sin against God and other fellow human beings. While there are many subordinate factors that contribute to the lack of a just peace in Israel-Palestine, the major issue for a just peace is the continued occupation that has been ongoing for the past forty-three years.

The real concern that we all embrace is that the window of opportunity for an end to the occupation and the viability of a two-state solution is rapidly closing. This is due in large part to the rapid growth of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the increasing number of bypass roads, the injustice of the separation barrier, and tragic numbers of house demolitions.

One of the growing concerns of the occupation is the dramatic increase of settlements that began after the 1967 war. One of the hopes of the Oslo Interim agreements was that settlement growth would cease; however, the opposite has occurred, resulting in a current population of the West Bank settlements at 285,000 and 198,700 settlers in East Jerusalem.¹⁰¹ The continued growth of the number of settlements and settlers is perceived by many as an attempt by Israel to prevent the establishment of an economically viable Palestinian state.

Another concern of the occupation is the number of “Israeli-only bypass roads” that carve up the Palestinian homeland and connect one settlement to another. This has a devastating effect on the ability of Palestinian residents to live out a normal life—to visit family, farm family property; to seek medical treatment; to secure employment; and to travel freely in one’s own country.

The separation barrier at times is an imposing twenty-six feet high, concrete wall and at other times, in less densely populated areas, it is a barbed-wire topped fence. Israeli supporters of the barrier argue that the wall is necessary to protect Israeli citizens in Israel and its West Bank settlements from Palestinian terrorists and attribute the decrease of incidents of suicide bombers to the existence of the barrier. While few would deny the right of any government to put a barrier on its own property line, thus along the 1967 borders, three-quarters of this barrier is inside the West Bank on Palestinian land.¹⁰² This is often perceived by the Palestinians as an effort to secure an illegal settlement, claim water sources, and annex Palestinian land. The location of the barrier is a violation of international law and thus is perceived as a means to preempt a just peace.

The number of house demolitions is alarming and shocks the human conscience. It is estimated that some 24,145 Palestinian homes have been demolished in the Occupied Territories since 1967¹⁰³ and that some 4,247 Palestinian homes were demolished in the Gaza Strip during Operation Cast Lead.¹⁰⁴ The Israeli reason given for these demolitions are as follows:

houses demolished for lack of a building permit, houses demolished as punishment for the actions of people associated with the houses, and houses demolished by the IDF in the course of military operations.¹⁰⁵ Regardless of the reason, the demolition of houses is a tragic human experience for Palestinian homeowners and an unnecessary action if there were no occupation.

A just and lasting peace and security for Israel is possible when the occupation has ended and the Palestinian acts of violent resistance are no longer employed. A just and lasting peace and security for the Palestinians is possible when the occupation has ended and Israel does not need to resort to military force to maintain its illegal land possession. If there were no occupation, there would be no Palestinian resistance. If there was no Palestinian resistance, Israelis could live in peace and security.

The Israeli occupation leads to the denial of many human rights and the violation of international laws. The violent forms of Palestinian resistance to the occupation also leads to violations of international law. The only just solution is to insist that both Palestinians and Israelis abide by international law and justly respect the human rights of all. Double standards must give way to equal justice for all, which will result in peace for all.

A Vignette: Jesus Wept

by Lucy Janjigian

Jesus wept!

For more than two thousand years, Palestine has been the destination of Christian pilgrimages. Sadly, now about 1.5 percent of its population is Christian. This is the cry from all the leaders of Christian denominations.

Born in Jerusalem, I attended an English Anglican School with Arab (Muslim and Christian), Jewish, Armenian, and other girls of many nationalities. Our home was in an international quarter where Abyssinian, Arab, Armenian, Assyrian, English, French, Jewish, Polish, and Russian families lived in peace and within proximity to each other.

Around 1946, militant Zionists began blowing up British soldiers and policemen. July 22, 1946, was Palestine's September 11. Irgun Zionists blew up the King David Hotel that housed the British Mandate Government, killing 92 Arab, Armenian, British, Greek, and Jewish personnel, including my aunt's sister Eugenie, and a Greek girl I knew, a recent graduate from our school.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations announced the Palestine Partition Plan. The house we lived in landed in no man's land with bullets flying through the windows between Arabs and Jews. One night, the four-storied Mandelbaum Apartment Building (that was behind our house) whose Jewish residents had evacuated that day, was blown up by Jewish forces. Our windowpanes shattered, dogs barked, pictures and dishes crashed to the tiled floor. The blast terrified us and shook us out of bed.

The next morning we were uprooted. At the urging of Bishop Stewart, we abandoned our home and moved to St. George's School across the street, where my father had taught both Arab and Jewish students. For us to move safely, a temporary two-hour ceasefire was agreed upon. Carrying a few personal belongings, the street we crossed became the boundary between Israel and Jordan. Jerusalem was now a divided city. Travel between Jerusalem Jordan and Jerusalem Israel had to be through the Mandelbaum Gate. This barbed wire fence in front of our demolished home was monitored by UN personnel. It was dismantled after the 1967 War when Jerusalem became a united city by illegal Israeli annexation that has not been recognized by the U.S. or by other international governments.

June 11, 1948—The first cease fire was signed by UN's Count Folke Bernadotte, with high ranking Israeli and Jordanian military and civilian officials, in our living room at St. George's School. During the ceasefire both sides rearmed. We left Jerusalem and found refuge at the Anglican Girls' Mission School, Amman, Jordan; where other refugees shared their room with extended family.

Upon our return to Jerusalem in 1950, I worked with United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) among Palestinian refugees in tented camps. That was an eye-opener and a heartbreak. In the past sixty years, the 750,000 refugees have since multiplied to millions. Sadly, they have not been allowed to return or compensated for their land and property.

It was an honor to be on this journey with the Presbyterian General Assembly-appointed study committee. Unfortunately, we were not able to visit Ramallah, Gaza, or refugee camps.

Israel evicts Palestinians, demolishes their homes and cisterns, confiscates their land, and cuts down their orchards, which are frequently their only means of livelihood. Palestinians are deprived of their human rights and are humiliated on a daily basis. We saw an example of this the day we visited Hebron. An Israeli soldier carrying his gun entered our bus to check our identities. As he was getting off, out of the blue, he spat at a young Arab boy passing by minding his own business.

Palestinians feel imprisoned and choked by the Separation Wall (sometimes referred to as Wall of Tears or Apartheid Wall) and continues to build illegal settlements on Arab lands and hilltops converging onto villages, even though President Obama asked for a freeze on settlement building. Palestinians are harassed, denied water and freedom of movement. They are required to carry identity passes that are checked at numerous checkpoints making travel difficult and time-consuming. Furthermore, they have to use unpaved, winding roads that prolong travel time, while Israelis have access to direct exclusive paved roads.

"Israel acts as a spoiled child," remarked one Israeli activist. "America has helped create this undisciplined child. It depends on the U.S. for its lifeline of funding and weapons." She continued to say "that even though the state of Israel is supposed to be a democracy,

it acts as a Nazi state.” She did not feel she could live in the country much longer if it continued to be an oppressor, ignoring human rights.

We were privileged to attend Dar Annadwa’s 5th Annual Conference—“The Kairos & the Intersection Between Theology & Politics—A South African Perspective” in Bethlehem.

Israel has violated human rights, broken Geneva Conventions, ignored UN Declarations, and gotten away with it. This I cannot understand. The U.S. government must stop providing Israel with unlimited funds and weapons.

I weep, with Christ for
the Oppressor,
the Oppressed,
Jerusalem—The Holy City.

I pray,
hearts of stone to melt into hearts of flesh,
Peace to reign with Justice, resulting in a two-state solution
Reinstating the 1967 borders,
Jerusalem declared an International City
Open for ALL.

May justice and peace reign.

Amen.

[Lucy Janjigian is a Palestinian American born of Armenian descent in Jerusalem. She is also an artist. One of her works appears on the cover of this report. She has served as a short-term volunteer with the Armenian Missionary Association of America and is an elder at Westside Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey.]

7. *Palestinian Christians: Agents of Reconciliation and Nonviolent Resistance*

In the Middle East the voice of our Christian partners, though increasingly small, is both vital and promising.¹⁰⁶ While their percentage of the population continues to decline due to the Israel-Palestine conflict and the resulting political struggles and economic pressures, their unified witness in the recent past has been clear, concise, and challenging. In June 2007, the World Council of Churches brought together an international peace conference in Amman, Jordan. An urgent ecumenical plea, known now as “The Amman Call,”¹⁰⁷ came out of this gathering. This document was a call for churches to step forward in their role to “heal and to bring all sides to reconciliation.” In addition it called for the Palestinian right of return, a two-state solution that is “viable politically, geographically, economically and socially,” and a shared Jerusalem. From our partners we all took seriously their cry, “Enough is enough. No more words without deeds. It is time for action.” Hearing this plea, the 218th General Assembly (2008) endorsed and affirmed “The Amman Call.”

The Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) was launched out of this initial gathering in Amman and during the next two years it continued to meet, encouraging the writing of a defining statement from our Palestinian partners.¹⁰⁸ In December 2009, the forum met again in Bethlehem, Palestine, and there witnessed the unveiling of a Palestinian Christian statement: “Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth, A Word of Faith, Hope, and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering.”¹⁰⁹

This Kairos Palestine document is a cry for the international community to stand with the Palestinian Christians who have faced great oppression and suffering. It is a call for us as Christians to oppose occupation theologies and to work for a just peace. This document clearly calls the occupation “a sin against God and humanity” and thus must be opposed by all who are concerned for justice and peace in the Middle East. It reaffirms “the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Al-Quds [East Jerusalem] as its capital.” Throughout the document, even in the face of the separation wall that illegally confiscates Palestinian land and the growing number of settlements that recreate a growing obstacle to a political solution and Israel’s disregard of international law, the tone is one of hope and the method embraced is peaceful, nonviolent resistance. Kairos Palestine focuses, above all, on love and reconciliation.

While Kairos Palestine calls for divestment and boycott of everything produced by the occupation as an act of conscience and a method of nonviolent resistance, it lifts this up as part of the Christian affirmation of speaking truth in love. We struggle with its call for solidarity in this area and confess that we have not fully answered it.

The hopes and prayers are that the Kairos Palestine document will “provide the turning point to focus all peace-loving peoples in the world,” because “liberation from the occupation is in the interest of all peoples in the region.”

A Vignette: 58 Years in Israel and Palestine

by John Huffman

I am theologically a moderate pro-Zionist. While I cannot embrace the triumphal enthusiasm of the ultra-dispensationalists with their detailed eschatological charts, I on the other hand cannot bring myself to deny the significant role of the Jews in both human history

and salvation history. Even as in my Reformed theology, I affirm the Church to be the New Israel, I am stopped in my tracks as I see an exiled people return to a land once theirs, more than 2,000 years since they have had complete sovereignty over that land. There is nothing comparable in history. This convinces me that some of the prophecies of Scripture are being fulfilled in our day in a most amazing way.

At the same time, I am forced to raise issues with today's zealous Jewish Zionism and the State of Israel in its present policies and actions in regard to the Palestinian people. There is no biblical mandate for such a lack of hospitality and such flagrant injustice. Something must be done.

I first visited the Middle East as a twelve-year-old in 1952. As my parents had tea with Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Lambie at the Berachah Tuberculosis Sanitarium south of Bethlehem, I stood on the roof of their house looking out into their backyard and the hillside beyond observing more than 30,000 Palestinian refugees of the 1947-48 war, still living in the squalor of camelhair tents, behind barbed wire fences, eking out an existence on United Nations rations. Seeing other such encampments, I then, as a youngster, sensed that these refugee camps would inevitably become hotbeds of resentment and even potential terrorism.

In my subsequent thirty trips to the area, the most recent being with our task force this past August, I have been perplexed by the complexity of the situation, troubled by acts of terrorism on both sides, and ultimately appalled by the arbitrary expropriation of Palestinian land and the exponential increase of that expropriation since 1967 and the use of that land in violation of international law, the most visible evidence of that being the building of Israeli settlements housing what soon will be one-half million settlers.

It was with great reservation that I accepted the invitation to join this General Assembly task force. I know how controversial is this topic and how viciously attacked any truth-tellers are by majority voices in the American Jewish community that are quick to attach the label "anti-Semitic" to anyone who even suggests that there are serious ethical and legal issues at stake. I support the security of the State of Israel and believe that American tax dollars should be used for that purpose. But it should not be done at all costs on Israeli-dictated terms resulting from a masterful manipulation of the United States political process.

Whatever else our report recommends, I personally plead for a reversal of the apartheid actions that now are integral to Israeli domestic and foreign policy. Something must be done to remove the ghastly wall that is such a reminder of the Soviet unjust endeavor to exclude. And I would hope for the negotiation of a land swap that will inconvenience the fewest possible Palestinians and Israelis in a realistic understanding that, as painful as it is, the clock cannot be turned all the way back to 1948 but that reparations can be made. I beg for a more humane approach by Israel to implement the conditions undergirding God's covenant blessing on His people, an implementation that will not deny realistic security threats but will endeavor to alleviate the suffering of the second-class status of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. If this is not forthcoming, I must reluctantly join that lonely minority of Jewish and Gentile voices that call for justice even if it takes divestment to force the issue. And I urge our American U.S. foreign policy to cut off our elaborate financial/military support of Israel until there is full compliance with international law and the standards of justice in any respected society. Short of such actions on the part of the Israelis, I see a continued heightening of tensions and circumstances evolving in the larger Middle East that could even ultimately threaten the existence of Israel as a continuing Jewish homeland.

[John A. Huffman has just retired from his position as senior pastor of the St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Newport Beach, California. During his life, he has traveled to Israel Palestine thirty-one times.]

8. *A Time for Action*

One last observation that the Middle East Study Committee encountered in the Middle East was the disparity between the fierce urgency felt by many whose lives focus on solving the conflict and the lack of urgency felt by many others whose lives are more removed from day-to-day contact with the conflict. Many give so much energy to the ending of the occupation and the resolution of a just peace; and, on the other hand, many simply are willing to live with the disparity of justice, perhaps because the insecurity of the current status quo is perceived to be better than the fear of the unknown that a dramatic change would bring.

On the floor of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the words attributed to Martin Niemoller, which he wrote as an anti-Nazi German pastor, read:

First, they came for the socialist, and I did not speak out, because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionist, and I did not speak out, because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out, because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.

We all do have a shared responsibility to guard human rights everywhere,¹¹⁰ and now is the time for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to speak out, stand up, and take action. We must be those who will say, "Never again" not just for the Jew, but for every suffering victim in the world today,"¹¹¹ including the Palestinians.

Part Two: Recommendations

[The recommendation section has been moved to the beginning of this report.]

Part Three: Study Materials

This section is composed of study materials to be used by individuals, groups, and churches for further study. These pieces were written at the request of the MESC and reflect the views and experiences of the authors. Sections of these historical perspectives have been used in previous portions of the committee's report.

~~[A. Notes from a Humanistic, Liberal Zionist: A Personal Perspective~~

~~[This study piece was written by Ron Kronish, a rabbi and educator, who has lived in West Jerusalem, for the past thirty years. Rabbi Kronish serves as the founder and director of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (www.icei.org.il). The Middle East Study Committee (MESC) met Dr. Kronish when in the Jerusalem and asked him to write this study piece. It gives a perspective to the Israel Palestine conflict.~~

~~[1. A Personal Introduction~~

~~[I am honored to write this short essay for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). During the past few years—since the issue of “divestment,” which emerged from the annual assembly of the PC(USA) in 2004, I have been privileged to engage in genuine dialogue with members of the PC(USA) on their study tours to Israel, and I have always felt a keen sense of fellowship and a sincere effort on their part to learn more about the Jewish Zionist narrative that underlies the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Accordingly, I am pleased to be able to respond positively to the invitation to write a short reflection as part of your church's comprehensive study on the Middle East, with a special focus on Israel-Palestine.~~

~~[Let me begin with a few words about myself. I am a Reform rabbi who grew up in the U.S. and made *aliyah* (Hebrew for “went up”) to Israel with my wife, Amy and then two daughters (we now have three wonderful daughters) in June 1979, slightly more than thirty years ago, which means that I have spent almost half my life in Israel by now! I grew up in Miami Beach, Florida, in a fervently Zionist Jewish home, so I imbibed Zionism from my youth, mostly from my father, Rabbi Leon Kronish, of blessed memory. He was a Reform rabbi at Temple Beth Sholom (House of Peace) from 1944–1996, where he preached and taught by example the meaning and importance of the Jewish state to Jews in America for more than five decades. He was also one of the leaders of the Reform Jewish movement in the United States from the 1960s until 1984, when he retired due to illness.~~

~~[In an essay that I wrote about my father in a book about him, which was published the year he died (1996), I wrote;~~

~~[Often, when I am asked why I decided to live in Israel, I answer that I took Ben Gurion's speeches¹¹² and my father's sermons seriously! My parents took my sister and me to Israel for the first time in 1964, the summer after I finished high school. And I fell in love with Israel on that first visit because my father's love for Israel was infectious and overwhelming.¹¹³~~

~~[Later in that same essay, I explained why the state of Israel was so important to my father, even though he never lived there:~~

~~[My father has been a great teacher of the concept that both Israel and the Diaspora are vital for the continuity of Judaism and the Jewish People. Not one or the other, but both are crucial and inextricably intertwined—this has been his greatest message. It is certainly a message that I learned from him and cherish deeply until this very day. And, it is the sort of concept that I believe that we still need to strengthen and develop, as we work towards the future of the local community and the State of Israel with a growing realization of the fact of our interlocking destiny as a people, which binds us together in common concern, caring and commitment.¹¹⁴~~

~~[Indeed, I am sure that one of the lessons learned by the leaders and followers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in recent years, since the beginning of the “divestment” debate, is how important the state of Israel—as the homeland of the Jewish People worldwide—is to American Jews with whom they live in neighborly relations and often work in common cause in many communities throughout North America.~~

~~[In addition to my personal upbringing at home, I am also very much a product of the 1960s in the U.S.A. Not only did I live through the heyday of the civil rights period and the anti-Vietnam War period when I was a college student at Brandeis University (1964–68) and as a student at the Rabbinical college of the Reform movement, the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion in New York (1968–73), but I was profoundly moved and inspired by the victory of Israel over those Arab countries who sought to annihilate the young Jewish state (only nineteen years old!). Yes, only twenty-two years after World War II, there was a serious attempt to destroy the state of Israel in what would surely have been perceived as another Holocaust or a continuation of the one that began in Europe in the late 1930s and early 1940s. It is often amazing to me how easily this is forgotten. Jews everywhere in the world live with this consciousness and visiting groups to Israel begin to understand this better after they pay a somber visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust museum and education center.~~

~~[It was actually in 1970–71, after a spending a full year as students at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem only three years after the Six Day War of 1967, did my wife, Amy, and I decide that Israel was the place where we would want to live our lives to the fullest extent as Jews in a society and culture committed to the creative survival of the Jewish People. In those years, there was no “intifada” (Palestinian uprising) and we thought naively that we were living with what Moshe Dayan called a “benign occupation” with regard to the Palestinians in the territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, whom the~~

Israel government thought were entitled to civil rights (hence the establishment of the Civil Administration), but not to national rights, since at that time, it was illegal to recognize the existence of the P.L.O. (Palestine Liberation Organization) or to speak with any of its leaders. For those who don't remember, from 1967–1986 (the outbreak of the first intifada), Israelis could travel the length and breadth of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and there was no violence or terror threatening normal life.

[When we actually made the move and came to live in Israel in 1979, it was a time of relative peace for Israel, six years after “the earthquake” of the Yom Kippur War and seven years before the outbreak of the first “intifada.” We were deeply moved—as we still are—by the unique historic opportunity and obligation to live in the Jewish State of Israel, where we would be able to raise our children as full-fledged and proud Jews in the language and culture of the people Israel.

[During the last eighteen years, I have served as the director of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI), Israel's leading interreligious organization, which I founded in 1991. In my capacity as leader of this institution, I have been invited to seminars at the Vatican several times and I was fortunate to be at the signing of the Fundamental Agreement between the State of Israel and the Holy See, at the end of 1993, a few months after the signing of the Oslo Accords on the White House lawn in Washington D.C. I also work closely with local Palestinians (Christians and Muslims) in an attempt to bring about greater understanding between people in this Land.

[In March 2002, I hosted fifty rabbis (as one of the programs of the convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) in Jerusalem that year) at the ICCI Education Center in the prestigious German Colony in Jerusalem for a panel discussion with a Christian and Muslim colleague on “The Contribution of Interreligious Dialogue to Peace-building in Israel and the Middle East,” a subject about which I have spoken and written extensively during the past eighteen years. After the session, I joined a number of other rabbis and their spouses for lunch at the well-known Café Cafit on Emek Refaim Street. During the lunch, a terrorist came in to the café and was noticed by a courageous waiter, who tackled him and took away his explosives, and we were saved by this act of bravery (and by the miracle of the nonfunctioning of the terrorist's detonator!) and, thank God, I am alive to tell the story. When we went back to thank the heroic waiter the next morning, we were interviewed by Israeli television, and by the end of the day the whole world knew about this incident.

A few days later, my colleagues and I offered a special blessing of gratitude to God at Shabbat morning services held at the educational and cultural center of the World Union for Progressive Judaism in a very emotional and heart-warming ceremony.

[Notwithstanding this traumatic experience, I have tried to be a voice for peaceful coexistence here in Israel. Since Israeli society has been moving to the right in recent years, I often find that my voice is a lonely one, but I persist nevertheless. In my lectures to visiting groups in Israel and around the world, I am often asked if Israel will ever live in peace, and my answer is “Yes!” It can and it will happen in my lifetime.

[2.—*Zionism as the National Liberation Movement of the Jewish People*

[Since the infamous “Zionism Is Racism” resolution in the U.N.¹⁴⁵ and since the horrific and continuous anti-Zionist and anti-Israel propaganda of the Arab countries and of some European countries since the outbreak of the first intifada in 1986, the term “Zionism” is greatly misunderstood and purposely distorted in much of the Western world, especially in much of mainline Christianity. This, therefore, is a good opportunity to set the record straight.

[First of all, it is important to note that Zionism is not simply a response to the Holocaust of World War II. Rather, its origins are to be found in Europe some sixty to seventy years before the Holocaust, during the rise of nationalism at the end of the 19th century.

[Zionism is one of the major streams of modern Jewish thought (and action) which arose out of the historical experience of the emancipation of the Jews of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was—and still is—one of the central Jewish responses to modernity and it offered the Jews of the world a compelling option for Jewish survival in the modern and contemporary world.

[The father of modern Zionism, Theodore Herzl, wrote a famous book in 1896 called *The Jewish State*, which diagnosed “the Jewish Problem” as it was called at the end of the 19th century, as one of anti-Semitism. According to his reading of the situation, there was no real possibility for Jews to survive in Europe anymore, after centuries of pogroms, blood libels, and rampant anti-Semitism, culminating in the infamous Dreyfus Affair in France of the 1890s. In his view—and the view of many other classical Zionist thinkers of the latter part of the 19th century—there was simply no future for Jews anymore in Europe since hatred of the Jews was so endemic to European (Christian) society. The only solution was to leave Europe and return “home.”

[And where was home? Clearly, it was the ancient homeland of the Jewish People, the Land of Israel, with which this people had been connected for all of its history, ever since the days of the Bible and in all our wanderings in the Diaspora. Herzl's theory became known as “Political Zionism” since he proposed a political solution to the Jewish People of his time.

Instead of anti-Semitism and rootlessness in Europe, the Jews should establish a state that would be a “state of the Jews,” i.e., a state with a strong Jewish majority, in which this people—the Jewish People—would “live and breathe free.”¹⁶ In this state, the Jews would live a “normal” national life. They would be a “people like all other peoples.” This state would therefore be first and foremost a refuge for oppressed Jews anywhere in the world who suffer from anti-Semitism, a haven for Jews in which their suffering as a humiliated and despondent people would be no more.

[This notion of Israel as a refuge for oppressed Jews everywhere still lies at the center of the self-consciousness of the modern state of Israel. It is therefore self-evident to all governments of Israel—and to the Jewish People of Israel—that when Jews were oppressed in the Former Soviet Union or in Ethiopia, it is automatically understood that they be “saved” and brought home to Israel. The same of course was the case for the “remnants” of the Shoah in the years during and immediately following World War Two.

[It is important for me to add that what underlies this idea of Zionism—and all other theories of Zionism—is the concept that Jews are a nation/people! In my briefings to Christian groups who come to Israel over many years, it is shocking to me how this comes as a surprise to them. Yes, the Zionist movement—in all of its streams from the beginning until today—understands the Jews as a national movement, as a people, which originated in biblical days and somehow miraculously survived for all of its history. To be a Jew, according to all versions of Zionism, is to be a member of the Jewish People. This is its revolutionary message to the Jewish World, one that most Jews have accepted in theory, but not always in practice. One can express one’s Jewishness nationally, culturally, or religiously, but at the base of one’s Jewish identity is the notion of belonging to an ancient people that has always maintained a very strong attachment to its ancient homeland.

[Theodore Herzl was not the only Zionist thinker at the end of the 19th century to propose radical new ideas for the Jewish People. There were many of them. One of them was a man originally named Asher Ginsberg, who took the name Ahad Ha’am (“One of the People”). He and his followers argued strongly with Herzl and his followers in the early years of the Zionist movement in Europe. In contrast to Herzl, he felt that the main problem facing the Jews—certainly those in Western Europe, as opposed to those in Eastern Europe—was assimilation, not anti-Semitism. In the West, the Jews were not persecuted or oppressed. In places like Germany, France, and Britain, they were welcomed as full citizens for the first time in Jewish history. So, many of them preferred to be Frenchman or Englishmen or Germans of the Jewish heritage. Many of them abandoned Jewish religion for the newer ideas of the Enlightenment—Science, Democracy, Rationality, Progress.

[Ahad Ha’am argued that the only place where Jews would live out a full Jewish national culture would be in their own homeland. In Israel, they would revive the Jewish language of Hebrew and with it Hebrew literature, art, music, and dance, all major elements of a thriving national culture. Only in Israel would Jews study the Bible as their national history. Only in the land of Israel would they feel a natural connection to the land and to every place in it as part of their own national heritage.

[In contrast to Herzl, Ahad Ha’am further argued that the goal of returning to Israel was not “normalization.” Rather, Israel must be a unique Jewish society, living up to the ideals of the biblical prophets of Israel by setting up an ethical and just society that cares for the minorities within its midst.

[Whether one subscribed to the political Zionism of Herzl or to the cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha’am, there was a definite sense that there was no future for the Jewish People outside of its homeland, the Land of Israel.

[In addition, there was a minority point of view in the early years of the Zionist Movement in Europe at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century that was called “Religious Zionism.” In contrast to political and cultural Zionism, religious Zionists did not think that the Jewish religion was a thing of the past. On the contrary, they argued that genuine Judaism is an authentic combination of religion and nationality. Indeed, they said that the Jews are both a religion and a people, and have always combined both sides of their identity. Attempts of assimilated Jews of one stripe or another to separate the Jewish Nation from the Jewish Religion are inauthentic, they argued, and this dichotomy could not hold water over time.

[Religious Zionism has grown and developed in Israel since the founding of the state in 1948 and especially in the past forty-two years since the Six-Day War of 1967. Not only Orthodox Jews are “religious Zionists” today, but so are Reform and Conservative and Reconstructionist Jews, who have all joined the Zionist Movement since 1967 and who all have major institutions in Israel to this day. In other words, there has been a general trend to combine the religious and national parts of our identity as Jews among all Jewish religious groups (except for the ultra-orthodox groups, which are another story or the ultra-secular, who hardly exist anymore) in contemporary Israel.

[3.—*Zionism and Jewish Identity Today in Israel*

[Without going into more Jewish history, the question now arises as to the nature of Zionism and Jewish identity in Israel today. This is a complicated contemporary issue, which I cannot tackle comprehensively in this short reflection, but I will present my own analysis and perspective in a short and succinct manner.

[First of all, it is important to state, that Israel has changed greatly during the years since the state was founded in 1948. New waves of aliyah (Jewish immigration to Israel) have helped Israel grow from a population of 600,000 people to a population of 7.5 million people today, 80 percent of whom are Jewish. With time, the idealism and socialism of the pioneering decades in the pre-state era and in the early years of the state, has dissipated greatly. Contemporary Western culture—for good and for bad—has inhibited greatly the ability of nonreligious Jewish culture to compete in the free market of ideas and trends, especially for the younger generation. And, many decades of wars and “intifadas”—including a great deal of terrorism, especially suicide bombers—have pushed the mainstream Jewish population to the right, with the feeling that the world is still out to get us via terrorism and wars that threaten to destroy the Jewish state, not to mention the possibility of a nuclear Iran that promises every day to wipe Israel off the map of the nations of the world.

[In other words, the right has take over the center in Israeli political and cultural life. Perhaps the greatest irony is despite our great military and technological power, we still live with a Holocaust consciousness which reminds us that major elements in the world still seek our destruction. In this sense, we are not yet entirely free, even though we live in a land of freedom, in our own national home.

[This brings me to the title of this reflection, i.e. the idea of a humanistic liberal understanding of Zionism. Is such a position still tenable in contemporary Israel?

[My answer, of course, is yes. Let me explain.

[Israel's founding document is our Declaration of Independence, published on May 14, 1948. It is an inspirational statement of the ideals on which this state and society are based. I quote below just a few paragraphs to give the reader some idea of the vision of what kind of state we are supposed to have here in Israel, according to our founding generation:

[THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

[THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

[WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

[WE APPEAL—in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months—to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

[WE EXTEND our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

[In many ways, all that is called for is a return to these basic values enshrined in our declaration of independence! Indeed, a Jewish organization of which I am a member, Rabbis for Human Rights, has written a new commentary on the Declaration of Independence to remind all Israeli citizens of the basic values upon which this state rests.¹¹⁷

[But life is not so simple. We cannot simply go back to 1948! Too many wars and too much violence have occurred since then. And, with them, the development of two very different national narratives—the Israeli Jewish one and the Palestinian Arab one. Sometimes I think that the only things they have in common are the dates!

[For a long time, both sides denied the existence of the other. Until the Oslo accords in 1993, both sides did not officially recognize the existence of the other. The state of Israel refused to recognize the existence of a collective entity in the world now known as the Palestinian people; and the Palestinians refused to recognize the state of Israel as a legitimate state and referred to it as “the Zionist entity.”

[Ever since the mutual recognition of the Oslo Accords, we now recognize the Palestinians and they now recognize us. At least in principle! The Jewish state now recognizes the existence of the Palestinian People and their rights to self-determination, i.e. a state. And the Palestinians recognize the state of Israel and its right to secure and recognize boundaries. In this sense, the Oslo Accords signed on the White House lawn in Washington, D.C., on September 13, 1993, represent a sea change in the whole Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

[Yet, peace has eluded us for the past sixteen years, since the signing of these accords. Instead, we have been witness to terror and counterterror, the Second Lebanese War in summer 2006, rockets shot from Gaza at our communities in the south, and Israeli military operations in Gaza last year.

[Naturally, people on both sides have begun to despair of the possibility of peace in our region. Instead of normalization, we have separation. Instead of negotiations, we have walls and fences.

[My answer to this—and the answer shared by many of my colleagues in Israel—is not to give up! We must resist despair with all of our strength and resources. Even if we cannot solve all of the political problems at once, we must persevere via dialogue wherever possible.

[4.—*Towards the Future*

[My father, Rabbi Leon Kronish, of blessed memory, always used to respond to the simple question “how are you?” with a typically Jewish/Israeli answer: “*Yehiyeh tov*” —“it will be good.” The future will be better than the past.

[He believed deeply in Israel’s mission as the fulfillment of messianic redemption. And so do I. I inherited this legacy, this optimism, from him.

[And therefore I say that despite the current difficulties and obstacles in the political peace process—and there are many of them—I believe that the process will work itself out, and there will be a political solution, sooner or later, between Israel and the Palestinians (and all the Arab states).

[There will be a two-state solution: Israel and Palestine, side by side. This is the new unfolding reality coming about, albeit much too slowly and painfully.

[And then what? Will we be prepared for the next steps? What will be needed in the future?

[What will be needed is what I like to call “the other peace process” the educational, religious, and spiritual one, to supplement the political one.

[There will be a desperate need for a massive religious, spiritual, educational, and psychological campaign to change the hearts and minds of the people on both sides, a serious and systematic set of programs that will educate the next generations about the existential needs to learn to live together.

[This will not be quick, nor will it be easy. But it will soon become the educational imperative of the new era.

[We will have no choice but to bring people together in large numbers to learn to live in peace:

[Rabbis, imams, priests and ministers, as the grass-roots community leaders,

[Teachers, educators, headmasters, assistant principals, curriculum writers,

[Youth movement leaders, informal educators, in a wide variety of settings, such as community centers, camps, and seminar centers,

[Women from all parts of the Palestinian and Jewish societies—professionals as well as laypersons, educators and activists, housewives and mothers, community leaders and laypersons.

[I believe that those of us currently engaged in interreligious dialogue and education in Israel and Palestine will have a major role to play in this people to people peace process for a long time to come. And, religious leaders and their followers from abroad—Jewish, Christian, and Muslim—will be called upon to help.

[This will be a time not to divest of the possibilities of peace but to invest in peace building programs in Israel and Palestine, and across borders, for the sake of all of God’s children in the region.

[B.—*A Plea for Justice: A Historical Analysis*

[This study piece was written by two members of the Middle East Study Committee, Nahida H. Gordon and Frederic W. Bush. Nahida Gordon is a professor of Statistics at Case Western Reserve University where she has long been involved in teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in mathematics and statistics. She has had a lifelong interest in the Middle East, particularly in Palestine where she has served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar. She subsequently received a Fulbright Alumni Initiatives Award grant to continue collaborations with researchers at Birzeit University. Frederic Bush served for thirty five years as professor of Ancient Near Eastern Studies and Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary. During that time, he spent a full year’s sabbatical in Israel/Palestine studying the physical and historical geography of Palestine, after which, for some ten years, he led or directed a summer program in which he took students to Israel to study biblical Hebrew, experience Israel and Palestine, and participate in archeological excavations.

[I.—INTRODUCTION

[The 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) called for the formation of a committee to prepare a comprehensive study focused on Palestine/Israel. This historic overview of the conflict was written by two members of the committee, who take sole responsibility for its contents. It was prepared as a study document for the committee.

We drew upon our combined experiences of living in Palestine; frequent visits during the past two decades to the Palestinian Occupied Territories; living in the West Bank as a Senior Fulbright Scholar; ongoing professional collaborations with Palestinian academicians; and serving as a volunteer with the Christian Peacemaker Team in Hebron in the West Bank. Along with other members of the committee, we traveled, conducted many interviews of both Palestinians and Israelis, and discussed among ourselves what we have seen and learned. This is an attempt to understand a complex situation, and we are grateful for the opportunity to present this document.

[One of us has the memory of pre-1948 Palestine as a multicultural society that included refugees from pre-World War II disasters elsewhere. A member of the committee is an Armenian-Palestinian-American, some of whose family survived the Armenian genocide. The Armenians came to Palestine to seek refuge with a wish to live, raise their families, and contribute to the culture of their new home. They embraced the culture, learned the language, shared its cuisine, and most importantly contributed to the rich diversity of Palestinian society. Deep friendships and lasting family connections were common among the newly arrived Armenians and the indigenous Palestinians. Tragically, the Armenian Palestinians were uprooted once more in 1948–1949 during the Nakba, the expulsion of Palestinian Christians and Muslims by the newly arrived Jewish settlers from Europe.

[It is important to note that there always has been a Jewish presence in Palestine before the arrival of these European immigrants. Jewish Palestinians spoke Arabic, lived peacefully on the land with Christian and Muslim Palestinians, shared its cuisine, and enjoyed Palestine as did their Christian and Muslim neighbors. They were part of a multicultural Palestine, without whom Palestine would have lost some of its rich diversity and heritage. Friendships between these Jewish Palestinians and their Christian and Muslim neighbors were common.

[So why did things change? They changed with the mass immigration of Jewish refugees from Europe to Palestine during the first half of the 20th century. These refugees came to Palestine to escape centuries of segregation, expulsion, murder, and the horrors of their holocaust during World War II. They were a traumatized people who, rather than integrating into the existing Palestinian society as the Armenians had done earlier, eventually came to displace the Palestinians. They took the land of Palestine from a majority of its inhabitants at gunpoint. The land dispossession by the state created by these European immigrants continues to the present time to further add to the widely dispersed 1948 Palestinian refugee population. Tragically, the government of these immigrants continues to nurture the belief that security comes only from military might. Not surprisingly, Palestinians responded with violence to their displacement. Violent elements in both the Israeli and Palestinian communities have repeatedly frustrated efforts at reconciliation.

[Western countries, mindful of the Jewish holocaust, and their wish for atonement, contributed to the establishment of Israel and, by their mostly unconditional support, enable the continuing dispossession of Palestinians by successive Israeli governments. The atonement for the suffering of one people has created another suffering and dispossessed people. Through our travels, interviews, study, research, and life experiences, it is the authors' belief that one of the major current obstacle to a just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the ongoing support by Western nations, but especially our own country, of the continuing dispossession of the Palestinians and the violation of their human rights, including the right to political self-determination.

[2 PALESTINE

[2.1 State in Palestine: Who's *Right*?

[After the end of World War I, on January 25, 1919, the League of Nations was created and shortly thereafter on June 22, 1922, it issued the Mandate for Palestine¹¹⁸ ("Mandate") to be administered by Great Britain. The Mandate document begins with the statement that the purpose of the Mandate is to give "effect to the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations." Article 22 concerns territories and communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire, such as Palestine.

[Article 22: To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.¹¹⁹

[Immediately after the restatement of Article 22, the mandate document declares that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting the Balfour Declaration into effect.

[His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.¹²⁰

[Furthermore, six articles (2, 4, 6, 7, 11, and 22) of the Mandate document relate to the obligations of the mandatory power to foster and support this endeavor. In both the Mandate and Balfour Declaration documents, "the Palestinians were never once cited by name, whether as Palestinians or as Arabs, and were referred to only as 'non-Jewish communities,' pos-

sessing solely civil and religious rights; their national and political rights were mentioned in neither. By contrast, national rights were ascribed to the ‘Jewish people,’ and the League of Nations Mandate made it a solemn responsibility of Great Britain to help the Jews create national institutions. The mandatory power was specifically called upon to extend all possible assistance to the growth and development of this national entity, notably by encouraging Jewish immigration.”¹²¹ At this time, the census of Palestine,¹²² showed that Jews constituted 7.90 percent of the population. *The incongruence between the League of Nations charter and the Mandate documents was ignored.*

[Starting soon after the British occupation, Palestinians repeatedly pressed Great Britain to grant them their national rights of self-determination and representative government. They claimed these rights on the basis of the American President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points,¹²³ specifically Point V which states that “A free, open minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the *interests of the populations concerned* must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.”¹²⁴ “Each time they did so, however, they were told that they were obliged to accept the terms of the Mandate as a precondition for any change in their constitutional position. But these terms denied the Palestinians any of these rights, or at best subordinated them completely to the national rights of the Jewish people. Acceptance of the Mandate by the Palestinians would thus have meant their recognition of the privileged national rights of the Jewish community in what they saw as their own country, and formal acceptance of their own legally subordinate position, indeed of their nonexistence as a people. This was something that the Palestinians felt they could not do without denying their own rights, their own national narrative, and the evidence of their own eyes, which told them that Palestine was an Arab country and belonged to them, and to them alone.”¹²⁵

[Even though Great Britain was a member state of the League of Nations it disregarded the clear contradictions between Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and Point V of Woodrow Wilson’s fourteen points with the Balfour declaration. Therefore rather than being a liberator, Great Britain became a conqueror as it disposed of Palestine according to its wishes thus ignoring the human rights of the Palestinian people, the large majority of whom were Muslim or Christian. A more detailed census conducted in 1922 by the British shows that the population consisted of 589,177 (78.34 percent) Muslims, 83,790 (11.14 percent) Jews, 71,464 (9.50 percent) Christians, and 7,617 (1.01 percent) Others. The British government facilitated the mass immigration of Jews into Palestine, thus altering its ethnic composition. By 1946 there were 608,225 (32.96 percent) Jews and 1,237,334 (67.04 percent)¹²⁶ Muslims and Christians; thus in spite of the mass immigration, Jews constituted a minority population, albeit larger than before.

[Palestinians objected to the Balfour Declaration and in the 1936 to 1939 uprising (which can be characterized as the first Intifada) against the occupation¹²⁷; Palestinians also objected to the mass immigration of Jews into Palestine. Violence between the British, Jews, and Palestinians continued until the end of the British Mandate on May 14, 1948. The partition of Palestine was proposed as a possible solution to the conflict.

[Many years of lobbying by prominent Jewish citizens of the United States and months of cajoling and threats by United States officials in the Truman Administration¹²⁸ preceded the United Nations General Assembly vote on partition. Therefore, Great Britain, in issuing and enforcing the Balfour Declaration, violated Article 22 of the League of Nations, point V of Woodrow Wilson’s League of Nations fourteen points, and the United States in imposing¹²⁹ its will on the UN General Assembly to recommend the partition of Palestine both violated the United Nations Charter, articles 1 (paragraph 2), 55 and 73¹³⁰, and the General Assembly’s Declaration on the Principles of International Law concerning the Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States thus infringing on the Palestinians’ human right of self-determination¹³¹. “This right provides all peoples, including the Palestinian people, the right to determine their own future. It is a right that Israelis [because of their minority status] did not enjoy in the Palestinian territory when they unilaterally declared their state in violation of Palestinians’ right to self-determination. The Palestinians’ right to self-determination preexisted any effort by Israel to occupy Palestinian lands. It is a right that all Palestinians are entitled to exercise according to international law from the very beginning of the British mandate in 1922. It is thus a right that is enjoyed over all of mandate Palestine.”¹³² The occupation of Palestine began in 1922 by the British and continued in May 14, 1948, to the present time by Israel when unilaterally, it declared itself a state. Subsequently, Israel was recognized as a state and is a member of the United Nations. Palestine is yet to be recognized by the United Nations.

[2.2 Partition

[On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 181) voted to *recommend* partition¹³³ of Palestine into two states, one Jewish and the other Palestinian. [See Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, Figure 1, p. 1126.] The territories designated to the Jewish and Palestinian states would be 56 percent and 43 percent of Palestine, respectively. Jerusalem and Bethlehem were to become an international zone¹³⁴. Approximately 407,000 or 45 percent of the population in the Jewish part was comprised of Muslims and Christians and 1 percent of the Palestinian part was comprised of Jews. At the end of 1946, Jews, most of whom were immigrants from Europe, had acquired by purchase 6 to 8 percent of the total land area of Palestine and comprised approximately one third of its population. The Palestinians who in a short span of three decades saw the ethnic composition of Palestine change dramatically due to the British facilitation of immigration of Jews into Palestine objected to the partition plan. Between November 19, 1947, and May 14, 1948, both sides

engaged in violence. The Israelis were better trained and equipped than the Palestinians. It is estimated that 442,000 Palestinians were expelled from Palestine and became refugees either in the West Bank, Gaza, and the surrounding Arab countries principally Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and to a lesser extent Egypt. It is also estimated that 225 villages were depopulated and/or destroyed.¹³⁵ The Israelis called it the war of independence and the Palestinians called it the Nakba (the catastrophe). The Israelis say that the Palestinians left of their own free will¹³⁶ urged on by their leaders while the Palestinians say that they were terrorized into leaving thinking that they will be able to return to their homes once the violence abated. Most historians¹³⁷ now agree that the expulsion of the Palestinians occurred against their free will and an Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé¹³⁸, uses the term “ethnic cleansing” to characterize what happened to the Palestinians.

[It was only after May 14, 1948, that Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt sent a portion of their armed forces into Palestine to protect the Palestinian populace. They were no match for the better trained and equipped Israeli forces. By July 20, 1949, armistice agreements¹³⁹ with these four countries and Israel were signed. By the end of this war, Israel had gained more territory and was in control of 78 percent of Palestine. Also at this time it is estimated that more than 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes and more than 500 villages were depopulated or destroyed.¹⁴⁰

[2.3 The 1967 War

[In June 1967, Israel attacked Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. At the end of six days, Israel had taken the Gaza strip and the Sinai from Egypt, East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan from Syria. The United Nations Security Council passed resolution 242¹⁴¹ that requested the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war and emphasized the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area could live in security. By 1979, the Sinai was returned to Egypt and a peace treaty was signed between Egypt and Israel. In 1994 Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty. At this time, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza strip are under total Israeli control.

[3. REFUGEES

[3.1 Right of Return

[The right of return of refugees to their countries of origin is a customary right and has origins from several sources. First, in Leviticus, Chapter 25, the “Year of Jubilee” is defined as occurring every fifty years. Leviticus, Chapter 25, verse 13 is a commandment from God: “In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property.”¹⁴² Thus, using God’s commandment, then after sixty two years, the Palestinian refugees certainly have the right to return.

[Second, on December 10, 1948, the General Assembly (GA) of the United Nations (UN) adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Articles 9, 13, and 15 address the *individual’s* right of return:

[Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

[Article 13: (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

[Article 15: (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.¹⁴³

[Third, on December 11, 1948, the UN GA passed Resolution 194(III) concerning the progress report of the United Nations Mediator for Palestine. Article 11 of Resolution 194(III) specifically addresses the issue of the right of return of refugees:

[11. *Resolves* that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible;

[Instructs the Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation, and to maintain close relations with the Director of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees and, through him, with the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations;¹⁴⁴

[Fourth, on December 16, 1966, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.¹⁴⁵ Article 12 section 4 states that “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.”

[Clearly, then, the Right of Return of refugees is granted under accepted practices and is firmly anchored in international law. The Israeli point of view as expressed by Dr. Eyal Benvenisti, professor at the Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law, is that international law stipulates that the demand of Palestinian refugees to return must be negotiated by governments, and not be resolved in the courts of law. He claims that “... in Resolution 194 there is no recognition of the refugees’ right of return. Indeed, since the 1990s, the Palestinians have been claiming that the resolution recognizes the right of return, but their claim is baseless. On the contrary, the resolution denies the refugees’ right to return to their homes. Moreover, the resolution set as

a goal for the UN the solution of the problem of the refugees by means of resettling them in Arab countries. The formulation that was passed was amenable to convenient interpretation from Israel's perspective, because it left in its hands the judgment as to whether, when and how many refugees it would accept into its territory."¹⁴⁶

[Clearly, this Israeli view is in direct contradiction to statements of international law and UN resolutions. The Palestinian view differs markedly. Salman Abu Sitta, a researcher on the land and people of Palestine and the founder and president of Palestine Land Society, London, is the author of *The Atlas of Palestine 1948* and a member of the Palestine National Council and general coordinator of the Right of Return Congress. Salman Abu Sitta claims:

[One of the most important lessons we have learned from the 60-year Palestinian-Israeli conflict is that the essence of the struggle has not changed: It is the expulsion of the people of Palestine from their homes and the confiscation of their land. Since then the Palestinian refugees have been dispersed all over the world, many of them living in deplorable conditions in exile, others suffering under occupation or virtual siege, harassed by friend and foe alike. The implementation of their inalienable rights is the key to a permanent peace. All else, including a Palestinian state, so-called regional cooperation or other contrived devices to obscure this fundamental issue, is peripheral. In addition, the misrepresentation of the Right of Return by Israel and its defenders, the United States in particular, is driven more by fear about, rather than interest in, their rights. However, the refugees issue is still the main problem to contend with and is imposing itself on every agenda of negotiating the question of Palestine.¹⁴⁷

[A third view is expressed by Alain Epp Weaver, the country representative for the Mennonite Central Committee in the occupied Palestinian territories.

[The energized debate over the right of return is a welcome development. More than any other issue, the right of return cuts to the core of the conflict: if justice, peace and reconciliation are to be achieved in Palestine/Israel, the refugee issue must be tackled head on, not swept under the diplomatic rug. The return of refugees need not mean a new exodus of Israeli Jews. The desire to maintain a Jewish demographic majority at the expense of refugee rights is not only morally problematic; it's a losing battle. Researchers suggest that within 50 years, Palestinians inside the Green Line will equal the number of Jews, while Palestinians and Jews will reach demographic parity in the land of Mandate Palestine within the next 15 to 20 years. This demographic reality, apart from moral considerations, suggests that the ultimate future in Palestine/Israel will lead toward integration, not separation.¹⁴⁸

[A fourth view is expressed by John Quigley, professor of Law at The Ohio State University, in his article "Displaced Palestinians and a Right of Return."¹⁴⁹ He methodically examines all international laws and argues for or against the right of return depending upon whether the refugees were expelled by Israel or whether they left of their own accord. His conclusion is that they have the right of return irrespective of the reasons for fleeing their homes in Palestine and stresses that

[...if the final status negotiations are to produce a settlement that enjoys the respect of the parties, and of the people who make up their constituencies, the issue of the displaced Palestinians must be resolved in a way that satisfies legitimate expectations. The parties would do well to recall the 1948 advice quoted above of the U.N. mediator, Count Bernadotte, who did not question Israel's existence as a state but who thought, nonetheless, that "it would be an offence against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes."¹⁵⁰

[While pursuing his official duties as UN mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte was assassinated in Jerusalem on September 17, 1948, by the militant Zionist group, Lehi (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel) to protest his diplomatic efforts to modify the Palestine partition plan. "Yitzhak Shamir reputedly played a role in planning the assassination; however, he was never tried and went on to become Prime Minister of Israel."¹⁵¹

[A Palestinian artist's view of the issue of right of return is depicted by the work of sculptor, Ahmad Canaan, in the *Negev*: two crosses in a common grave. [See Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, Figure 2, p. 1126.] When the wind blows, the crosses move and the key, the Palestinian symbol of the Right of Return, hanging between them moves up and down. This work suggests that the Palestinians and Israelis share a common fate and the right of return is an issue between them.

[Finally, the Israelis themselves claim the right of return after 3,000 years to the land granted to them by God. The Israeli "narrative" claims that they are *uniquely* the descendants of the Jews from Palestine. Scientific inquiry into this claim is complex with varying opinions on the amount of admixture of Jews from Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East with gentile ancestors. Some research appears to indicate that they, along with the present day Palestinians of Christian and Muslim faiths, all share very similar genetic associations and represent the descendants of people of Palestine from 2,500 to 3,000 years ago.¹⁵² Other research supports the contention that there is more admixture with European gentile populations, particularly among the Ashkenazi Jews.¹⁵³ Clearly to state that present day Israelis are returning after two or three millennia to their ancestral home in Palestine and that they *uniquely* are the descendants of the Jews of Palestine is not supported by scientific evidence.

[Another point of view that the Israeli government presents is that "This war [1967] resulted in the movement of more than 590,000 Jewish refugees from Arab lands to Israel, and of a similar number of Palestinian Arabs from Israel to Arab-controlled Gaza and the 'West Bank,' Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, where the majority became residents of refugee camps."¹⁵⁴ (See the differing United Nations Relief and Works Agency's [UNRWA] estimates of refugee numbers, below.) Some claim that Jews in Arab countries were actively encouraged by the Zionist movement to move to Israel so that Israel would increase its Jewish population. The Palestinians' refugee rights are affirmed by general world practices, international and human rights laws, and UN resolutions. Furthermore Palestinians were not responsible for the emigration of Jews from Arab countries into Israel and their right of return cannot be negated by the rights of another group of refugees. By the same standards which

apply to the Palestinian refugees, Jewish refugees from Arab countries should have the right to return to their home countries or to have compensation for any lost properties. The Right of Return is an “individual” right and no country has the right to make decisions for these individuals. The idea of a swap of refugees benefits the Israeli government and does not necessarily benefit individual Jewish refugees and certainly not the Palestinian refugees who wish to return to their homes and lands.

[3.2 Palestinian Diaspora

[Obtaining accurate estimates of the worldwide numbers of Palestinians is difficult; however estimates exist. The Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics has periodically published such estimates. The table below provides estimates as of the end of the year 2007.]

[Estimated Number of Palestinians in the World by Country of Residence 31/12/2007

Country	Number	Percent
Palestinian Territory	3,770,606	36.5
Israel	1,184,466	11.5
Jordan	3,102,463	30.0
Other Arab Countries	1,690,709	16.3
Other Foreign Countries	593,580	5.7
Total	10,341,824	100

Source: PCBS, 2008, Palestinians Projection in the world, preliminary Projection.¹⁵⁵

[Of these 10.3 million Palestinians, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency’s (UNRWA) estimates that 4.7 million are registered refugees. The definition of a registered refugee is a person “whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab Israeli conflict. To be eligible for UNRWA’s services a refugee must be registered.”¹⁵⁶ The UNRWA estimates that it responded to the needs of approximately 750,000 refugees when it began operation in 1950. Furthermore, after the 1967 war, UNRWA estimates that another 140,000 persons became refugees in Jordan and an additional 240,000 citizens of the West Bank were “displaced persons.”

[The table¹⁵⁷ below provides some basic statistics about UNRWA’s base of operations, the numbers of camps, refugees registered in camps and refugees not living in camps.]

[Field of Operations	Official Camps	Registered Refugees	Registered Refugees
Jordan	10	337,571	1,951,603
Lebanon	12	222,776	422,188
Syria	9	125,009	461,897
West Bank	19	193,370	762,820
Gaza Strip	8	495,006	1,073,303
Agency total	58	1,373,732	4,671,811

[The UNRWA maintains and administers camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic, and the occupied Palestinian Territories. “Socio-economic conditions in the camps are generally poor with a high population density, cramped living conditions and inadequate basic infrastructure such as roads and sewers. Conditions differ among the host countries.”¹⁵⁸

[In Jordan, Palestinian refugees have full Jordanian citizenship; however in Lebanon “they do not have social and civil rights, and have very limited access to the government’s public health or educational facilities and no access to public social services. ... Considered as foreigners, Palestinian refugees are prohibited by law from working in more than 70 trades and professions and thus have a very high rate of unemployment. ... In Syria, Palestinian refugees have access to government services such as government run schools, universities, and hospitals. UNRWA’s services complement those of the Syrian Government.”¹⁵⁹

[In the West Bank, “camp residents have been hard hit by closures imposed on the West Bank by the Israeli authorities, since they are largely dependent on income from work inside Israel. Subsequently, unemployment has risen and socioeconomic conditions in the camps have deteriorated. The West Bank camps are active social units. Camp residents run their own activities and camp committees in each camp are regarded as an official body representing the camp population. The Agency

runs elementary and preparatory schools. However, the main problem facing UNRWA's education program in the West Bank is overcrowding with an average of 50 pupils per classroom."¹⁶⁰

[In Gaza, "over three quarters of the current estimated population of some 1.5 million are registered refugees; representing 22.42 per cent of all UNRWA registered Palestine refugees. The refugee camps in the Gaza Strip have one of the highest population densities in the world."¹⁶¹

[4 FAILED PEACE PROCESS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

[The Oslo Accords or the Declaration of Principles (DoP) document was signed September 13, 1993. Briefly, this document outlines the procedure for a "peace process" between Israel and the Palestinian people. It called for the creation of a Palestinian interim self-government authority and an elected council for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The document further claims that "the two sides view the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved during the interim period." This interim government was for a transitional period of not more than five years leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Security Council Resolution 242 called for Israel to withdraw to its 1949 Armistice lines (i.e., what is now referred to as the 1967 borders, or the "green line"), the right of every state in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force, and achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem.¹⁶² Resolution 338 signed October 22, 1973, shortly after the 1973 war between Israel and Egypt, calls upon all parties to cease fire and terminate military activity, and further calls upon all parties to begin the immediate implementation of Security Council Resolution 242.¹⁶³

[Initial reaction of the Palestinian people to the DoP was enthusiasm and hope for the future. This may be best depicted by the Tamam Al Akhal painting. [See Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, Figure 3, p. 1127.] Beginning at the upper lefthand corner, we see depicted the people of Palestine returning home and carrying olive branches. Some are returning in wheelchairs and others are carrying suitcases. Other scenes depict a horse representing the resistance and its white colt representing peace; a woman calling to announce and celebrate the coming peace; people rebuilding their homes; children going to school; children playing; and others picnicking underneath two trees representing the peaceful side by side coexistence of the Israeli (orange tree) and the Palestinian (olive tree with many roots) people.

[Unfortunately, the enthusiasm, optimism, and hope were short lived. Article V, part 3 of the DoP stipulates that further permanent status negotiations shall cover several issues among which are the status of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, and border.¹⁶⁴ These negotiations, which became known as the "peace process," lingered past the five year interim period. A detailed accounting of these negotiations can be found in several publications.¹⁶⁵ In 1998, Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, head of Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) in Jerusalem, commented on the general view of the DoP by Palestinians:

[For most Palestinians, life has worsened since the Oslo Accords and only a few talk about the ongoing negotiations in positive terms. Today, five years after Oslo the hopes for a two-state solution to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and bring about a better life for the generations to come have been replaced by great disillusionment and frustration among Palestinians.¹⁶⁶

[While the interim negotiations were taking place, Israel commenced to build and expand settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Conditions under the present Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza are described below in Section 5. House demolitions, destruction of agricultural land, building of the wall/fence and its concomitant land seizure, restrictions in movement within and between the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem (contrary to the agreement in the DoP), the seizure of Palestinian lands for the building of settlements and bypass roads are all factors contributing to the disillusionment of the Palestinian people with the so-called "peace process."¹⁶⁷ Resolution of these conflicts through the courts yielded very little results. Israeli "state security needs" trumped the law. An example of a revealing and detailed description of the futile legal processes that Palestinians undertook to forestall seizure of their land is the Albina Case described in detail in the book by the attorney, Rajah Shehadeh, who is a co-founder of the Al-Haq Palestinian Human Rights group.¹⁶⁷

[4.1 Violence

[Distressingly, all too often violence is used as a means of reacting to injustice or as a means of inflicting a country's will on another people. Violence, whether by tanks, attack helicopters, F 16 fighter jets, rubber bullets, tear gas canisters, antipersonnel bombs, white phosphorous, rockets, bombs of any kind including suicide bombs, is reprehensible and is a crime against humanity.

[Quantifying human suffering with numbers cannot relay the depth of anguish, feelings of hopelessness, fear of the other whether Palestinian or Israeli, anger, or frustration. Nevertheless, the casualty statistics of violence can demonstrate the lack of parity in power and means of the parties to the conflict to inflict their will on the other.

[4.1.1 Arrests and Kidnapping

[Arrests and kidnappings by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) are common occurrences. According to the Amnesty International 2009 Human Rights Report for Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories:

[Israeli soldiers and settlers who committed serious abuses against Palestinians, including unlawful killings, assaults and attacks against property, enjoyed impunity in most cases. Hundreds of Palestinians were arrested by Israeli forces; reports of torture and other ill-treatment were frequent, but investigations were rare. ... Hundreds of Palestinians, including scores of children, were detained by Israeli forces in the OPT and many were held incommunicado for prolonged periods. Most were later released without charge, but hundreds were charged with security-related offences and tried before military courts, whose procedures often failed to meet international standards for a fair trial. Some 8,000 Palestinians arrested in 2008 or in previous years were still imprisoned at the end of the year. They included some 300 children and 550 people who were held without charge or trial under military administrative detention orders, including some who had been held for up to six years.¹⁶⁸

[The Palestinian Authority conducted hundreds of arrests of individuals known to be connected to groups taking part in suicide bombings.¹⁶⁹ These arrests were of individuals belonging to resistance organizations such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Suspected or known collaborators were arrested and on a few occasions executed by the PA.¹⁷⁰

[4.1.2 Targeted Assassinations

[The PFLP assassinated Rehavam Ze'evi, Israeli Minister of Tourism on October 17, 2001, and said it was in revenge for the assassination of their secretary general, Abu Ali Mustafa, killed by Israel in August 2001.¹⁷¹ According to a CNN report, Rehavam Ze'evi sparked controversy in July 2001 for referring to Palestinians working and living illegally in Israel as "lice" and a "cancer."¹⁷²

[In apposition to this assassination of an Israeli leader is the campaign of targeted assassinations of Palestinian leaders by Israel. Between September 29, 2000, and December 26, 2008, the Israeli government killed 234 Palestinians as targets of assassination and an additional 153 innocent bystanders including children.¹⁷³ These assassinations were of leaders of PLO, Islamic Jihad, Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and Hamas. Furthermore, on March 22, 2004, Israeli forces assassinated Hamas founder and leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin as he was leaving morning prayers at the Omari Mosque in Gaza City. Three missiles were shot at him and his entourage, killing seven bodyguards and other Hamas operatives and wounding fifteen other people. Hundreds of thousands attended Yassin's funeral later that day and throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces erupted. Arab states and Europe condemned the assassination as "unlawful." On April 17, 2004, Israeli forces also assassinated Hamas leader Dr. Abed El-Aziz El-Rantisi along with his driver and a bodyguard.

[According to B'Tselem, these targeted assassinations and others merely served to fuel the cycle of revenge and counter revenge.

[These killings are part of an open policy to assassinate Palestinians suspected of acts of violence against Israelis. Far from being a new phenomenon, Israel has carried out assassinations overseas for over 30 years. Over the course of the previous intifada, Israeli undercover units assassinated "wanted" Palestinians in the Occupied Territories as well. The assassination policy violates the right to life, the most fundamental of all human rights, enshrined in international and Israeli law. There is no legal basis for these killings. Unnamed security personnel make a decision to kill a person, and the decision is carried out with no legal process whatsoever. The assassinations carried out by Israel in recent months are, in essence, extra-judicial executions.¹⁷⁴

[As the statement above claims, Israel has carried out targeted assassinations overseas for more than thirty years. These assassinations were not always against militants who use armed resistance to Israel but also against those who used nonviolent resistance. Consider the case of Ghassan Kanafani, a Palestinian journalist, novelist, and short story writer, who was assassinated along with his young niece, Lamis, on July 12, 1972, by Israeli agents in a car bomb explosion in Beirut. By the time of his early death at the age of 36, he had published eighteen books and written numerous articles on the culture, politics, and the Palestinian people's struggle. His works have been translated into seventeen languages. A collection of short stories about Palestine's children was published in English in 1984 and was titled *Palestine's Children*. Kanafani's untimely death deprived the Palestinians of an eloquent voice.

[An excerpt from his work, "The Curiosity of a Child or the Destiny of a Man" perhaps explains why he was deemed to be dangerous.

[My son, oh future,

[I overheard you yesterday in the other room asking your mother, "Am I Palestinian too?" When she said "yes," a heavy silence engulfed the whole house. It was as if something that was suspended over our heads had fallen, its noise exploding, and then falling silent.

[Afterwards, I could not believe my ears, but my fingers I did believe. I was reading when I felt the book trembling in my hands. No, everything was real to an alarming extent. I heard you cry. ...

[I could not move to see what was happening in the other room. I knew, however, that a distant homeland was being reborn, that some land of meadows, olive groves, dead people, torn and folded banners, was making its way into a future of flesh and blood, to be born in the heart of another child.¹⁷⁵

[4.1.3 Other Deaths: Palestinian Suicide Bombers and Israeli Occupation Forces

[According to records from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs,¹⁷⁶ the first recorded suicide bombing occurred in April 6, 1994. Total deaths recorded due to suicide bombings in Israel for the years 2000 to 2008 are listed as 553 from a total of 147 attacks.¹⁷⁷ According to B'Tselem, during this same period there were 490 Israeli civilians and 90 Israeli occupa-

tion forces killed by Palestinians for a total of 580—a higher total than that reported by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Also during the same period, from September 29, 2000, to December 26, 2008, 4,860 Palestinians were killed (Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Israel) by occupation forces and 47 by Israeli civilians for a total of 4,907. Also during this same period 955 Palestinian minors were killed by Israeli occupation forces and 129 Israeli minors killed by Palestinians.¹⁷⁸ The ratio of all Israeli to Palestinian deaths is 1 to 8.5 and for children it is 1 to 7.4. These numbers are chilling and do not convey the depth of suffering they cause to both peoples.

[4.2 A Way to Transcend Violence

[Yet, some are able to withstand their suffering and reach levels of human love and reconciliation that are indeed humbling. We will relate two such instances. The first is that of Dr. Nurit Peled Elhanan, linguist at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, who is the recipient of the Sakharov Prize 2001 awarded by the European Parliament and the mother of Smadar Elhanan, thirteen years old, who was killed by a suicide bomber in Jerusalem in September 1997. In a speech on International Women's Day at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, August 3, 2005, she said:

[However, I must admit I believe you should have invited a Palestinian woman at my stead, because the women who suffer most from violence in my county are the Palestinian women. And I would like to dedicate my speech to Miriam R'aban and her husband Kamal, from Bet Lahiya in the Gaza strip, whose five small children were killed by Israeli soldiers while picking strawberries at the family's strawberry field. No one will ever stand trial for this murder.

[My little girl was murdered because she was an Israeli by a young man who was humiliated, oppressed and desperate to the point of suicide and murder, just because he was a Palestinian. Now their blood is mixed on the stones of Jerusalem that have long been indifferent to children's blood. We, who were not wise enough to free our children from the grip of hate and racism before they found their final rest, need to look at their mutilated bodies and innocent faces, and ask ourselves, with the poetess Anna Akhmatova, Why does that streak of blood rip the petal of their cheek?¹⁷⁹

[The second instance is that of Ismail Khatib, Ahmed Khatib's father. Ahmed was shot by Israeli soldiers in Jenin in 2005. Ismail Khatib and his wife decided to donate Ahmed's organs. His heart saved the life of a Druze Muslim girl in Israel; a kidney went to a Bedouin child from the southern Negev desert; and other organs to two recipients who choose to remain anonymous. Ahmed's second kidney went to a young Israeli toddler, Menuha Levinson, daughter of an Ultra Orthodox Jewish family in Jerusalem. A movie, *The Heart of Jenin*, has been made by an Israeli-German team about Ismail and Ahmed Khatib's sacrifice. Menuha's father, Yaakov Levinson, remarks shortly after his daughter's lifesaving operation that "he would have preferred a Jewish donor and remarks that he would never allow his children to be friends with Arabs for fear of 'bad influence.'"¹⁸⁰ Two years after the death of his son, Ismail Khatib and his brother are allowed to enter Israel to visit the children who were saved. The climax of the movie is a meeting with the Levinson family. Menuha is well and happy. In an exchange at their Jerusalem home, the Levinsons "apologize for their earlier comments and thank Khatib, but betray a deep misunderstanding about life in the occupied West Bank."¹⁸¹

[It is clear that the lives of Israelis and Palestinians are so intertwined that peace will come only after acknowledgement of the other's trauma thereby opening the way to forgiveness and reconciliation. Both Nurit Peled Elhanan and Ismail Khatib have shown us that forgiveness can occur even after the most painful loss that a parent can experience.

[5 PRESENT DAY OCCUPATION

[5.1 Israel

[5.1.1 Status of Palestinians

[According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics,¹⁸² the population of Israel at the end of 2008 was composed of 5,569,200 ethnic Jews (including those living in settlements in the Occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem), 1,487,600 ethnic Palestinians, and 317,100 of other ethnicities for a total of 7,374,000 individuals. Of the total, 121,900 are listed as Druze, 153,100 as Christian, and 1,240,000 as Muslim. Comparatively little is written about the status of Palestinians, both Christians and Muslims, who live in the State of Israel. To understand the contributory factors to this demographic composition of the people of Israel, it is necessary to consider several historic factors in the development of the state.

[In 1950, Israel passed the "The Absentee Property Law." This law divided all the Palestinians who had lived in what had become the State of Israel into two categories: the "absentees" and the "present." The vast majority of the "absentees" consisted of the 750,000 to 800,000 Palestinians who were expelled from what became Israel. Using Israeli statements and publications, Don Peretz (professor emeritus of Political Science at the State University of New York at Binghamton), in his Ph.D. thesis claimed:

[Abandoned property was one of the greatest contributions toward making Israel a viable state. The extent of its area and the fact that most of the regions along the border were absentee property made it strategically significant. Of the 370 new Jewish Settlements established between 1948 and the beginning of 1953, 350 were on absentee property. In 1954, more than one-third of Israel's Jewish population lived on absentee property, and nearly a third of the new immigrants (250,000 people) settled in urban areas abandoned by Arabs. They left whole cities like Jaffa, Acre, Lydda, Ramle, Beisan, Majdal; 388 towns and villages;¹⁸³ and large parts of 94 other cities and towns, containing nearly a quarter of all the building in Israel. 10,000 shops, businesses and stores were left in Jewish hands. At the end of the Mandate, citrus holdings in the area of Israel totaled about 240,000 dunums of which half were Arab owned. Most of the Arab groves were taken by the Israeli Custodian of Absentee Property. But only 34,000 dunums were cultivated by

the end of 1953. In 1951–52, former Arab groves produced one and a quarter of a million boxes of fruit, of which 400,000 were exported. Arab fruit sent abroad provided nearly 10 per cent of the country's foreign-currency earnings from exports in 1951. In 1949, the olive produce from abandoned Arab groves was Israel's third largest export ranking after citrus and diamonds. The relative economic importance of Arab property was largest from 1948 until 1953 during the period of greatest immigration and need.¹⁸⁴

[A *dunum* is 1,000 square meters. "In 1951, abandoned cultivable land included nearly 95 per cent of all Israel's olive groves, 40,000 *dunums* of vineyards, and at least 10,000 *dunums* of other orchards excluding citrus. 20,000 *dunums* of absentee property were leased by the Custodian in 1952 for individual industrial purposes. A third of Israel's stone production was supplied by 52 Arab quarries under his [Custodian] jurisdiction."¹⁸⁵

[It is estimated that between 220,000 and 250,000 Palestinians referred to as the "Present Absentees" and originating from sixty displaced communities inside Israel were dispossessed by the Israeli army in 1948–1949 and were not allowed to return to their homes.¹⁸⁶ These internally displaced had their property and homes taken by the state. Most were forced to leave their villages under military orders during the 1948–49 war; moreover evictions continued after the war.

[When the Israeli authorities realized how many of these displaced persons there were, the Israeli historian, Tom Segev, explains that the state changed the definition of the Absentee Property Law so that

[the law was changed to embrace all who had abandoned their "usual place of residence." A few thousand of these owners were actually living in Israel, yet the law defined them as absentees, even if they had only left their homes for a few days and stayed with relatives in a nearby village or town, waiting for the fighting to end.¹⁸⁷

[According to Adalah, an Israeli registered independent human rights organization, the Israeli government has maintained an aggressive policy of land seizure, adversely affecting Palestinian land and housing rights. For example, the National Planning and Building Law (1965) retroactively re-zoned the lands on which many Arab villages sit as "non residential." The consequence of this is that despite the existence of these villages prior to the establishment of the state, they have been afforded no official status. These "unrecognized Arab villages" receive no government services, and residents are denied the ability to build homes and other public buildings. The authorities use a combination of house demolitions, land confiscation, denial of basic services, and restrictions on infrastructure development to dislodge residents from these villages. The situation is severely acute for the Arab Bedouin community living in these unrecognized villages in the Naqab.¹⁸⁸

[Palestinians who remained in Israel, but were driven from their villages became "internally displaced persons." Indeed, rather than allowing these displaced Palestinians to return to their lands and villages, the Israeli government declared them to be "present absentees" under the Absentee Property Law and proceeded to confiscate their lands.¹⁸⁹

[Rana Bishara, an installation artist who lives in Northern Israel, created a work that depicts a leaf of the cactus plant, called "saber" in Arabic. [See Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, Figure 4, p. 1127.] The artist took a saber leaf and dipped the lower part in chocolate. Rana Bishara is telling us that "Palestine is sweet but it is difficult to enjoy it." "Saber" also means patience in Arabic. The Saber plant is easy to destroy with a bulldozer but its roots are tenacious in their hold on the land. This plant is often used as a fence between homes and its fruit is delicious. When Israel destroyed entire villages with bulldozers, the saber came back and grew showing the fence lines of houses of the village. Another interpretation of this work is that Palestinians in their hospitality and warmth may seem sweet and gentle but they are tenacious and difficult to eradicate. The Saber plant is also a symbol of "sumud"—the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in refusing to be denied their land, identity, and culture.

[5.1.2 Political Status

[Israeli citizens of Palestinian ethnic origin enjoy the rights of citizenship however with some reservations as explained more fully below. They enjoy the privilege of voting and have elected representatives to the Israeli Knesset. According to the U.S. Department of State Human Rights Report for 2008,¹⁹⁰ the 120 member Knesset included ten ethnic Palestinians and two Druze. The twenty nine member cabinet included two women, one Druze, and one Arab-Israeli Muslim. An Arab Christian was on the High Court, but no Muslim or Druze citizens have served. Of note is that even though ethnic Palestinians constitute 20 percent of the population of Israel, they have only 8.3 percent representation in the Knesset.

[5.1.3 Economic Status

[According to Adalah, economic discrimination exists at many levels through governmental practices. "The discretionary powers entrusted to various government ministries and institutions—including budget policies, the allocation of resources, and the implementation of laws—results in significant *de facto* discrimination between Jewish and Palestinian citizens. For example, a report issued by the [Israeli] Ministry of Interior confirmed that Arab municipalities received a fraction of the total funds allocated by the national government per resident to Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories and to development towns populated exclusively by Jews. Moreover, the Ministry of Religious Affairs affords a small percentage of its budget to the Arab Muslim, Christian, and Druze religious communities. Funds for special projects such as the renewal and development of neighborhoods and improvements in educational programs, services, and facilities are also disproportio-

nately allocated to Jewish communities. To date, Israeli authorities have rarely used their discretionary powers to benefit the Palestinians minority.”¹⁹¹

[5.1.4 Human Rights

[According to the U. S. State Department 2008 report on Human Rights, the government of Israel generally respected the human rights of its citizens; however problems in some areas were evident. “Institutional, legal, and societal discrimination against Arabs, non Orthodox Jews, and other religious groups continued, as did societal discrimination against persons with disabilities. Women suffered societal discrimination and domestic violence. The government maintained unequal educational systems for Arab and Jewish students. Trafficking in and abuse of women and foreign workers remained a problem, as did societal discrimination against persons with disabilities.”¹⁹²

[5.1.5 Education

[Israel maintains two separate school systems, one for the Jewish majority and the other for the Palestinian minority children. Israeli citizens of Palestinian origin attend the minority school system that is “a world apart in quality from the public schools serving Israel’s majority Jewish population. Often overcrowded and understaffed, poorly built, badly maintained, or simply unavailable, schools for Palestinian Arab children offer fewer facilities and educational opportunities than are offered other Israeli children.”¹⁹³

[Human Rights Watch claims that the Education Ministry authorities have acknowledged that the ministry spends less per student in the Arab system than in the Jewish school system and claims that “the Israeli government has offered various other explanations for the gaps between Jewish and Palestinian Arab students’ performance. These include poverty and cultural attitudes, especially regarding girls. Human Rights Watch found that in light of clear examples of state discrimination, neither poverty nor cultural attitudes adequately explained the existing gap. Indeed, in many instances, the data run directly contrary to the claim that these factors, and not discrimination, are at the root of the problem.”¹⁹⁴

[Human Rights Watch further notes that the right to education is universally recognized under international law and must be enjoyed without discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property, or birth. The Convention against Discrimination in Education, to which ninety countries are parties and which Israel ratified in 1961, requires that if Israel maintains separate systems for Jews and Palestinian Arabs, the two systems must provide the same standard of education in equivalent conditions.

[Finally and of particular note, is the claim Ismael Abu Saad, professor of Education at Ben Gurion University of the Negev puts forth that “the Arab curriculum is designed to ‘de educate,’ or dispossess, indigenous Palestinians pupils of the knowledge of their own people and history.”¹⁹⁵

[5.1.6 Discrimination Against Non Jewish Ethnic Minorities

[Other factors leading to discrimination are evident in Israel. Adalah identified more than twenty laws that discriminate against the ethnic Palestinian minority in Israel.¹⁹⁶ Examples are the “Law of Return (1950) and the Citizenship Law (1952), which allow Jews to freely immigrate to Israel and gain citizenship, but exclude Arabs who were forced to flee their homes in 1947–48 and 1967. Israeli law also confers special quasi governmental standing on the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund and other Zionist bodies, which by their own charters cater only to Jews. Various other laws such as The Chief Rabbinate of Israel Law (1980), The Flag and Emblem Law (1949), and The State Education Law (1953) and its 2000 amendment give recognition to Jewish educational, religious, and cultural practices and institutions, and define their aims and objectives strictly in Jewish terms.” According to the U.S. State Department 2009 International Religious Freedom Report,¹⁹⁷ the Basic Law describes Israel as a “Jewish and democratic state” and that government policy continued to support the generally free practice of religion, although governmental and legal discrimination against non Jews and non Orthodox streams of Judaism continued. As of the end of 2008, of 137 designated “holy sites” given protection by the Israeli government under the Protection of Holy Sites Law, all were Jewish. “[M]any Muslim and Christian sites are neglected, inaccessible, or threatened by property developers and municipalities.”¹⁹⁸

[5.2 The West Bank

[5.2.1 The Occupation as a Matrix of Separation in the West Bank.

[In a number of articles over the years, Israeli professor Jeff Halper has described the occupation as a “matrix of control.”¹⁹⁹ However, what Halper called “a matrix of control,”²⁰⁰ has now become a “matrix of separation.”²⁰¹ The separation principle was first enunciated publicly in Ehud Barak’s slogan, “Us here, them there” during his 1999 campaign for prime minister of Israel,²⁰² and it has been the policy of every Israeli government since.²⁰³ The “matrix of separation” has many facets and dimensions, each of which has had a drastically negative impact upon every aspect of Palestinian life.

[5.2.2 Land Seizure

[In an interview with Ma'ale Edumim architect, Thomas M. Leitersdorf described the strategy to “capture ground” in the West Bank: “you capture as much areas as possible by placing few people on numerous hills. The underlying political idea was that the further inside the Occupied Territories we placed settlers, the more territory Israel would have when the time came to set the permanent international borders.”²⁰⁴

[5.2.2.1 The Settlements

[One of the most important elements of the matrix of separation is the massive number of Jewish settlements, which Israel has built in the West Bank (see Attachment I, Map 1, “West Bank and Gaza Strip 2000,” which can be found on p. 1132 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps). The Israeli government has been building settlements ever since shortly after the 1967 War. The Oslo Interim Agreements in the 1990s were based on the premise that Israel would be willing to give up land in the West Bank and Gaza for peace. Yet, during the seven years of the Oslo Process, the number of settlements in the West Bank increased significantly, and the actual number of settlers in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) increased by 90 percent!²⁰⁵ And, ever since Oslo, the number of settlers and settlements has relentlessly increased. In their 2008 annual report,²⁰⁶ B’Tselem describes what has happened during the last few years:

[The Ministry of the Interior recognizes 121 settlements in the West Bank (not including East Jerusalem). In addition there are 12 large settlements in East Jerusalem. Also there are some 100 outposts in the West Bank that the government does not officially recognize, but supplies services to many of them.

[The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) estimated the 2008 population of the settlements at 285,800. Together with the 198,700 residents of the East Jerusalem settlements, the total number of settlers in the West Bank approaches half a million. The CBS also estimates that, in 2008, the settler population (not including East Jerusalem)²⁰⁷ rose by 4.7 percent. This figure is appreciably higher (*almost 300 percent*) than the 1.6 percent growth rate inside Israel.²⁰⁷

[Further, settlements have been placed in every section of the West Bank, and many of them are strategically located at communication junctions, on strategic hilltops, and in valleys that are of strategic importance as corridors of movement. In the words of Israeli author, Eyal Weizman, “[I]ndividual settlements were located on strategic summits, thereby allowing them to function as observation points: maintaining visual connection with each other and overlooking their surroundings, main traffic arteries, strategic road junctions, and Palestinian cities, towns and villages.”²⁰⁸

[Furthermore, numbers of these settlements have been put together into large, almost continuous, urban blocks (see Attachment I, Map 2, “Jewish Settlements in the West Bank,” which can be found on p. 1133 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps). First, there is a large group of settlements southwest of Nablus. Israel plans that this settlement block will become part of Israel since “fingers” of the wall/fence run many miles into the West Bank to include them (see Attachment I, Map 3, “West Bank Wall—2006,” which can be found on p. 1134 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, and see the discussion of the separation wall/fence below). Second, there is a massive arc of settlements surrounding Jerusalem. As the map reveals, this block extends many miles eastward into the Jordan valley near the Palestinian city of Jericho. The significance of this massive arc of settlement will be discussed when considering the impact of “matrix of separation” on Jerusalem, below.

[5.2.2.2 The System of Bypass Roads/Highways

[The next critical element in the matrix of separation is the system of bypass roads/highways. (These are represented on Map 1, which can be found in the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, p. 1132, by blue lines). From very early in the process of establishing settlements, the Israeli government began building bypass roads.²⁰⁹ They were built in order to connect the Israeli settlements to one another, to Jerusalem, and to Israel proper without passing through any area of Palestinian occupation. During the Oslo process, the Israeli government built twenty nine of these roads. In 2005, Halper described these roads as follows: “these highways, lined on both sides with ‘sanitary margins’ that eliminate all Palestinian homes, fields and orchards in their path, are 300 miles in length and three to four football fields wide.”²¹⁰

[As Halper notes, as a result, many farmlands were destroyed by the construction of these roads, depriving their owners of their source of income. And because they are “security” roads, most of them are fenced. Consequently, farms have often been split into pieces, rendering it impossible for their owners to cross from one side of their property to the other. In recent years, the bypass roads have been connected with the West Bank highways and integrated into a huge system (see Attachment I, Map 4 “Forbidden Roads Regime,” which can be found on p. 1135 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps).²¹¹ Few Palestinians travel on either the bypass roads or the highways, either because access to them is prevented by a system of physical barriers (see the discussion of “the closure regime” below) or because permission to do so is forbidden.²¹² Further, note on Maps 1 and 4, which can be found in the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, pages 1132 and 1135, how the bypass and highway road system divides the West Bank into enclaves, which do not connect with one another. Movement between the enclaves requires formal permits from the Israeli authorities, which are very difficult to

obtain. As a result, movement from one enclave to another has become very difficult for Palestinians. Clearly, if this situation becomes permanent, it will preclude any meaningful Palestinian state.

[5.2.2.3 The Separation Wall/Fence

[Without doubt, the most serious element of the matrix of separations is the “separation wall/fence.” [For pictures, see Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, Figure 5, p. 1128.] The wall/fence, which Israel began building in 2002, is a complex barrier, replete with rolls of barbed wire on each side, a six to eight foot deep ditch on the Palestinian side, and paved roads for military vehicles. The average width of the barrier is fifty to seventy yards, but it may reach up to 100 yards in some areas. In most areas of the West Bank, at the center of the barrier is a ten-foot high fence. However, when the barrier passes close to Palestinian cities, such as East Jerusalem or Bethlehem, at its center is not a fence, but a wall made of solid concrete slabs, 26 feet in height, often with observation and sniper towers every few hundred yards.

[The construction of the wall has resulted in several serious consequences for the Palestinians, one of which is occasioned simply by its route (see Attachment I, Map 3, “West Bank Wall, 2006,” which can be found on p. 1134 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps). The current route of the wall/fence was approved by the Israeli cabinet in April 2006.²¹³ Note that the wall is frequently not built on the internationally recognized armistice line between Israel and the West Bank. Almost three quarters of the separation wall/fence (325 of the 450 miles in length) is inside the West Bank.²¹⁴

[In the north, the wall/fence extends many miles into the West Bank (in what are frequently called “fingers”) to include some of the settlements of the large block southwest of Nablus (see Map 3, which can be found in the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, p. 1134). Indeed, one of the worst effects that the wall/fence is having and will have on the West Bank is what has happened in this northern region. The loss of land here will severely damage the Palestinian way of life. The Palestinian economy is essentially an agricultural one, and this area, where rainfall is the heaviest, is literally the breadbasket of the West Bank. In section 5.2.4.1 “Water—Consumption of a Rare Resource” below, dealing with Israel’s discriminatory water policy, the importance of the mountain aquifer for the Palestinians of the West Bank is noted. In this region, the settlements have been strategically located over these water reservoirs. If these areas are annexed to Israel, it will create a permanent shortage of water for the Palestinians of the West Bank.

[Secondly, the wall/fence will have grave consequences for those who live in the land between the wall/fence and the 1967 borders. Israel calls this area the “seam zone.” In October 2003, the area was declared closed by military order. All residents and landowners in the seam zone must obtain a special permit to remain in their homes or to work their land, permits that are exceedingly difficult to get.²¹⁵ The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the OPT reports²¹⁶ that 60,500 Palestinians living in forty-two villages will be living in this seam zone, and will be virtually cut off from the rest of the West Bank.

[Finally, the wall/fence runs east of some sixty-nine Israeli settlements—comprising some 83 percent of the settlers,²¹⁷—and the Israeli government has publicly declared that the wall/fence will be its permanent border. Numerous Israeli government statements have made this clear. For example, in an article in the Israeli newspaper, *Ha’aretz*, on Thursday, Dec. 1st, 2005, entitled, “West Bank fence is Israel’s future border,” Israeli journalist Yuval Yoaz wrote, Justice Minister Tzipi Livni has stated publicly that the separation wall/fence will serve as “the future border of the state of Israel” and that, “the High Court of Justice, in its rulings over the fence, is drawing the country’s borders.”

[And on February 10th, 2006, the Israeli columnist Aluf Benn published an article, entitled, “Olmert: Israel will separate from most Palestinians,” in which he wrote: Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said yesterday, that Israel “will separate from most of the Palestinian population that lives in the West Bank. ... We are moving toward separation from the Palestinians, toward setting Israel’s permanent border.”

[On July 9, 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) published its advisory opinion regarding the construction of the wall/fence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. “The Court finds that the construction by Israel of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and its associated régime are contrary to international law”; “the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law”; “Israel is under an obligation to terminate its breaches of international law; it is under an obligation to cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle forthwith the structure therein situated, and to repeal or render ineffective forthwith all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto, in accordance with paragraph 151 of this Opinion”; and “Israel is under an obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem.” Furthermore, the ICJ concludes, “the Court considers that Israel cannot rely on a right of self defence or on a state of necessity in order to preclude the wrongfulness of the construction of the wall. The Court accordingly finds that the construction of the wall and its associated régime are contrary to international law.”²¹⁸

[5.2.2.4 House Demolitions

[One of the most brutal of the means by which the Israeli military maintains this matrix of separation is the policy of the demolition of Palestinian homes.²¹⁹ The policy is used for preventing the Palestinians from building either outside the enclaves to which they have been confined or anywhere near the bypass roads. Any construction outside the Palestinian enclaves cannot be done without a building permit. The introduction to a study by B'Tselem reports, "Over the past dozens of years, Israel has created a situation in the West Bank in which thousands of Palestinians are unable to obtain a permit to build on their land. Consequently, they are compelled to build without a permit."²²⁰ And, as Neve Gordon notes, "Applications filed to the Civil Administration ... for building on private land ... are almost always rejected."²²¹ As a result, desperation caused by overcrowded conditions in the Palestinian areas have forced many Palestinians to build without permits and to invest their life savings in building homes they know might well be destroyed. Halper reported in 2005 that, from the time of the start of the second intifada in September 2000 until then, more than 900 homes had been demolished for lack of a permit,²²² while many thousands had been destroyed for other reasons.²²³

[As Jeff Halper notes, "The human suffering entailed in the process of destroying a family's home is incalculable."²²⁴ Palestinian families never know just when the demolition crews, accompanied by dozens of soldiers and police, will arrive. When the dreaded time comes, the families are usually given fifteen to thirty minutes warning to remove their belongings before the bulldozer moves in. Home demolitions are almost always brutal, since families understandably refuse to leave their home voluntarily so that it might be demolished. Therefore, demolitions usually involve arrest and often beatings. This cruel policy has had but one goal, to keep the Palestinians confined to their isolated enclaves, and to keep the area of the West Bank under Israeli control free for Israeli settlement construction and the building of bypass roads, etc.

[5.2.3 Travel Restriction — The "Closure Regime"

[For several years now, another layer of restrictions has been imposed upon the Palestinians of the West Bank, which has come to be called the "closure regime." "Closure" in general refers to restrictions placed by Israel on the movement of Palestinians (as well as goods and produce) across the borders between Palestinian enclaves and the territory controlled by Israel. Closure was imposed upon the Palestinians during Oslo,²²⁵ as a response to suicide attacks carried out by Palestinian militants. Though such attacks have virtually come to an end, the Israeli government has not ended or reduced the policy. Instead, in the interests of separation, it has been drastically heightened and extended it, so that it has become what we shall call the "closure regime."

[The most important of the elements of the closure regime are the many "checkpoints," barriers of various types manned by the Israeli military.²²⁶ These barriers consist of a large number of other physical impediments, used primarily to block access to the bypass road/highway system (described in section 5.2.2.2 The system of Bypass Roads/Highways), such as metal gates, mounds of earth or rubble, a series of large concrete blocks across the road, or deep trenches.²²⁷ All of these impediments have the purpose of controlling or blocking Palestinian movement. Yet, in November 2005, Israel signed "The Agreement on Movement and Access." In regard to the West Bank, the agreement stated, "Israel will facilitate the movement of people and goods within the West Bank and minimize disruption to Palestinian lives." Not only has this not been met, exactly the opposite has happened. According to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the number of closures in the West Bank has increased from 396 in November 2005 to 630 in March 2009, an increase of 59 percent!

[Since most Palestinians have little or no access to the bypass road/highway system, they are compelled to use an alternative road network of secondary and inferior roads, often unpaved.²²⁸ As a result, a two tier road system exists in the West Bank, which operate side by side. To enable Palestinians to travel from one enclave to the other, increasingly tunnels and bridges are being built under or over the Israeli bypass/highway network.²²⁹ This regime has been imposed by the Israeli military ostensibly as a security measure to protect its citizens. However, the vast majority of the elements of the closure regime separate Palestinians from Palestinians, rather than Palestinians from Israelis.

[Thus, the matrix of separation in the West Bank, with its ever expanding settlements, its system of bypass roads/highways, the seizure of Palestinian water and the closure regime, has kept the Palestinians tightly confined. This has virtually destroyed the Palestinian economy, and reduced many Palestinians to poverty. Speaking of an earlier period, Neve Gordon describes the situation as follows:

[Due to the various restrictions placed on the movement of people, labor and goods, ... the Palestinians have experienced a contraction of real personal incomes of almost 40 percent ... Using a \$2.10 per day poverty line, an estimated 60 percent of the population was poor by December 2002. ...²³⁰

[This was the result of the dire situation created by the re-occupation of the West Bank by the Israeli army in the summer of 2002. Since then, through massive infusions of aid, conditions have improved. Based on household income, according to the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics, 45.7 percent of West Bank citizens live below the poverty line.²³¹ If the present status of the Israeli occupation as a "matrix of separation" in the West Bank does not change, a two state solution seems hardly possible.

[5.2.4 Environmental Degradation

[5.2.4.1 Water—Consumption of a Rare Resource

[Soon after the 1967 War, Israel transferred control over all the sources of water in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the military. The reason is simple: 80 percent of the mountain aquifers, the region's largest reservoirs, are located under the West Bank (see Attachment I, Map 5, "Water Sources," which can be found on p. 1136 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps), and Israel desires the great majority of it for her own use.²³² Weizman reports, "Though the aquifer is the sole water source for residents of the West Bank, Israel uses 83 percent of its annually available water for the benefit of Israeli cities and its settlements, while West Bank Palestinians use the remaining 17 percent."²³³ At the same time, Israeli water policy has placed stringent, arbitrary, and unjust controls upon Palestinian development of water resources and installations, for example, prohibiting the Palestinians from drilling any new wells. As a result, Palestinians regularly suffer acute water shortages, many receiving water only for three or four days a week, requiring the installation of large cisterns on the roof for storage. Even then many people run out of water before the next delivery and are forced to purchase it on the black market at exorbitant prices. It hardly needs to be said that this highly discriminatory policy contributes significantly to Israel's matrix of separation.²³⁴

[5.2.4.2 Water—Pollution

[A joint effort between the Israelis and the Palestinians is necessary to safeguard the purity of the water resources of the Mountain Aquifer. Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) is a nongovernmental, nonprofit environmental organization with the primary objective of promoting cooperative efforts to protect the shared environmental heritage of the Middle East. The FoEME has offices in Amman, Bethlehem, and Tel Aviv. Water resources are scarce in Palestine/Israel and Jordan. The Mountain Aquifer, which is mostly located under the West Bank, supplies large quantities of good quality freshwater to both peoples, and as we have seen, albeit unequally. The aquifer's recharge area, most of which is located in the West Bank, is highly vulnerable to pollution produced by people living in that area, including West Bank Palestinians and Israelis residing in settlements and within Israel's internationally recognized borders. Israel operates several dump sites in the West Bank that are supposed to be illegal under international law. According to FoEME, one major Israeli-run dump site in the West Bank has no adequate pollution prevention measures, although Israeli environmental regulations apply for Israeli-managed sites in the West Bank as well. There also have been frequent reports of the waste of Israeli settlements (see below in the subsection titled "dumping of waste") being disposed in unsanitary Palestinian dump sites. Furthermore, it is noted that over the last years, and due to the difficulties of movement for Palestinians in the West Bank imposed by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), hundreds of small, random dump sites were created within areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Complete details can be read in the 2006 report by FoEME.²³⁵

[5.2.4.3 Agricultural Land—Access and Destruction

[As noted in previous sections, in the West Bank, restrictions on movement of people and access to natural resources have stifled economic growth. The wall/fence is restricting farmers' access to their land. Recurrent destruction of trees, private homes, and public infrastructure, as well as settlers' encroachments on private land create a permanent state of insecurity. Land administration and registration within the Palestinian Authority (PA) controlled areas has been slow and lacking in institutional capacity and resources.²³⁶

[Amnesty International has reported on the Israeli practice of destroying agricultural land and cisterns. Throughout the millennia, Palestinians have relied on water cisterns in which they collect rainwater for daily use and irrigation. The government of Israel does not allow the construction of cisterns without a permit and makes it almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain such permits to build them. Amnesty International reported the heartbreaking story of a West Bank farmer, Mahmoud al-'Alam.

[The village of Beit Ula, where Mahmoud lives, is not connected to the Palestinian water network. Instead the community, located north-west of Hebron, relies on rainwater, which it collects and stores in pots dug in the ground, known as cisterns. The nine new cisterns built in 2006 as part of a European Union-funded project to improve food security became the pride of the village. The cisterns were vital to the survival of the nine families that used them ... until the bulldozers arrived. "[The Israeli army] destroyed everything; they went up and down several times with the bulldozer and uprooted everything," recalls Mahmoud al-'Alam. In a few hours, years of hard work had been undone. The cisterns had been built with the help of two local nongovernmental organizations, the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees and the Palestinian Hydrology Group. The cisterns provided water for 3,200 newly planted trees including olive, almond, lemon and fig trees. The farmers had also contributed a significant portion of the overall cost of the project. "We invested a lot of money and worked very hard," said Mahmoud al-'Alam. "This is good land and it was a very good project. We put a lot of thought into how to shape the terraces and build the cisterns in the best way, to make the best use of the land, and we planted trees which need little water... the saplings were growing well." The story of Beit Ula is one of many cases where Israeli forces have targeted Palestinian communities in the region.²³⁷

[Another example is the March 11, 2008, destruction of vegetable crops and irrigation network in Jiftlik in the Jordan Valley. A photograph showing an Israeli army bulldozer at work destroying the crops can be found in the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, Figure 6, p. 1128.

[5.2.4.4 Dumping of Waste

[Rajah Shehadeh, a Palestinian lawyer and co-founder of Al Haq, a Palestinian Human Rights group from the West Bank, describes in his book, *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape*, his experiences walking the hills of the West Bank. On a walk with his friend, Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, founder of the Palestinian Medical Relief Organization, he tells us:

[As we neared the top of the hill the clods of soil began to feel wet even though there was no spring nearby and it hadn't rained. We soon realized that we had walked into the open sewers of the Jewish settlement of Talmon to the north. This settlement might have had a rubbish collection system but it did not have one for treating sewage, which was just disposed of down the valley into land owned by Palestinian farmers.²³⁸

[Talmon is a settlement northwest of Ramallah. This incident is not unique and unfortunately typical. Kathleen and Bill Christison, retired U.S. Central Intelligence Agency analysts, relate their experience when they visited the village of Wadi Fukin in the West Bank. They describe seeing tons of construction dirt and rocks from Betar Illit, an illegal Israeli settlement east of Wadi Fukin, dumped onto the Wadi Fukin's agricultural fields. Furthermore, the sewage from this settlement, which has approximately a population of 29,000, is regularly dumped onto Wadi Fukin's lands. The Christisons say that "it is possible to see the large diameter opening of a pipe near the top of the ridge line, from which the sewage pours."²³⁹

[Johann Hari, in an article in the London-based newspaper, *The Independent*, reports about the problem of dumping of raw sewage onto Palestinian agricultural lands. "Across the occupied West Bank, raw untreated sewage is pumped every day out of the Jewish settlements, along large metal pipes, straight onto Palestinian land. From there, it can enter the groundwater and the reservoirs, and become a poison."²⁴⁰

[A third example is a B'Tselem video showing dumping of domestic effluent as well as industrial waste from the settlement of Ariel onto the lands of Sulfit village: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPxLBzJr9Y>. The footage shows graphically the sewage coming out of an open pipe down the valley onto the farm land of Sulfit.

[5.2.5 Food Insecurity

[Food insecurity, as defined by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, consists of four characteristics, all of which must be present. These are: first, the availability of sufficient quantities and qualities of food; second, the ability to access adequate food resources; third, the stable availability of these food resources; and fourth, the opportunity to consume food through adequate diet and availability of clean water, adequate sanitation, and health care.

[According to the United Nations FAO, the Palestinian people living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are in serious trouble. Food security continues to the present day to be precarious in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. A 2007 food security analysis conducted by the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition concluded that 34 percent of the population of West Bank and the Gaza Strip was considered food secure in 2006, while 20 percent was marginally food secure, 12 percent was vulnerable to becoming food insecure, and 34 percent was food insecure.²⁴¹ See Map 6 in Attachment I, which can be found on p. 1137 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, for details of food insecurity by West Bank governorates. Economic conditions, particularly the loss of jobs, impacts directly on a population's food security in particular when that population is already experiencing significant levels of food insecurity. The Palestinian economy continues to contract under the pressures of economic restrictions and political instability. According to the World Bank, the per capita GDP in 2007 decreased to 60 percent of its levels in 1999, and investment dropped to precariously low levels.²⁴²

[5.2.6 Destruction of Archeological Sites

[A debate within Israel has existed for many years about the role of archeological excavation. There is a contention that some archeologists, in an attempt to show connections of the present state of Israel with the ancient Land of Israel, have been in too much haste or have discarded as unimportant upper layers of archeological records belonging to intervening Turkish, Arab, and Byzantine periods. In other words, present day political realities have assumed a more important point of view than science. As quoted by William Dalrymple in his book *From the Holy Mountain*,²⁴³

[In 1992 the Jerusalem-based archaeologist Shulamit Giva accused Israeli Biblical archaeology of being "a tool in the hands of the Zionist movement [attempting] to find a connection between the ancient history of the Land of Israel and the historic occurrence of the [modern] State of Israel." Israeli archaeology, she continued, had "lost its independence as a scientific discipline and become an executive arm of an ideological movement, a nationalist and political instrument which provided 'roots' for the new state."²⁴⁴

[In a meeting with Bishop Hagop Sarkissian, of the Armenian Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem, William Dalrymple relays several examples:

[According to the official Israeli archaeological report ... there were *four* separate monasteries discovered in the excavations north of the Damascus Gate, as well as two hostleries for pilgrims and a large Christian cemetery. Moreover, shortly afterwards, a fifth Byzantine shrine—a small burial chapel decorated with mosaics and rare frescoes—was discovered near the Jaffa Gate. ... But despite the unprecedented Christian protests, not one of these sites was preserved for posterity. All were reburied, with the exception of the frescoed chapel outside Jaffa Gate, which was bulldozed to make way for nothing more important than an underground parking lot. "The whole Mamilla Project depends on it [the car park]," Gideon Avni of the Israel Antiquities Authority told the *Jerusalem Post* by way of explanation.²⁴⁵

[Other than archeological excavations, there have been complaints about the safeguarding of world heritage sites in the West Bank. January 9, 2004,²⁴⁶ Claire Smith, president of the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) and associate professor in Archaeology at Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia, accused Israel of systematically destroying world heritage sites in the West Bank and urged the international community to insist that Israel observe the Hague treaty protecting cultural assets in armed conflicts. In a rebuttal to Professor Smith's declarations, Dr. Uzi Dahar, the deputy director of the Israel Antiquities Authority in 2004, stated in a letter to Professor Smith dated January 25, 2004, that "a common cultural heritage of the sons of Abraham—Jews and Arabs—each with divided opinions on the fate of this country [presumably Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories] can serve as a lever for fostering peace. A condition for this is that neither side 'Take possession' of archaeology for its own objectives." Mr. Dahar, however, does recognize that "the violent events of the last two years (2002 to 2004) in the Palestinian Territories and in the State of Israel, have not only caused irreversible damages to many archeological and historical sites of intrinsic value, but also shattered hopes for a better definition of the present and the future of the cultural heritage of the Holy Land." An example of such destruction by the Israeli Occupation Forces is the destruction of large sections of the historic Old City of Nablus. Al Haq, which has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, has made an appeal in its report, "the world must stop destruction of cultural heritage in OPT" dated May 13, 2004. Al Haq claimed that in April 2002, Israeli occupying forces destroyed large sections of the historic Old City of Nablus as well as parts of Bethlehem and Hebron during "Operation Defensive Shield."

[5.3 East Jerusalem and Territorial Expansion

[The occupation is as fully a "matrix of separation" in the area of Jerusalem as it is in the rest of the West Bank. To document this, some historical background is necessary.

[When Israel took control of the West Bank in the 1967 War, there were two separate cities of Jerusalem: Israeli Jerusalem, which covered an area of about 15 square miles, ruled by Israel, and Palestinian Jerusalem, consisting of the Old City of Jerusalem and its municipal territory, which contained an area of about 2.3 square miles, ruled by Jordan (see Attachment I, Map 7 "Israeli Settlements and Palestinian Neighborhoods in East Jerusalem," which can be found on p. 1138 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps).

[However, within weeks after the end of the war, Israel seized not only the area that had been Palestinian Jerusalem, but also an additional 24.7 square miles, most of which had belonged previously to twenty eight Palestinian villages of the West Bank, including parts of Ramallah in the north and Bethlehem in the south. The Israeli government unilaterally annexed this territory to the municipal boundaries of Israeli Jerusalem, and imposed Israeli law there.²⁴⁷ This area is now known as "East Jerusalem," and the earlier Israeli Jerusalem is known as "West Jerusalem." In 1980, the Israeli Knesset passed legislation, which declared, "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel."²⁴⁸ Therefore, most of the area that Israel claims as "East Jerusalem" was never previously part of the city, but rather part of the West Bank.

[Demographic considerations were the primary factor in determining what land was expropriated to form "East Jerusalem." The primary goal was to ensure a Jewish majority in the city. This was accomplished by annexing sparsely populated land and excluding heavily populated Palestinian areas. In many cases villages were split in half. Parts of the villages of Anata, Hizma, and Beit Ikka, for example, were annexed by Israel, but the most populated areas remained in the West Bank. In other cases, agricultural lands were annexed to Jerusalem, while the town or village itself remained in the West Bank. Such was the case with territory belonging to Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahur in the south (for the location of these villages and towns, see Attachment I, Map 8 "The Wall, Bethlehem District—December 2003," which can be found on p. 1139 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps).

[The effects of the annexation of East Jerusalem upon the Palestinians have been extreme. In its 2008 annual report, entitled "Human Rights in the Occupied Territories," B'Tselem states,

[Since the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, the authorities have discriminated against its Palestinian residents in almost every area of life—education, infrastructure, municipal services, urban development, planning and building, and so forth.²⁴⁹

[Such discrimination has been going on since the Oslo period. In a study issued in late 1999, entitled "Injustice in the Holy City," B'Tselem included information on the neglect of infrastructure and services in the Palestinian neighborhoods. They reported that East Jerusalem residents are required to pay taxes like all city residents; however, they did not receive the same services. Since the annexation of Jerusalem, the municipality had continuously failed to invest significantly for roads, sidewalks, water and sewage systems in Palestinian neighborhoods, and almost no new school, public building, or medical clinic had been built. Less than 10 percent of the Municipality's development budget for 1999 was allocated for Palestinian neighborhoods, although the population then represented 33 percent of the city's residents. This lack of investment had left infrastructure in East Jerusalem in a deteriorated state. This is what B'Tselem reported in 1999, and it has not substantively changed since then:

[•—Entire Palestinian neighborhoods were not connected to a sewage system and did not have paved roads or sidewalks;

[•—Almost 90 percent of the sewage pipes, roads, and sidewalks are found in West Jerusalem;

[~~•—West Jerusalem had 1,000 public parks, East Jerusalem had 45;~~

[~~•—West Jerusalem had thirty six public swimming pools, East Jerusalem did not have even one;~~

[~~•—West Jerusalem had twenty six libraries, East Jerusalem had two;~~

[~~•—West Jerusalem had 531 sports facilities, East Jerusalem had 33.~~

[Further, over the years, the Jerusalem city planning authorities have prepared few, if any, planning schemes that allow building in Palestinian areas. In the summary of a 1995 study entitled “A Policy of Discrimination: Land Seizure, Planning and Building in East Jerusalem,”²⁵⁰ B’Tselem reported:

[The Israeli authorities promote extensive building for Jewish neighborhoods, at an enormous investment, in the annexed area. At the same time, by their acts and omissions, the Israeli authorities choke development and building for the Palestinian population, who are perceived as a “demographic threat” to Israeli control of the city. ... Town Planning Schemes: the planning authorities utilized the town planning schemes to restrict the development of Palestinian neighborhoods, limit the area designated for Palestinian construction, and reinforce Jewish control throughout the city.

[This discrimination has continued unchanged over the years. In B’Tselem’s annual report for 2008,²⁵¹ they provide the following information:

[The situation in the village of Silwan, which lies south of the Old City, clearly illustrates the discrimination in planning and building. The planning authorities have never prepared an outline plan for the village, without which it is impossible to build legally. Given that population growth in the village raises the need for additional construction, the residents have been forced to build without a permit.

[Undoubtedly, the least defensible and certainly the most brutal of the Israeli policies to restrict the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem is the policy of demolishing houses and other structures belonging to those who have been forced to build without a permit. The policy is politically motivated and is aimed at maintaining a Jewish majority in the city.²⁵² In a 2007 study of home demolitions in East Jerusalem, the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions (ICAHN) included a table listing the buildings demolished in East Jerusalem between 1994 and 2006. The total listed is 678, including four, five, and seven-story structures.²⁵³ The brutal policy has continued over the last two years. B’Tselem’s annual report for 2008 states:

[In November, the Municipality demolished two structures that had been built illegally in the Bustan neighborhood. The Municipality intends to demolish the 90 structures in the neighborhood, which were built in the 1980s and 1990s, in order to construct an archeological garden. ... In other Palestinian neighborhoods ..., too, residents are compelled to build without a permit. In 2008, the Municipality demolished 89 residential units in East Jerusalem, compared to 65 in 2007. The threat of demolition hovers over thousands of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem that, having no alternative, have also built their homes without a permit.

[The human suffering and trauma entailed in the destruction of houses in East Jerusalem is no different than it is for Palestinians in the West Bank (see section 5.2.2.4 West Bank, House Demolitions, above).

[Clearly, the occupation is as fully a “matrix of separation” in the area of Jerusalem as it is in the rest of the West Bank. However, there are other aspects of the matrix of separation in the area of East Jerusalem and the territory of the West Bank surrounding Jerusalem that raise extremely serious questions about the possibility of a “two state” solution to the occupation. As described above, the Israeli authorities have gone to great lengths to keep the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem confined to their limited neighborhoods. Yet, at the same time Israel has invested enormous resources in the construction of numerous, large and affluent new settlements in East Jerusalem for Jews alone. These settlements are slowly and relentlessly virtually filling East Jerusalem.²⁵⁴ However, the problem is not only the large number and size of the settlements for Jews alone built in East Jerusalem. As Map 3 “West Bank Wall 2006” reveals, Israel has also constructed a large block of settlements north and northwest of Jerusalem. [See Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, p. 1134, for Map 3.] There is also a second block of settlements south of Jerusalem and west and southwest of Bethlehem, isolating Bethlehem. Most critical, however, is a third, large block of settlements, Ma’aleh Adummim,²⁵⁵ which lies due east of Jerusalem.

[As Map 3 reveals, these three blocks create a massive arc of settlements around which the separation wall/fence is being built in order to include them on the west side of the wall, which Israel has declared will be its permanent border. The most troubling aspect of this massive arc of settlements, surrounded by the wall/fence, for the possibility of a viable Palestinian state is the Ma’aleh Adummim block on the east, which now stretches into the Jordan Valley, almost to the Palestinian town of Jericho, 10 miles east of Jerusalem.²⁵⁶

[The Ma’aleh Adummim settlement block was designated a city by the Israeli government in October 1992. While its current built up area is small, its municipal plan covers a total area of just over twenty one square miles.²⁵⁷ The significance of this area can be gleaned from a comparison with Tel Aviv, a city of some 350,000 inhabitants with an area of twenty square miles. The strategy involved in the creation of the Adummim Block does not have to be inferred only from its dimensions on the map, though that is clear enough. The town’s mayor, Benny Kashriel, a leading figure in the West Bank settler movement, has openly said that Adummim was established “to create a buffer that will prevent the creation of a Palestinian state, because every state requires territorial contiguity.”

[The massive arc of settlements stretching around Jerusalem and ending in the east in the massive bubble of the Ma'aleh Adumim block, surrounded by the separation wall, has cut the West Bank in two (see Map 3, which can be found in Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, p. 1134). Without change, it renders impossible a contiguous Palestinian state. It is hard to escape the conclusion that this has been what the Israeli government has intended with the building of the Ma'aleh Adumim block.

[5.4 Gaza

[Some background about the Gaza Strip would be helpful to understanding the conflict. The Gaza Strip, has the highest population density in the world, and "over three quarters of the current estimated population of some 1.5 million are registered refugees."²⁵⁸ A large proportion of these refugees were expelled by the Israeli Haganah forces in 1947 to 1948 from Jaffa, Palestine, and the coastal areas south of Jaffa.

[In elections, which were certified as fair by international observers including former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, held on January 25, 2006, Hamas won municipal seats throughout the West Bank and Gaza and won 76 of 132 seats in the parliamentary election. With a majority of seats in the Palestinian parliament, Hamas could then form the government for the Palestinian Authority. Israel and its supporters, the United States and European Union, refused to recognize the new Hamas prime minister and instituted an economic blockade of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in an effort to unseat the Hamas government. When the economic blockade failed, Israel (with United States cooperation) provided Fatah forces in Gaza with arms to battle Hamas. Violence erupted within the Palestinian territories with the end result that in 2007 Hamas controlled the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority and Fatah controlled the West Bank. Efforts at reconciliation between the two factions have repeatedly failed. Violence continued between Hamas and Israel.

[The United States, European Union, and Israel governments consider Hamas to be a terrorist organization bent on the destruction of Israel, while most Gazans see Hamas as an organization formed to resist the occupation by Israel and to recover their lost lands in Palestine. Hamas is an Arabic acronym for *Harakat al Muqawama allslamiyya*, or Islamic Resistance Movement. Hamas is a militant organization; however over 90 percent of Hamas' resources are spent on social services to the Palestinian refugees.

[The most horrific violence against Gaza by Israel occurred between December 2008 and January 2009, in the course of which the Israeli military destroyed or badly damaged Gazan homes, places of worship, schools, universities, factories, fishing boats, police stations—in short, everything that sustains civilized and orderly life. The Israeli government justified its attack by claiming that (1) Israel had no choice but to attack in response to the barrage of Hamas rockets fired from Gaza into Israel over the past eight years, and (2) only Hamas violated the six month ceasefire on Dec. 19th, 2008, and only Hamas refused to reinstitute it. Thus, only Hamas bears responsibility for what happened.

[Major U.S. media outlets repeated the Israeli government pronouncements. On January 8th, Shervan Sardar published in the website the Electronic Intifada²⁵⁹ an extensive study of the coverage of the conflict in the op eds and editorials of major American newspapers, entitled *The US Media and the Attack on Gaza*. He writes, "In the first three days of the Israeli offensive from 28–30 December, editorials and op eds from the major papers overwhelmingly adopted the official US and Israeli government talking points." Here are two of his examples.

[*The Washington Post* stated that Hamas "invited the conflict by ending the six month old ceasefire and launching scores of rockets and mortar shells at Israel." Similarly, in *The New York Times*, Benny Morris maintained, "In November and early December, Hamas stepped up the rocket attacks and then, unilaterally, formally announced the end of the truce."

[On Friday, January 9, the House of Representatives passed a resolution that "calls on all nations to lay blame both for the breaking of the 'calm' and for subsequent civilian casualties in Gaza precisely where blame belongs, that is, on Hamas." Conversely, the resolution praised Israel for the facilitation of humanitarian aid to Gaza. The resolution passed 390 to 5.

[To understand the reality that lies behind this war, two periods of time will be considered: (1) What was the situation in Gaza after Hamas drove out the forces of Fatah and took over sole control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, and (2) what transpired during the period of the six-month truce, which was inaugurated June 19th and ended on Dec. 19th, 2008.

[During the first period, the twelve months from June 2007 until June 2008, violence by both sides continued unabated. Extremists in Gaza, some of them under the control of Hamas and some not, such as members of the Islamic Jihad, continued to fire rockets into Israel and seriously disrupt the life for Israel's southern towns. In an attempt to end this, the Israeli military regularly engaged in bombing attacks and military incursions into the Gaza Strip.

[But a more important factor in what has led up to the current catastrophe has been the drastic deterioration of the quality of life of the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip. That quality of life was bad enough prior to the summer of 2007. John Wolfensohn, who had left his position as head of the World Bank in April 2006, was a special envoy of the "Quartet," whose job was to help implement the peace process during and after the removal of the Israeli settlements from Gaza in the summer of 2005. In an interview with the *Ha'aretz* newspaper in 2007,²⁶⁰ Wolfensohn said that "every aspect of that agreement was abrogated." The economy collapsed as a result, as Gaza's farmers saw their produce rot at the crossings, and unemployment and disillusionment among Gazans sky-rocketed. He concluded, "Instead of hope, the Palestinians saw that they were put back in prison. And with 50 per cent unemployment, further conflict is inevitable."

[As a result of the Hamas takeover in 2007, the Israeli government placed the Gaza Strip under an unremitting blockade, which placed far more severe limits upon the amount of electricity, food, medicine, and other necessities that may enter the Gaza Strip than had been permitted previously.

The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs issues a monthly report on conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories called “the Humanitarian Monitor.”²⁶¹ The report monitors key humanitarian indicators and includes field observations collected by UN agencies, including those of the health, education, and food aid sectors.

[The *Gaza Humanitarian Monitor* for October 2007 included the following statement: “Following ... an Israeli cabinet decision, on 28 October the Government of Israel started implementing a proposed series of economic sanctions on the Gaza Strip.” The new sanctions included the following severe restrictions: (1) the closure of Karni, the largest commercial crossing; (2) the prohibition of all exports from Gaza and the suspension of most industrial imports that were not of a humanitarian nature; (3) a severe reduction in the amount of fuel allowed entry; (4) a ban on the movement of Palestinians through Erez, the sole passenger crossing for Israel and the West Bank; and (5) an almost total closure of the Rafah crossing point, the only crossing on the border with Egypt. As Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur for The Occupied Palestinian Territories has noted: “Such a blockade is unlawful, a massive form of collective punishment, and as such is in violation of Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and also a violation of Article 55, which requires that the occupying power ensure that the civilian population has sufficient food and that its health needs are addressed.”²⁶²

[Under such an unremitting blockade, conditions in Gaza grew steadily worse and lead to the economic collapse of Gaza. An article in the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, written by Soumaya Ghannoushi, a freelance writer and a researcher at the University of London, described conditions in Gaza early in 2007 as follows:

[Gaza is at Israel’s mercy. It depends almost totally on it for electricity and fuel, a result of the 38 years of Israel’s direct control over of the Strip. This dependence has grown since June 2006, when Israel bombed Gaza’s only power station. This was forced to close on Sunday when Israel blocked fuel shipment to the Strip. And, of course, no electricity does not mean dark candlelit nights only; it means no heating in the cold Gazan winter, and, more crucially, no water, with no fuel to pump, treat, or deliver the vital liquid to homes, schools, medical clinics or hospitals.

[For months a terrible cloud of stench has been hanging over the tiny coastal strip. The sanitation system is in a state of paralysis. Raw sewage is spilling out on to the streets, homes and fields, and in order to save fuel, the city has stopped collecting garbage—400 metric tons a day.

[The siege has reduced 85 percent of Gaza’s 1.5 million inhabitants to total dependency on food aid, the highest rate anywhere in the world. More than 95 percent of businesses and factories have been forced to close their doors...

[The health system is crippled, with rapidly declining medical supplies, generated by the blockage of international aid. Hospitals are out of funds.... [T]he number of patients permitted to leave for medical treatment has ground almost to a halt, leading to tens of deaths.²⁶³

[When visiting [by one of the authors of this document] Hanna Massad, the pastor of the Gaza Baptist Church, it was apparent that conditions were as bad as Ghannoushi describes. Garbage collection had not been made for many weeks. For want of adequate garbage disposal, the piles of garbage were being burned producing clouds of noxious and unhealthy smoke.

[The effects of the blockade were nothing short of catastrophic, particularly for the children. Prior to 2005, when conditions were not as bad as they are now, Dr. Jean Ziegler, UN special envoy for the UN Human Rights Commission, spent ten days in the occupied territories, from which he prepared a report for the UN General Assembly on conditions there. In a press briefing on his report held in the UN Briefing Room, the main findings were,

- 22 percent of Palestinian children under five are suffering from malnutrition—a threefold increase from 2000;
- 9.3 percent suffer acute malnutrition—an eightfold increase from 2000;
- 15.6 percent suffer acute anemia, which can lead to permanent impairment of physical and mental development.

[Peter Hansen, who was United Nations Relief and Works Agency Commissioner General in the same period, assessed the significance of findings like these. He wrote:

[The world has grown used to the idea that hunger manifests itself only in the hollow cheeks and distended stomachs of an African famine. But today in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, a dreadful, silent malnutrition is stalking the Palestinians.

[In the terminology of experts, the Palestinians are suffering in the main from micronutrient deficiencies—what the World Health Organization calls “Hidden Hunger.” It may be less dramatic than the protein-energy malnutrition that stalks African emergencies, but on the scale that it is being found among the Palestinians it is just as serious. Micronutrient deficient children fail to grow and develop normally; their cognition is damaged, often severely and irreversibly. Their immune systems are compromised. In both adults and children, mental and physical capacities are impaired. In extreme cases, blindness and death result. The mental and physical development of a generation of Palestinian children hangs in the balance. An ongoing study funded by the United States Agency for International Development has found that four out of five children in Gaza and the West Bank have inadequate iron and zinc intake, deficiencies that cause anaemia and weaken the immune system....

[The stark fact is that 22 per cent of the Palestinian children are suffering from acute or chronic malnutrition for purely man-made reasons. No drought has hit Gaza and the West Bank, no crops have failed and the shops are often full of food. But the failure of the peace process and the destruction of the economy by Israel’s closure policy have had the effect of a terrible natural disaster.

[After setting forth further aspects of the situation, Hansen concluded his article:

[There are as yet no skeletal faces in Gaza for the television cameras to record, no bloated bellies to shock the world to action. Instead, the Palestinians face hidden hunger and the quiet horror of a generation that will be physically and mentally stunted for the rest of their lives.²⁶⁴

[During the same period described above, Qassam rockets from Gaza had caused fear and disruption of life in southern Israeli towns and had killed four Israeli civilians in the first six months of 2008. On June 19th, 2008, Israel and Hamas enacted a cease fire brokered by the Egyptian government. The terms of the cease fire were as follows:

- [1. ~~Hamas would halt all rocket attacks into Israel.~~
- [2. ~~Israel would halt all bombing raids and military incursions into Gaza.~~
- [3. ~~Israel would begin to significantly reduce its military blockade of Gaza.~~²⁶⁵

[In the order that they are mentioned, let us briefly consider how each side met these terms. Term 1: On the Hamas side, the ceasefire was remarkably effective. In fact, the rate of rocket and mortar fire from Gaza into Israel dropped almost to zero, and stayed there for four straight months. The evidence for this has been set forth, surprisingly enough, in a chart of all the rockets fired from Gaza into Israel during 2008, prepared by the Israeli Consulate in New York City.²⁶⁶

[Figure 7, which can be found in the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, p. 1129, demonstrates that during the first six months of 2008, the monthly average of rockets fired from Gaza into Israel was 179. However, for the first four and a half months of the truce, from June 19 through the end of October, the contrast is dramatic and striking. Only eleven rockets were fired, and eight of those eleven were fired in August. Hence, for three of the first four months of the ceasefire, one rocket each month was fired into Israel. The data shows clearly that Hamas can indeed control the violence if it so chooses, and sometimes, when it has the right incentives, it does for long periods of time. However, from November through December 19, the end date of the cease fire, the situation was completely reversed. Once again, numerous rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel. For that six week period, the number of rockets fired per month rose to an average of 112. Then, on December 19, Hamas declared that it would not continue the cease fire.

[What caused this drastic reversal in Hamas' actions and decisions? The second condition of the cease fire was that Israel would halt all military incursions into Gaza. Evidence for this is set forth in the monthly reports of The UN Humanitarian Monitor for the Occupied Palestinian Territories.²⁶⁷ A portion of the chart of the monthly report of Palestinian deaths and injuries for October 2008 is displayed in the table below:

[Number of Palestinian deaths — direct conflict												
	Oct-07	Nov-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08	Apr-08	May-08	Jun-08	Jul-08	Aug-08	Sep-08
West Bank	10	1	4	9	6	8	3	3	5	4	1	5
Gaza Strip	27	25	58	80	67	104	70	41	26	1	0	0
Israel	0	2	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	2	0	1
Number of Palestinian injuries — direct conflict												
West Bank	81	77	53	111	58	122	45	87	139	218	149	130
Gaza Strip	71	50	84	182	143	215	155	107	41	3	0	4

[As the table shows, on the Israeli side also, the cease fire was remarkably effective in reducing the violence. As with the number of rockets fired from Gaza, the contrast from the first six months of 2008 is dramatic. A little arithmetic would show that, during the first six months an average of seventy Palestinians were killed each month in Gaza by the Israeli military, and an average of 153 Palestinians were injured. But, for the four and a half months from June 19 to the end of October, only one Palestinian was killed by direct military action, and only nine were injured. However, in November and December the situation was reversed, exactly as was the case with the rockets from Gaza into Israel. The text of the monthly report of The UN Humanitarian Monitor for the Occupied Palestinian Territories for November²⁶⁸ states that fifteen Palestinians were killed and twenty four injured from Israeli military incursions, and concludes, "This figure represents a sharp increase compared with the single Palestinian fatality during the four months (July–October 2008) immediately following the truce."

[What happened to end this eminently successful cease fire and bring on a new and tragic round of violence between the two sides? To answer this, consider the second condition of the ceasefire that was incumbent upon Israel, term 3, the requirement that Israel would begin to significantly reduce its military blockade of Gaza. Tragically, from the outset of the cease fire, Israel did little to increase humanitarian aid to the previous level of around 700 trucks daily. Former President Carter said that it reached only about 20 percent of the previous levels and so Israel did not live up to even this more modest agreement. As a result, during the four and a half months from June 19 to the end of October, in which the cease fire was so very effective, Gazans continued to suffer from a lack of food, fuel, financial aid, electricity, clean water, medical supplies,

and more, to a degree that can only be called horrendous and unconscionable. Indeed, as the summer months went by, the situation actually deteriorated. The UN Humanitarian Monitor for July, dated August 12, states:

[In Gaza, ... the population of Gaza saw little tangible dividend from the truce. The amount of commodities remained far below actual needs as the level of imports was 46% below the level in May 2007 (one month before the Hamas takeover that triggered the full closure). The restrictions on imports, combined with the total ban on exports, kept 95% of Gaza's local industry closed.

[And the *Monitor* for August, dated Sept 12, states:

[Despite the re-opening of the Kerem Shalom commercial crossing, the amount of imports allowed to enter Gaza continued to decrease over the month, August imports constituted around 70% of July imports and 23% of the imports in May 2007, before the Hamas take-over. The lack of raw materials, combined with the continuous prohibition on exports prevented economic reactivation.

[And yet, despite the fact that Hamas saw no tangible relaxation of the desperately serious living conditions in the Gaza Strip, they maintained the cease fire from June 19 through October. So was there another reason for ending the eminently successful cease fire and bringing on a new and tragic round of violence between the two sides? The answer seems crystal clear and unmistakable. In spite of the fact that the cease fire had accomplished the end of violence by both sides, and especially the end of the rocket attacks upon the residents of southern Israel for four and a half months, an end that Israel had been ceaselessly demanding, the cease fire was broken, not by Hamas, but by the Israeli military. Late in the evening of November 4th, while Americans voted for a new president, Israeli troops raided the Gaza Strip. Israeli military authorities claim that the target of the raid was a tunnel that they said Hamas was planning to use to capture Israeli soldiers, but the tunnel was located 250 meters from the border fence. In the course of the action six Palestinian militants were killed. On November 5, Hamas resumed sending rockets into Israel. With hindsight, the Hamas leadership should not have reacted to the Israeli provocation. But, having seen no tangible relaxation of the desperately serious living conditions in the Gaza Strip while they maintained the truce for four and a half months, one presumes they acted out of anger and frustration.

[One result of the failure of the cease fire for the Palestinians of Gaza was drastic indeed. Following the resumption of violence on November 5, Israel virtually sealed the Gaza Strip. On Dec. 23rd, four days before the Israeli offensive began, Professor Sara Roy, who teaches at Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, published an article in *The London Review of Books* in which she discussed the extent and ramifications of this new siege of Gaza. She reported:

[On November 5, the Israeli government sealed all the gates and entrances into Gaza. Food, medicine, fuel, parts for water and sanitation systems, fertilizer, plastic sheeting, phones, paper, glue, shoes and even teacups were no longer getting through in sufficient quantities or at all. According to Oxfam only 137 trucks of food were allowed into Gaza in November. This means that an average of 4.6 trucks per day entered the strip compared to an average of 123 in October this year and 564 in December 2005. ... UNRWA alone feeds approximately 750,000 people in Gaza, and requires 15 trucks of food daily to do so. Between 5 November and 30 November, only 23 trucks arrived, around 6 per cent of the total needed; during the week of 30 November it received 12 trucks, or 11 per cent of what was required. There were three days in November when UNRWA ran out of food. ... On 18 December UNRWA suspended all food distribution for both emergency and regular programs because of the blockade.²⁶⁹

[Thirty out of forty seven commercial bakeries in Gaza have had to close because they had run out of cooking gas. As the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has made clear, cooking gas canisters are necessary for generating the warmth to incubate broiler chicks. Shortages of gas and animal feed have forced commercial producers to smother hundreds of thousands of chicks. By April, according to the FAO, there will be no poultry there at all: 70 percent of Gazans rely on chicken as a major source of protein. Gaza's Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU), which is not controlled by Hamas, is supposed to receive funds from the World Bank via the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) in Ramallah to pay for fuel to run the pumps for Gaza's sewage system. Since June, the PWA has refused to hand over those funds, perhaps because it feels that a functioning sewage system would benefit Hamas. The CMWU has also asked Israel's permission to import 200 tons of chlorine, but by the end of November 2008 it had received only eighteen tons — enough for one week of chlorinated water. By mid December 2008, Gaza City and the north of Gaza had access to water only six hours every three days.

[In his report to the special session of the Human Rights Council on the situation in the Gaza Strip, held on January 9, 2009, Richard Falk, the UN's Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian Territories, summarized the situation in Gaza prior to Dec. 27th as follows:

[U]p to 80% of Gaza was living under the poverty line, unemployment totals approached 75%, and the health system was near collapse from the effects of the blockade.²⁷⁰

[Finally, given the fact that Israel had not only not met the most important obligation that the cease fire imposed upon her, namely the easing of the blockade, but had in fact virtually sealed the strip so that conditions in Gaza had become unimaginable, on December 19th, Hamas decided that to continue the cease fire was pointless.

[Yet, according to the Israeli press, as late as December 23rd, four days before Israel began her bombing campaign, Yuval Diskin, the head of the Israeli security service Shin Bet, "told the Israeli cabinet that Hamas is interested in continuing the truce, but wants to improve its terms."²⁷¹ Diskin explained that Hamas was requesting two things: an end to the blockade, and an Israeli cease fire on the West Bank. The cabinet — eager to appear tough with elections coming in February — rejected these terms.

[Present conditions in the Gaza Strip continue to be intolerable. In the words of Amnesty International as expressed in their report, titled “Suffocating: The Gaza Strip Under Israeli Blockade” and dated January 10, 2010,

[the Israeli authorities say the blockade is a response to attacks from Palestinian armed groups, in particular the indiscriminate rockets fired from Gaza into southern Israel. In November 2009, Hamas declared a unilateral cessation of rocket fire, although this has been since been breached on several occasions by members of Palestinian armed groups. Israeli military forces, meanwhile, have conducted regular raids into Gaza and have continued to bomb the tunnels under the border at Rafah used for smuggling between Gaza and Egypt.

[In fact, whatever its stated justification, by restricting the food, medical supplies, educational equipment, and building materials allowed into Gaza, the Israeli authorities are collectively punishing the entire population of Gaza, the majority of whom are children, rather than targeting those responsible for carrying out rocket or other attacks. The situation is made all the worse by the Egyptian government’s continued general closure of the Rafah crossing and, most recently, by its construction of a steel wall along the border at Rafah to disrupt the cross-border smuggling that has become Gaza’s life-line. However, as the occupying power, it is Israel that bears the foremost responsibility for ensuring the welfare of the inhabitants of Gaza.²⁷²

[Clearly, as this study has shown, the cause of the current catastrophe has far more to do with Israel’s refusal to relieve the injurious and inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip than it does with Hamas’ refusal to control the rockets fired into Israel. For Hamas has demonstrated that, with sufficient incentive, it can control the rockets. Israel, however, has demonstrated its unwillingness to allow the people of Gaza a life worth living. Until Israel is willing to end the occupation and to grant the Palestinians their own state—a state with such dimensions and character that they do indeed have a life worth living, there will be no peace for either side in this tragic conflict.

[On 3 April 2009, the president of the United Nations Human Rights Council established the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict with the mandate “to investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law that might have been committed at any time in the context of the military operations that were conducted in Gaza during the period from 27 December 2008 and 18 January, 2009, whether before, during or after.”²⁷³ The report of the findings of this Mission is commonly called the Goldstone Report.

[With regard to Palestinian armed groups, the Mission found that:

[In relation to the firing of rockets and mortars into Southern Israel by Palestinian armed groups operating in the Gaza Strip, ... the Palestinian armed groups fail to distinguish between military targets and the civilian population and civilian objects in Southern Israel. The launching of rockets and mortars which cannot be aimed with sufficient precisions at military targets breaches the fundamental principle of distinction. Where there is no intended military target and the rockets and mortars are launched into civilian areas, they constitute a deliberate attack against the civilian population. These actions would constitute war crimes and may amount to crimes against humanity.

[And with regard to Israel, the Mission found that

[the following grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention were committed by Israeli forces in Gaza: willful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, and extensive destruction of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly. As grave breaches these acts give rise to individual criminal responsibility. The Mission notes that the use of human shields also constitutes a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, [and] that the series of acts that deprive Palestinians in the Gaza Strip of their means of subsistence, employment, housing and water, that deny their freedom of movement and their right to leave and enter their own country, that limit their rights to access a court of law and an effective remedy, could lead a competent court to find that the crime of persecution, a crime against humanity, has been committed.²⁷⁴

[Furthermore, as reported in the Goldstone Report, the number of Palestinians killed during Israel’s attack on Gaza is estimated to be between 1,387 and 1,417. These numbers are based on estimates obtained after extensive field research and from nongovernmental organizations. “According to the Government of Israel, during the military operations there were 4 Israeli fatal casualties in southern Israel, of whom 3 were civilians and one soldier, killed by rockets and mortars attacks by Palestinian armed groups. In addition, 9 Israeli soldiers were killed during the fighting inside the Gaza strip, 4 of whom as a result of friendly fire.”²⁷⁵

[In interviewing Palestinian victims, human rights defenders, civil society interlocutors, and officials, the Mission reported frequent comments about the hope that “this would be the last investigative mission of its kind, because action for justice would follow from it” and that “every time a report is published and no action follows, this ‘emboldens Israel and her conviction of being untouchable.’”

[To deny modes of accountability reinforces impunity and impacts negatively on the credibility of the United Nations, and of the international community. The Mission believes these comments ought to be at the forefront in the consideration by Members States and United Nations bodies of its findings and recommendations and action consequent upon them. *The Mission is firmly convinced that justice and respect for the rule of law are the indispensable basis for peace. The prolonged situation of impunity has created a justice crisis in the OPT that warrants action.* [Emphasis added.]²⁷⁶

[6 THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

[6.1 Governing Structure

[The evolution and structure of the governing bodies of the Palestinian people both in the Diaspora and in the Occupied Territories (West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) is somewhat complex. The Arab League, during the 1964 Cairo

meeting, created the Palestine National Council (PNC) as the legislative arm of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which will be described in detail below. The PNC meets approximately biannually and operates as the Palestinian Parliament in exile. The PNC consists of the elected Palestine Legislative Council (PLC) (which also will be described in detail below) members to represent the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, and members at large to represent the Palestinian Diaspora. Among past actions of the PNC was the creation of the PLO in 1964, adoption of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1988, and ratification of the Oslo Accords in 1993.²⁷⁷ (Also see section 4, Failed Peace Process and Its Consequences, p. 1059.)

[The PLO is an umbrella organization for several parties all of which share the goal of an independent Palestinian state. For example, Fatah, is one party and the largest within the PLO. Governing bodies for the PLO are the PNC, which is the legislative branch, the Executive Committee, which is appointed by the PNC and conducts the business of the PNC between its biannual meetings, and the Central Committee, which serves as the advisory body for the PLO. Ostensibly, these organizations represent all the Palestinian people including those in the Diaspora.]

[A description of the governing bodies within the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) follows. A summary description of the government and administration of the Palestinian Authority (PA) can be found on the web site of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem (PASSIA).²⁷⁸ The following content is a brief summary of that document. Pursuant to the Oslo Accords signed in September, 1993 (see Section 4 Failed Peace Process and Its Consequences, p. 1059), the West Bank was divided into three areas designated as areas A, B, and C. In Area A, comprised of 17.2 percent of the West Bank (as of October 2000), the Palestinian Authority (PA) was to have jurisdiction and security control; however Israel retained authority of movement in and out of Area A and in fact conducts almost daily incursions into Area A. In Area B (23.8 percent of the West Bank), the PA has civil authority and responsibility for public order, while Israel maintains a "security presence." Finally, Area C consisted of the remaining 59 percent of the West Bank and was and continues to be under total Israeli control and occupation. In spite of this apparent control by the PA of some areas of the West Bank, under international law Israel remains the occupying power over all the OPT including East Jerusalem.]

[Within the context of the Oslo Accords, the agreement, between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, called for the creation of an interim administrative organization to govern the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem (to be determined at final status talks) within the limitations of areas A, B, and C. This organization became known as the Palestinian National Authority (PNA or PA as is more commonly used). The peace process was to last five years after which there would be final status talks and the creation of the State of Palestine. As we have seen, this process failed.]

[The West Bank and the Gaza Strip were divided into sixteen governorates, eleven in the West Bank including East Jerusalem and five in the Gaza Strip. The president of the PA appoints the governors who are subordinate to the Ministry of Local Government. Municipal and village councils, of which there are 557, have administrative responsibility for water, electricity, waste disposal, schools, planning and building control, road construction and maintenance, and control of public markets; however the Israeli authorities limited their powers and took control over policies and budgets. "The Arab Jerusalem Municipality Council was completely dissolved." Of the total number of municipal and village council members, 13.4 percent were women, mostly in the West Bank.²⁷⁹

[As mentioned earlier, the Palestinian Authority held elections on January 25, 2006, for the Palestine Legislative Council. These elections were monitored by international observers, including former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and were certified as fair and democratic. On September 26, 2005, during the campaigns for the elected seats in the Palestine Legislative Council, Israeli Occupation Forces arrested 450 members of the Hamas party, most of whom were actively campaigning for the municipal elections or the PLC. The majority of those detained were kept in administrative detention for varying periods of time and released a few days before or after the day of elections. Furthermore "during the elections the Israeli authorities banned the candidates from holding election campaigns inside Jerusalem. Rallies and public meetings were prohibited. Those who violated the order were arrested. For example, on January 3, 2006, Dr. Mustafa Barghouthi, head of the Independent Palestine coalition list, was arrested in East Jerusalem whilst on a tour of the Old City as part of the Legislative election campaign."²⁸⁰

[In June of 2006, Hamas militants abducted Cpl. Gilad Shalit shortly after which "Israel detained dozens of Palestinians holding senior positions in the Palestinian Authority, some of them ministers in the Hamas government, and most of the members of the Palestinian Legislative Council on behalf of Hamas in the West Bank. ... In May 2007, following a Qassam attack on Sderot, the army arrested dozens more senior Palestinian officials, among them the Minister of Education ... and the Minister for Fence and Settlements Affairs. ... These two ministers and forty five members of the PLC continue to be held in detention in Israel."²⁸¹ As of September 2009, there were twenty four Hamas members of the Palestine Legislative Council (Parliament) in Israeli custody.²⁸² The Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (the Goldstone Report)

[finds that these practices have resulted in violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including the prohibition of arbitrary detention, the right to equal protection under the law and not to be discriminated based on political beliefs and the special protections to which children are entitled. The Mission also finds that the detention of PLC members may amount to collective punishment contrary to international humanitarian law.²⁸³

[In spite of the difficulties encountered in the campaign, Hamas won many municipal seats throughout the West Bank and Gaza and 76 of 132 parliamentary seats in the parliamentary election thus enabling it to select the prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh. Thus Hamas replaced Fatah as the majority party. The elected president of the PA, Mahmoud Abbas, is affiliated with Fatah, which caused tensions between the largely Fatah dominated senior bureaucratic personnel and the newly appointed Hamas ministers and deputy ministers.

[Israel and its supporters, the United States and European Union, refused to recognize the new Hamas prime minister and instituted an economic blockade of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in an effort to unseat the Hamas government. Violence erupted, thought by many to be aided and abetted by the United States and Israel, within the Palestinian territories with the end result that in 2007 Hamas controlled the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority and Fatah the West Bank. President Abbas then appointed Salam Fayyad (who belongs to the Third Way party) as the prime minister in the West Bank.

[Donors to the PA bypassed the existing financial institutions (mainly the Hamas headed Finance Ministry) and channeled funds via the president's office. The surprising win by Hamas at the polls was thought, by many Palestinians, to be the result of disillusionment with Fatah and the perception of widespread corruption within the PA. Many Palestinians resented the interference with their elections by Israel and others. They felt that they worked for two years to plan a fair and democratic election and against great odds managed to carry on campaigns in spite of arrests and restrictions on travel. During and shortly after the economic boycott, one manifestation of this resentment was the oft repeated statement: "I did not vote for Hamas, but if I had a chance again, I would vote for Hamas."

[The Palestine Legislative Council (PLC) consists of 132 elected members (with six seats reserved for Christians). Palestinians vote solely for party lists. All presidential and parliamentary candidates are furthermore required to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. According to the U. S. Department of State 2008 Human Monitor for Israel and the Occupied Territories, there were seventeen women in the 132 member PLC and three women in the sixteen member cabinet formed in June. There were seven Christians in the PLC and two in the cabinet during the year 2008.²⁸⁴

[“Since the PLC elections in 1996, the development of a legal infrastructure and judicial system—devastated by decades of neglect under occupation, the lack of regulatory frameworks and a confusing mixture of Ottoman, British Mandate, Egyptian, and Jordanian laws as well as Israeli military orders—has been a priority. As of November 2005, eighty five laws had been passed and signed, while another seven were awaiting signature by the president and others were pending in their readings or reviews by the PLC, or being drafted.”²⁸⁵ The Palestinian Basic Law was passed on July 7, 2002, and serves as a basis for a constitution. In 2005, there were a chief justice and 128 judges (thirteen of them women) serving in the PA court system, consisting of the Supreme Court, Appeals Court, First Instance Courts, and Magistrate Courts.²⁸⁶

[6.2 Human Rights

[Arrests. In the past, in a response to suicide bombing and strong pressure from Israel and the United States, the PA conducted large scale arrests of individuals from various factions suspected of planning and carrying out suicide bombing. These arrests included members of Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Palestine Front for Liberation of Palestine, and others.²⁸⁷ According to PASSIA, “The insufficient conduct of legal proceedings, arbitrary raids and arrests, violation of the right to freedom of expression, as well as the torture of detainees have become regular complaints.”²⁸⁸

[Freedom of the Press. “The Basic Law permits every person the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and expression, orally, in writing, or through any other form. The PA does not have laws providing for freedom of press. A press law enjoins criticizing the PA or the president, but it was not applied. The climate of violence induced self censorship, and both the PA security forces in the West Bank and members of the Hamas security apparatus in Gaza restricted freedoms of speech and press. Individuals criticizing the authorities publicly risked reprisal, and during the year (2007) PA security forces and Hamas Executive Forces closed media offices, confiscated equipment, prevented the delivery of newspapers, and assaulted journalists during demonstrations.”²⁸⁹

[Deaths. From September 29, 2000, to December 26, 2008, five hundred and ninety three Palestinians were killed by Palestinians, 120 of them on suspicion of collaborating with Israel.²⁹⁰ According to the Palestine Human Rights Monitoring Group, (PHRMG) 161 collaborators were killed by Palestinians and the PA Security Forces between September 28, 2000, and August 31, 2008, and a total of thirty five honor killings occurred in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 2003–August 2008.²⁹¹ According to B’Tselem, there were seventy one death sentences of which thirteen were executed.²⁹²

[7 LAW IN OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

[7.1 Separate Laws for Settlers and Palestinians

[The system of military rule imposed upon the OPT²⁹³ has been in place ever since the 1967 War. It is in some ways the most primary of the elements that comprise the matrix of control since (see Section 5) it is the one that makes all the others

possible. However, it has changed over the years of the occupation only in expanding and contracting as Israel's military commanders deemed it necessary for its control needs.

[The 1967 War ended the geographic separation between the Israelis and the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, which had existed during the eighteen years since the end of the 1947-49 War. This created a critical demographic problem for the government of Israel, for these areas contained some 900,000 Palestinians who had not fled during the war or been expelled shortly after its end.²⁹⁴ Israel could simply annex the West Bank and Gaza, thereby granting citizenship to their Palestinian residents, as she had done with the Palestinians who had not been driven out of Israel in the 1947-49 War, who by 1967 numbered some 400,000. But then Israel would face a Palestinian population of some 1.3 million. Given that the Palestinian birthrate was higher than that for Israel, eventually the number of Palestinians would exceed the number of Jews in the state. This was unacceptable to the leadership of Israel, for whom the ideal state of Israel was for Jews alone.

[Consequently, unwilling on the one hand to risk the international, political costs of eviction and unwilling on the other hand to accept the internal, social implications of annexation, the Israeli government settled for the option of leaving the Palestinians in place, but putting them under a tight, oppressive military rule.

[On June 7, the third day of the 1967 War, the commander of the Israeli occupying forces placed the OPT under strict military rule, justifying himself with the words, "in the interests of security and public order."²⁹⁵ Military Order No. 2 stated, "All powers of governance, legislation, appointment and administration in relation to the Region and its inhabitants shall henceforth invest in me alone and shall be exercised by me ...". The proclamation went on to state that the military commander had the power to enact any law, make legislative changes, and cancel or suspend any existing law. These military orders immediately became law for all Palestinians living in the OPT.

[In addition to establishing military rule, Israel rejected the applicability to the OPT of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, the most important humanitarian law pertaining to the land and the population of occupied territories.²⁹⁶ Israel's rationale was that the West Bank and Gaza should not be considered "occupied" territory because, though the two regions had been ruled by Jordan and Egypt from 1948 to 1967, they had never legally become a part of those two states. Consequently, they are disputed, not occupied, territory. Therefore, since they are not "occupied territory," they are not subject to the Fourth Geneva Convention.²⁹⁷ The international community has rejected entirely these arguments.

[Further, though it rejected the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel accepted the principles of The Hague Conventions and Regulations of 1907, in particular article 43, which specifies that the occupying power must recognize the laws that were in force when a territory was occupied. Consequently, Israel was able to set up in the OPT a complex legal tradition that incorporated laws from the period of Ottoman rule, from the time of the British Mandate (in particular the emergency regulations from 1945), Jordanian laws in the West Bank, and Egyptian laws in Gaza.²⁹⁸ Israel's transparent purpose in this adoption is well described by Neve Gordon:

[The implementation of this complex and comprehensive legal system has not only enabled Israel to enact any law it wishes, but also to change or cancel local laws that were in place prior to the occupation. Those parts of the Jordanian or Egyptian law that advanced Israel's political objectives were maintained, while other parts that hindered these objectives were altered or annulled. ... Israel opted for a partial adoption of the pertinent clauses of the Hague Convention, one that corresponded to its needs.²⁹⁹

[Since June 1967, the military commander has issued more than 2,500 of these military orders, and they have dealt with virtually every aspect of the matrix of control, as well as military, judiciary, and fiscal matters; and administrative affairs, including education, welfare, and health. After the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993 and 1995, the military order system continued to apply to all Palestinians in the OPT, even those living in Area A, which was exclusively under the civil and security control of the Palestinian Authority. Palestinians are often unaware that new military orders have been issued because they have not normally been translated into Arabic.³⁰⁰ They are frequently revised, almost impossible to challenge, and can apply retroactively.

[As part of rule by military law, Israel set up a system of military courts, replete with military judges and prosecutors. Though Palestinians charged with violations of local Palestinian law are tried in Palestinian courts, all those charged with violations of military edicts are tried in the Israeli military court system. All the officials of the court system are military officers, many of whom do not have sufficient judicial training. It has been frequently noted by NGOs and human rights organizations that, all too often, the court procedures not only do not fall within the required international standards of fair trial, but are gross violations of the same.³⁰¹

[This system of military law was also largely established by a permit system created by military orders. Permits monitored and controlled every aspect of Palestinian life,³⁰² such as, for example, car registration, opening a business, or constructing any kind of building. By March 1968, every male over the age of sixteen had to be registered and carry an identity card at all times. Entire areas such as the Jordan Valley were made closed zones, requiring a permit to enter.

[It is difficult to overstate the immense, and often negative, impact that this self-serving system of military law has had upon the occupation. Neve Gordon assesses its significance as follows:

[T]he conception of the law as an instrument that protects the individual from the sovereign—which can be traced back to the Magna Carta (1215) and, more recently, to post-World War II international law—was totally foreign to the legal system Israel set up in the OPT. It is therefore no coincidence that this system was never applied to the Jewish settlers who moved into the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These settlers ... were subjected to Israeli civilian law. ... By transforming Jewish settlers into ... creatures that are entitled to “personal jurisdiction” (i.e., laws that follow people), Israel managed to create a situation whereby two ethnic groups sharing the same space have actually been subjected to two radically different legal systems.³⁰³

[This complex system of legal governance served to sanction and make possible the alleged legality, legitimacy, and morality of the matrix of control. As Neve Gordon observes, “The law served as the foundation for almost all of the other controlling apparatuses and practices and in many ways shaped their operation.”³⁰⁴ It is thus not difficult to conclude that these two separate laws are institutionalized discrimination against the Palestinian People.

[7.2 Violations of International and Humanitarian Laws

[This report thus far has described the conditions leading to the creation of the State of Israel and the reality under which the Palestinian People live. Deprivation of the human rights of the Palestinian People under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Law has been discussed in some detail beginning with the British Mandate in 1922 until the present day under Israeli occupation.

[Human Rights as defined by international law are codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly 217 A (III) on December 10, 1948.³⁰⁵ This declaration arose after the experience of World War II and specifically after the Hitler’s holocaust of Jews and others. The preamble recognizes that “the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” A brief summary of some of the thirty articles in the Declaration is provided here:

[everyone has the right to: life, liberty and security of person (Article 3); freedom from torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 5); recognition everywhere as a person before the law (Article 6); equality before the law and entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law (Article 7); not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile (Article 9); not be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation (Article 12); freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state or leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country (Article 13); nationality or not be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality (Article 15); not be arbitrarily deprived of his property (Article 17); and freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19).

[Here in brief summary are the details of the present state of Human Rights in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. There are many sources of information on this subject. The B’Tselem Annual Report 2007 “Human Rights in the Occupied Territories”³⁰⁶ summarizes Human Rights violations in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. The U.S. Department of State “2008 Human Rights Report: Israel and the occupied territories”³⁰⁷ is also a good source of information. There are many other human rights groups that can be consulted on the subject. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, PASSIA, Al Haq, and Miftah are just a few.

[According to B’Tselem 2007 Report, the intentional killing of civilians not taking part in hostilities is a grave breach of the right to life and is classified in international humanitarian law as a war crime. Both Israel and Palestinians have killed innocent civilians. B’Tselem estimates that in 2007 alone, Israel killed 379 Palestinians of whom 133 were not participating in hostilities and 50 were not possible to determine if they were engaged in hostilities. During the same period, Palestinians killed 7 Israeli civilians not engaged in hostilities. The Israeli government continues to practice collective punishment, a tightened siege, and sanctions of the Gaza Strip. According to B’Tselem the Gazan economy is devastated and “more than 80% of Gazans depend on direct assistance from humanitarian agencies to keep them from starving.” Gaza is often called a big prison containing 1.5 million Palestinians. This blockade and siege of Gaza is in violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

[Other violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people are the restriction of movement in and out of Gaza and in and out and within the West Bank. The wall/fence, forbidden road system, earth mounds, and other road closures all hinder the movement of people and goods within the West Bank. The opinion of B’Tselem is that “these restrictions constitute a form of collective punishment, which is categorically prohibited by international humanitarian law.”³⁰⁸ Beatings and humiliations by Israeli security forces are extensive. “The large number of cases, their severity and their frequency all indicate that ill treatment is not committed by a handful of ‘rotten apples’, but is common and constitutes a systematic failure.”³⁰⁹

[More than 6,000 Palestinians were detained for interrogation by the Israel Security Agency (known as Shin Bet). Detainees were subjected to varying amounts of psychological and physical abuse. According to B’Tselem, some interrogations included the use of physical force that amounted to torture. There were many complaints sent to the Israel State Attorney’s Office; however the government failed to initiate criminal proceedings. According to B’Tselem, “this failure exposes the Israel Security Agency interrogators and those in the political echelon who supervise them to criminal prosecution abroad.”

[Israeli soldiers continued using Palestinians as human shields—forcing them to perform dangerous military tasks or to protect soldiers from gunfire. Settler violence against West Bank citizens continued. B’Tselem investigated many cases and claims that it occurs daily in the Hebron City Center. Cases of settler violence, even when brought to the attention of the courts, seldom result in punishment. Moreover, Palestinians are tried in military courts whereas settlers are tried in Israeli civil courts. “This dual system is discriminatory with regard to the right to fair trial, in that it is based solely on the nationality of the defendants. Such discrimination is patently prohibited by both international and Israeli law.”³¹⁰

[Other violations of human rights, most of which are described more fully in the report, are the denial of family unification; discriminatory distribution of water in the West Bank; the existence and expansion of the settlements (colonies) in the West Bank; settler violence and the restriction of movement; restricted urban planning, house demolitions, isolation, and expulsion of residents; revocation of residency in East Jerusalem; and the separation barrier and its consequences. B'Tselem, in its 2007 Annual Report on Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, describes more fully each of these areas of human rights violations.]

[The Palestinian Authority and the Hamas government have also committed human rights violations against Palestinians. According to B'Tselem, clashes between Fatah and Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip resulted in increased incidences of human rights violations. Seventy three deaths of innocent bystanders, twenty three of them children, occurred during street fighting or from gunfire during demonstrations. There have also been reports of torture of detainees by the Palestinian Authority.³¹¹

[8 UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT OF ISRAEL BY THE UNITED STATES

[Based on funding, supplies of arms, vetoes in the United Nations Security Council, and media, the United States government is a strong partner and supporter of Israel in its war efforts, settlement, and economic development.]

[8.1 Support Through Funding

[A comprehensive and thorough estimate of total U.S. aid to Israel from 1949 to 2008 is provided in an article by the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs November 8, 2008, issue.³¹² The conservative estimate is that Israel over the years has received \$14,992.47 billion. This amount is considered to be a conservative estimate because additional moneys are buried in the budgets of various U. S. agencies such as the Defense Department or “in a form not easily quantifiable, such as the early disbursement of aid, giving Israel a direct benefit in interest income and the U.S. Treasury a corresponding loss.”³¹³ Sources for these estimates were obtained from the Congressional Research Service Report RL33222, U. S. Foreign Aid to Israel, updated January 2, 2008, and the FY '08 omnibus appropriations bill, H.R. 2764.]

[However others contend that costs to American taxpayers due to the Israel/Palestine conflict is much more than the direct contributions to Israel. Thomas R. Stauffer, who has taught the economics of energy and the Middle East at Harvard and Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, published a report that estimates the cost to U. S. tax payers to be close to \$3 trillion measured in 2002 dollars.³¹⁴ Stauffer claims that approximately 60 percent (which amounts to \$1.7 trillion) resulted from the U.S. defense of Israel since 1973. The majority of the remaining amount is due to a series of six oil supply crises since the end of World War II.]

[United States aid to the Palestinian Authority totaled \$622.458 million³¹⁵ for the 2004 to 2008 budget years. This compares to \$10,282.97 billion to Israel during the same period of time. The ratio of Palestinian aid to Israeli aid is 1 to 16,520! There is certainly nothing evenhanded about this disparity in aid.]

[8.2 Support Through the Supply of Arms

[Military weapons are machines designed to kill. *Consider what has been done with these machines in Lebanon, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip!*

[Citing U. S. government sources³¹⁶ Frida Berrigan and William D. Hartung, foreign policy scholars at Foreign Policy in Focus, estimate that “between 1996 and 2005 (the last year for which full data are available), Israel took delivery of \$10.19 billion in U.S. weaponry and military equipment, including more than \$8.58 billion through the Foreign Military Sales program, and another \$1.61 billion in Direct Commercial Sales.”³¹⁷ The most prominent arms deal during the Bush administration was a \$4.5 billion sale of 102 Lockheed Martin F 16s. This type of aircraft has been used by Israel in its assaults on Lebanon, civilian areas of the West Bank and Gaza. A selected list of other U.S. weapons “purchased” from the U.S. and included in the Israeli arsenal is: rifles, grenade launchers, 2.50 caliber machine guns, ammunition, cluster bombs; F 4E Phantom, F 15 Eagle, and F 16 Fighting Falcon fighter planes; AH 64 Apache Attack, Cobra Attack, CH 53D Sea Stallion, and Blackhawk helicopters; AGM 65 Maverick, AGM 114 Hellfire, TOW, AIM 7 Sparrow missiles, AIM 9 Sidewinder, AIM 120 B AMRAAM, Patriot, and Harpoon Anti Ship Missiles.³¹⁸

[In contrast, the Palestinian Authority or Hamas have none of these weapons creating an enormous disparity in military power.]

[“Critics of U.S. aid policy, particularly some in the Middle East, argue that U.S. foreign aid exacerbates tensions in the region. Many Arab commentators insist that U.S. assistance to Israel indirectly causes suffering to Palestinians by supporting Israeli arms purchases. In the past, the United States reduced loan guarantees to Israel in opposition to continued settlement building, but it has not acted to cut Israel's military or economic grant aid.”³¹⁹

[8.3 Support Through Vetoes on Behalf of Israel

[The United States first exercised its veto privilege in the Security Council in 1970. Its first veto on behalf of Israel was on July 26, 1973. From that date until the end of 2009, the United States used the veto eighty two times and of those eighty-

two times, forty one were on behalf of Israel.³²⁰ Here is a small sampling of the draft resolutions that were vetoed by the United States:

[•—Three draft resolutions dated Nov 11, 2006, July 13, 2006, and October 5, 2004, demanding that Israel withdraws from Gaza and that both parties stop the violence.

[•—March 25, 2004: condemnation of the assassination of Ahmed Yassin, the leader of Hamas.

[•—On Oct 14, 2003: regarding the wall/fence built by Israel in the West Bank.

[•—On Sept 16, 2003: regarding the Israeli decision to “remove” Palestinian Authority leader, Yasser Arafat.

[•—Dec 20, 2002: on the killing by Israeli forces of several United Nations employees and the destruction of the World Food Program (WFP) warehouse.

[•—Two resolutions in 2001: the first on the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian controlled territory and condemning acts of terror against civilians and the second on establishing a UN observer force to protect Palestinian civilians.

[•—In 1997: calling upon Israel to refrain from East Jerusalem settlement activities and demanding Israel’s immediate cessation of construction at Jabal Abu Ghneim (now known as Har Homa settlement) in East Jerusalem.

[9] CHRISTIAN PRESENCE

[The Christian community has maintained an unbroken presence and witness in Jerusalem since Pentecost, gradually spreading throughout Palestine, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean world.³²¹ Much has been written about the history of Christianity in the Middle East. The subject is complex and cannot be reasonably considered within this short discussion. Christians of the Middle East, including Palestine, are part of the rich tapestry of Arabic culture. Arabic is the native language of the majority of Middle Eastern Christians. Many Palestinian Christians trace their history to the early church in Palestine and have a deep love and attachment to the land of Palestine.

[There is continuing concern about the numbers of Christians remaining in the Middle East and particularly in Palestine. Estimates of numbers in the Middle East throughout the past two millennia are difficult to obtain at best. During the Byzantine Empire, Christians were thought to be the majority population of Palestine, Egypt, and much of the Near East. At present it is estimated that 9,246,000 to 16,206,000 Christians live in the Middle East. Currently, Christians have been emigrating from the Middle East, and reasons for the outmigration vary by country. Political upheavals in Lebanon; discrimination in Israel, Egypt, and Iran; the occupation and economic decline in the West Bank and Gaza; and security in Iraq are some of the reasons. Christians in Jordan and Syria appear to experience the least difficulties in the Middle East; however numbers are reported to be declining there as well. The table below provides estimates by country.³²²

Country	Estimated Numbers	Percentage of Population	Reasons for Decline
Lebanon	1.35 M ¹ to 1.6 M	34-41%	Political Situation
Israel	144 K ² to 196 K	2.1-2.9%	Discrimination
West Bank and Gaza	40 K-90 K	1.1-2.4%	Occupation, Economic Decline
Egypt	5.8 M-11 M	8-16%	Discrimination
Syria	970K-1.7 M	5.4-9.4%	None given
Jordan	163 K-220 K	3-4%	None given
Iraq	700 K-1 M	2.7-3.5%	Security
Iran	79 K-400K	0.1-0.6%	Discrimination
Gulf States	2,048.9 K to 2,083.9 K	These are expatriate workers from many countries.	

[1: ‘M’ denotes ‘Million’; 2: ‘K’ denotes ‘Thousand’

[Although the total numbers of Christians in Israel and the Palestinian Territories have gradually increased, the proportions have declined significantly. According to the 1922 British census of Mandate Palestine,³²³ Christians constituted 9.50 percent of the total population. Using estimates from the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the proportion of Christians in Israel and the Palestinian Territories is estimated to be 1.9 percent. However, in certain areas, the Christian population has *decreased* in absolute numbers. An example is the Jerusalem Bethlehem area, which “today has a Christian Palestinian population that is at least 12,000 less than the numbers of 1945.”³²⁴ Clearly, the Christian population is not growing at the same rate as the Jewish and Muslim populations.

[The perception that the numbers of Christians are dwindling is underscored further if one examines population growth patterns. If one assumes that the population growth has an exponential distribution, and using British census data for Mandate Palestine from the years 1914 to 1947,³²⁵ the growth rate parameter can be estimated; then using the 1945 number of Christians as a starting point, we would expect the population of Christians to double. Clearly, since the Christian population has not doubled and since there have been no reports of famine or epidemics, the natural conclusion is that outmigration is a major contributory factor to the population dynamics of Christians.

[The reduction in the proportion of Christians is attributed to lower birthrates and the higher rates of outmigration,³²⁶ which result from the occupation with its difficulties for daily life. A further concern of this outmigration is that those who migrate, either Christian or Muslim, are those whose political views are “liberals or seculars” thus tending to leave behind a greater proportion of those on the extremes in political orientation.³²⁷

[Propaganda on the issue of the decline in the numbers of Christians in the Middle East is frequent. A common assertion is that Christians experience discrimination in majority Muslim countries; however such a statement is misleading. The U.S. Department of State cites examples of discrimination against Christians by the government of Israel, which is not predominantly Muslim. In the Palestinian Territories, which are predominantly Muslim, Christians have six reserved seats and the Samaritans have one reserved out of the 132 seats in the Legislative Council. Party affiliations of Christians are either Fatah Party or Independents.³²⁸ Mainstream Muslim thinking about Christians in their midst is exemplified by the words of El Has-san Bin Talal, the previous Crown Prince of Jordan (now the present king's uncle):

[Christians remain leading spokesmen for Arab national causes — most notably, the Palestinian Arab cause. ... Christian Arabs are in no way aliens to Muslim Arab society: a society whose history and culture they have shared for over fourteen centuries to date, without interruption, and to whose material and moral civilization they have continually contributed, and eminently so, on their own initiative or by trustful request. With such a heritage of trust and good faith in their favour, Christian Arabs need not feel any more apprehensive than other Arabs for things to come. With the patience, resilience and empathy for which they have been historically known, and the imaginative leadership they have rarely lacked, they will surely be at no loss to find their place in the Arab world of the future, to their own benefit, and to the benefit of all other parties concerned.³²⁹

[Christian churches and denominations are varied and provide a rich heritage to the Arab culture of Palestine and elsewhere in the Middle East. There are four major divisions of Christians: the Orthodox churches, the Orthodox Byzantine churches (known as “Greek Orthodox churches”), Catholic churches, and Protestant churches. Each of these divisions is yet divided further.³³⁰ The table below is a listing of these churches.

[I. Oriental Orthodox Churches:

- [1. — “Assyrian Church of the East” or Oriental Syrian Church
- [2. — The Syrian orthodox Church of Antioch
- [3. — The Coptic Orthodox Church
- [4. — The Armenian Apostolic Church:
 - [(a) — Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin
 - [(b) — Patriarchate of the Throne of Saint Jacques of Jerusalem
 - [(c) — Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople
 - [(d) — Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia

[II. Eastern (Byzantine or Greek) Orthodox Churches

- [1. — Patriarchate of Alexandria, Patriarchate of Alexandria and all of Africa
- [2. — Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all of the East
- [3. — Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
- [4. — Monastery of Saint Catherine from the Mount Sinai

[III. Catholic Churches:

- [1. — Maronite Patriarchate of Antioch and of all the East
- [2. — Melkite Catholic Greek Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East, Alexandria and Jerusalem
- [3. — Chaldean Catholic Church: Chaldean Patriarchate of Babylon
- [4. — The Coptic Catholic Church: Patriarchate of Alexandria
- [5. — Catholic Armenian Church: Armenian Patriarchate of Cilicia
- [6. — Syrian Catholic Church: Antioch Patriarchate of the Syrians
- [7. — The Catholic Church of the Latin Rite

[IV. Protestant Churches: 11 denominations

[A concise history explaining these divisions can be found in the article, “Christian Churches in the Near and Middle East.”³³¹ Unlike the Christians in the West, those in the East have lived as a minority in a society predominantly Muslim. This heritage provides an environment conducive to reconciliation between the three faiths in Palestine-Israel. The European Jewish immigration into Palestine brought with it a traumatized people who were the victims of religious persecution and this has unfortunately become a dominant characteristic of interethnic/religious relationships between Jews and Christians and Muslims. Furthermore, the West’s intolerance of the Muslim culture has complicated relations between Muslims, the dominant religion, and Christians and Jews.]

[10 PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

[What is the solution to the Palestine/Israel conflict? It has been suggested there are four possible outcomes: (1) expulsion of all Palestinians from Palestine; (2) one state with fragmented and separated Palestinian “ghettos”; (3) two states, each sovereign and independent; and (4) one state that is binational or secular with equal rights for all its citizens.]

[10.1 Expulsion of All Palestinians from Palestine

[Consider option (1), i.e., the wish for the leadership in Israel to have a land without a people—free of all non-Jewish Palestinians whether Christian or Muslim. This wish has been expressed in various forms early from the founding of Zionism to this day. Nur Masalha in his book, *The Politics of Denial: Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem*,³³² describes in detail the theme of “population transfer” or “ethnic cleansing” in the thinking and action of the Zionist movement in Palestine-Israel. His work is largely based on Hebrew and Israeli archival sources and represents some of the most original work in this area and is frequently cited by later authors.]

[For example, Masalha writes that Israel Zangwill, a prominent Anglo-Jewish writer, was an early advocate of the transfer solution: worked relentlessly to propagate the slogan “a land without a people for a people without a land”³³³ Zionists knew that in fact that the land had people; however they viewed the Palestinians as people not worth considering. The view of Palestinians by most Zionists has not changed over the past century! As early as 1891, a leading liberal Russian Jewish thinker, Ahad Ha’Am (Asher Zvi Ginsberg) observed that the Zionist “pioneers” believed that

[the only language that the Arabs understand is that of force. ... [The Zionist “pioneers”] behave towards the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, trespass unjustly upon their boundaries, beat them shamefully without reason and even brag about it, and nobody stands to check this contemptible and dangerous tendency.³³⁴

[Masalha documents with meticulous detail the early plans of the Zionist elites that the “transfer” of the Palestinian people was a necessary prelude to the founding of the state of Israel. Tactics for such a transfer evolved with time. In the beginning there was hope that through negotiations with colonial powers such as Italy, England, and Turkey that these powers would cooperate with the voluntary or forced transfer of the Palestinian population. When these tactics failed, then purchase of land was the attempted device; however by late 1947, the Jewish National Fund and others had acquired by purchase only 6 to 8 percent of the land (see “Partition” in Section 2 above). Clearly other tactics were necessary if the Zionist leaders were to achieve their goal of a ‘land without people’. After the United Nations General Assembly voted to recommend partition of Palestine in 1947, civil war erupted. The Yishuv armed forces, the Haganah, Irgun Tzavi Leumi, and Lehi groups, were fully armed and on the offensive against a largely unarmed, disorganized, and powerless Palestinian groups. Both force and psychological intimidation were tactics used to initiate and implement the mass exodus of 750,000 to 800,000 Palestinians. After the cessation of hostilities and successful takeover of many villages by the Yishuv armed forces, the massacre of villagers was used as a successful device of intimidation resulting in the mass exodus.³³⁵

[The expulsion of approximately 60,000 Palestinians from the towns of Lydda and Ramle in July 1948 is just one example of outright forced expulsions. [For art and a picture, see Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, Figures 8 and 9, see pp. 1129–30.] Masalha writes

[Ben-Gurion and three senior army officers were directly involved: Yigal Allon, Yitzhak Rabin and Moshe Dayan. Shortly before the capture of the towns, Ben-Gurion met with his army chiefs. Allon, commander of the Palmach, the Haganah’s elite military force, asked Ben-Gurion, “What shall we do with the Arabs?” Ben-Gurion answered (or according to one version, gestured with his hand), “Expel them.” This was immediately communicated to the army headquarters and the expulsion implemented.³³⁶

[Benny Morris, one of the first Israeli historians to write about the Nakba, writes:

[At 13.30 hours on 12 July ... Lieutenant Colonel Yitzhak Rabin, Operation Dani head of Operations, issued the following order: “I. The inhabitants of Lydda must be expelled quickly without attention to age. ... Implement Immediately.” A similar order was issued at the same time to the Kiryati Brigade concerning the inhabitants of the neighbouring town of Ramle, occupied by Kiryati troops that morning. ... On 12 and 13 July, the Yiftah and Kiryati brigades carried out their orders, expelling the 50–60,000 remaining inhabitants of Lydda and Ramle and refugees camped in and around the two. ... About noon on 13 July ... Lydda’s inhabitants were forced to walk eastwards to the Arab Legion lines; many of Ramle’s inhabitants were ferried in trucks or buses. Clogging the roads ... the tens of thousands of refugees marched, gradually shedding their worldly goods along the way. It was a hot summer day. Arab chroniclers, such as Sheikh Muhammad Nimr al-Khatib, claimed that hundreds of children died in the march, from dehydration and disease. One Israeli witness described the spoor: the refugee column “to begin with [jettisoned] utensils and furniture and, in the end, bodies of men, women and children.”³³⁷

[Massacres did not stop in 1948–49. On October 29, 1956, Israeli border patrol massacred forty-eight Palestinian in Kafir Qasim, which was a village within Israel and near the “green line,” the so-called border between Israel and the West Bank.³³⁸ Palestinian sources put the death toll at forty-nine since one of the women was pregnant and her unborn child is counted as one of the casualties. The artist, Samia Halaby, collected eyewitness testimony [See Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, Figure 10, p. 1130.]:

[The women grouped together into one embrace and began to slowly turn as the bullets struck them. ... According to Kafir Qasim residents, the 16-year-old Hana Amer was in the middle and could hear the bullets thudding on the women. One after another the women and girls all fell in one place at which time Hana, wounded and bleeding fainted. There she remained till the following day when she woke up as they were removing the dead. ... In my drawing of the embrace before death, I draw Kahmise Amer in the front. She is first to begin falling. I show her wearing an *abbaye*, a tradition Arab coat, and her shoes fallen off her feet. Her son, Abu Butros, told me that on Wednesday afternoon when the curfew ended and they were allowed out of their homes, he found her shoes in the road along with pools of blood and other scattered possessions of the departed.³³⁹

[To the credit of some in the Israeli public who put pressure on their government, the Ben-Gurion government reluctantly agreed to bring the commanders responsible for the massacre to trial. They received jail sentences but were pardoned in one year and were then promoted.³⁴⁰

[The previous descriptions are but a small sample of the expulsions of approximately 750,000 Palestinians in 1947 to 1948 and later. The present Muslim and Christian population within Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza is at least 4 million. It would be difficult indeed to implement such a mass expulsion without worldwide revulsion. So option (1) is inconceivable and morally objectionable!

[10.2 One State with Fragmented and Separated Palestinian “Ghettos”

[The present situation resembles option (2) most closely in that the Palestinian people live in areas fragmented into many “ghettos” or “prisons.” The Gaza Strip has been frequently characterized as a 1.5 million people prison. East Jerusalem is under continuing pressure from the Israeli government with revocation of residency permits, house demolitions, and a myriad number of measures designed to make the people to quit and leave. We have seen with ample description in this report that the West Bank is divided into many enclaves with limited freedom of travel by the Palestinian people and their goods from one enclave to the next. A map that demonstrates the Palestinian loss of land beginning in 1946 (the white areas represent land owned by Jewish citizens of Palestine) can be found in the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, p. 1131, as Figure 11. The second map represents the land proposed by the UN Partition plan for the Palestinians (green areas) who were two-thirds of the population of Palestine; the third map represents the area bounded by the 1967 (or equivalently the 1949 armistice) borders; and finally the fourth map represents the present-day reality.

[That the present situation is unacceptable by the international community is amply clear. A permanent occupation and repression of a people by a state is morally and ethically unacceptable and is against all international laws.

[10.3 Two States, Each Sovereign and Independent

[On April 30, 2003, the Road Map was formally presented to Israel and the Palestinian Authority by the United States, European Union, Russia, and the United Nations (the Quartet). The plan is characterized as a performance-based and goal-driven roadmap that proposes three phases. The first phase to be implemented by May 2003, was intended to end terror and violence, normalizing Palestinian life, and building Palestinian institutions. The end of violence was explicitly stated as follows:

[Palestinian leadership issues unequivocal statement reiterating Israel’s right to exist in peace and security and calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to end armed activity and all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere. All official Palestinian institutions end incitement against Israel.

[Israeli leadership issues unequivocal statement affirming its commitment to the two-state vision of an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside Israel, as expressed by President Bush, and calling for an immediate end to violence against Palestinians everywhere. All official Israeli institutions end incitement against Palestinians.

[This first phase also calls for the Government of Israel (GOI) to immediately dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001 and, consistent with the Mitchell Report, GOI freezes all settlement activity (including natural growth of settlements). The second phase, to end in December 2003, was to focus on creating an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders and “attributes” of sovereignty, based upon the new constitution, which was to be written in Phase I. The third phase, to be completed by 2005, was to result in a permanent status agreement and end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.³⁴¹

[Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority immediately accepted the Road Map after its introduction by President Bush in a speech given June 2003; however very shortly thereafter Israel published fourteen “reservations.” To date the Road Map has not been implemented and Israel is proceeding with a greater land seizure through the building of the wall/fence and through expanded settlements.

[As in the Oslo agreements, the Road Map depended upon the willingness of the parties to negotiate. In fact the text of the Road Map contains the statement: “... however, as a performance-based plan, progress will require and depend upon the

good faith efforts of the parties, and their compliance with each of the obligations outlined below.²³⁴² Because of the unequal status and power of the two parties involved in the conflict, the weaker party is at the mercy of the stronger party—in this case Israel. It has been in Israel's interest to continually negotiate, i.e., have a “peace process” so that during the negotiations it can continue its land seizure and creation of facts on the ground. It has become abundantly clear to the Palestinians that the Road Map is dead.

[10.3.1 The Saudi Plan

[A second proposed peace plan for a two state solution was proposed by Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and approved by the Council of the League of Arab States summit in Beirut in 2002. The statement of the plan is concise and explicit.³⁴³ In summary form, the plan calls for “full Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967, implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, reaffirmed by the Madrid Conference of 1991 and the land for peace principle, and Israel's acceptance of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in return for the establishment of normal relations in the context of a comprehensive peace with Israel. It also called for a just solution to the Palestinian Refugee problem in accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution 194.”³⁴⁴

[According to a March 28, 2007, article that appeared in Ha'aretz,³⁴⁵ Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority voted for the plan and Ismail Haniyeh, the democratically elected prime minister now in control only in Gaza abstained from the vote but said that he would not oppose the peace plan. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared, “The Arab League initiative is positive in calling for normalization of relations with Israel. However, it contains some problematic aspects as well, such as insistence on a Palestinian ‘right of return’ and a predetermination of the border issues.”³⁴⁶

[To date no agreement has been reached based on either the Road Map or the Saudi Peace Plan. It is in Israel's interest to continuously negotiate to provide more time for creation of “facts on the ground” while the Palestinians are in disarray and are too weak to be a partner in realistic negotiations. By continuing to “exist,” the Palestinians are resisting nonviolently to their displacement and the erasure of their culture.

[The lives of Palestinians and Israelis are intertwined in many respects. By consulting the maps in Attachment I, which can be found starting on p. 1132 of the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, it is clear that separating the two peoples will be difficult. There are approximately 500,000 Israelis living in settlements in the West Bank and areas annexed to Jerusalem. If there were to be a two state solution with the 1949 armistice lines for borders, these people would either have to be moved to Israel, which would be difficult but not impossible, or they could become citizens of the new state of Palestine, a possibility that would very likely be unacceptable to the settlers. Furthermore, Israel depends very heavily on water from the West Bank mountain aquifer and an equitable and just agreement would have to be reached regarding its use. The difficulties are many but not insurmountable if the two parties choose to implement the two state option; however there is little evidence that Israel is willing to contemplate this choice. On the contrary, the continuing seizure of Palestinian land and construction of settlements all demonstrate Israel's wish to take all of Palestine. As Saeb Erekat, chief negotiation for the Palestinian authority states²²

[If the US Administration cannot compel Israel to halt the construction of settlements, who will believe that it will be able to compel Israel to withdraw to the borders of 4 June 1967, to withdraw from Eastern Jerusalem, and to resolve the issue of the refugees according to the UN resolutions, with Resolution No. 194 at their forefront?²⁴⁷

[10.4 One State That Is Either Binational or Secular with Equal Rights for All Its Citizens

[The pursuit of a two state solution has continued for many years, at least since the Oslo Accords in 1993. The perception by many is that the Road Map is dead. The Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, said that the “Palestinians may have to abandon the goal of an independent state if Israel continues to expand settlements and the United States does not stop it.” Palestinians may have to “refocus their attention on the one state solution where Muslims, Christians and Jews can live as equals.”³⁴⁸ An objection to a one state solution is the fear that Israel will cease to be a Jewish state. However, Mark Satin, claims that the majority of those proposing a one state solution do not question Israeli's right to exist as a Jewish state but rather “they question the *wisdom* of its existing as a specifically Jewish state when Jewish life and culture could be equally well (and arguably more securely and benignly) preserved in that same region in a secular, democratic state that was constitutionally sensitive to the needs of all its peoples.”³⁴⁹ Palestine, before 1948, was a multicultural society of Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Difficult though it may be after so much strife between Palestinians and Israelis, it is imperative for the sake of peace that they strive to live together with respect for each other's differences.

[There have been several suggestions for a one state solution to the Palestine Israel conflict. One possibility is a binational arrangement similar to that existing in Belgium or to a state where each person has an equal vote. Either format would entail enormous adjustments by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

[At present the Government of Israel has control over its own territory and the occupied territories. It even contests the term “occupie” and would rather use the term “disputed.” In other words the Government of Israel rules over all of Mandate

Palestine. As Ali Abunimah, a Palestinian American and editor of the *Electronic Intifada*, states “the two people[s] are completely interrelated and intertwined on every possible level. ... In reality, Palestine is Israel today and Israel is Palestine.”²³⁵⁰ There is already a *de facto* one state in which differing levels of discrimination against both Christians and Muslims exists. The quality of life in Israel for Christians and Muslims, though by no means ideal (see Section 5, Israel) is better than in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza (see Sections 5.2 to 5.4).

[There is much that must happen before the emergence of one state with equal rights for all its citizens. The occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza must stop; the wall/fence must be removed; freedom of movement throughout the territory previously known as Mandate Palestine must be possible with no highways for Jews only; integration of all schools and neighborhoods must occur; equal employment opportunities must be possible; discriminatory laws against non-orthodox Jews, Christians, and Muslims must be abolished; citizens of the state must have the right to purchase land irrespective of their religious affiliation; the state should support religious institutions of all three faiths equally; security for all its citizens must be assured; and safeguards for diversity of ethnic traditions must be in place.³⁵¹ In other words, all its citizens must enjoy the same human rights. The state would have to be bilingual with both Arabic and Hebrew signage and all legal documents. The issue of what to call the country can be resolved.

[The most contentious issue is Israel’s Law of Return that at present allows a Jewish person living anywhere outside Israel to immigrate to Israel but does not allow those of Palestinian origins to return to Palestine Israel. The right of return or compensation must be granted to Palestinians according to UN resolution 194 III and under accepted international laws (see Section II, Right of Return). This right is an individual right and cannot be negotiated away by governments.

[The right of return issue is at the heart of the conflict. Israelis see it as a threat to the identity of Israel as a Jewish state and Palestinians, who see the land as an inseparable part of their heritage and culture, see it as a necessary prelude to justice. A country composed of only one religious ethnic group is an anachronism in the 21st century. Israeli must come to terms with the notion that they can share Mandate Palestine with its indigenous Christian and Muslim people, who have lived there for centuries before the land was colonized in the 20th century by immigrants initially from Europe. Truth telling and acceptance of the other must be the preludes to peace.

[11 CONCLUSION

[We ended this overview of the Palestine Israel conflict with a section on the “Prospects for the Future” by presenting four possible outcomes. The first two options, which are a total dispossession and displacement of the indigenous Palestinians or the present reality with the Palestinians herded into ever shrinking ghettos, are morally and ethically unacceptable. Achieving either of the other two possibilities, two states, both sovereign and independent, or a one state that is either binational or secular with equal rights for all its citizens, appear not to be possible at this time. A two stage development where initially there would be two states that would then federate to form a binational state also seems unachievable at this time. The huge disparity in power, wealth, and international support enjoyed by Israel leaves them little incentive to change the present status that is a continuing dispossession of the Palestinians.

[Sixty two years after the United Nations General Assembly passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms in Article 2 that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, *religion*, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.[emphasis added],”³⁵² theocratic states in the Middle East that are “Islamic” or “Jewish” should be considered as anachronisms in the twenty first century. Such states cannot exist without practicing discrimination against citizens who are of the other faiths than those of the state.

[Frequently the criticism aimed at the Palestinians is that they, through their violence, are responsible for their treatment by Israel. The thought is that if they would only use nonviolent resistance, then Israel would feel secure and reconciliation would be possible. This accusation is unjust. When one talks with most Palestinians, they will voice their frustration but put their hope in *sumud*—their ability to withstand all their hardships and continue with their lives. They firmly believe that to continue to exist is their way of resisting. They will tell you that time is on their side and that history will repeat itself—meaning that the Israelis, like all previous invaders, eventually will blend with the people of Palestine Israel and become one with the others. This hope at this time seems unrealistic.

[Another example of nonviolent resistance is the weekly demonstrations that take place in Bil’in, a village 60 percent of whose land has been seized for a nearby Israeli settlement and the building of the wall. These demonstrations, supported by Israeli and international peace activists, are regularly met with violence from the Israeli Occupation Forces. Tear gas canisters, rubber bullets, and concussion grenades are used to disperse the demonstrations and raids into Bil’in to arrest and harass the organizers of the demonstrations are also common.³⁵³ The resolve of the leaders of the demonstrations is evident in the words and actions of Abdallah Abu Rahmah, a member of the Bil’in Popular Committee against the Wall. He was arrested on International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2009, by Israeli occupation forces that raided his house at 2 a.m. in the morning and arrested him in front of his wife and children.³⁵⁴ In a letter from prison, Abu Rahmah declared “whether we are confined in the open air prison that Gaza has been transformed into, in military prisons in the West Bank, or in our own vil-

lages surrounded by the Apartheid Wall, arrests and persecution do not weaken us. They only strengthen our commitment to turning 2010 into a year of liberation through unarmed grassroots resistance to the occupation.” “Unlike Israel, we have no nuclear weapons or army, but we do not need them. The justness of our cause earns us your support. No army, no prison and no wall can stop us.”³⁵⁵

[Other forms of nonviolent resistance are through the mediums of poetry, literature, and art. One example, the story of Ghassan Kanafani, is portrayed in Section 4.1.2 Targeted Assassinations. John Halaka, a painter, now professor of Visual Art at San Diego University in California, says this about his work: “My drawings from the series *Landscapes of Desire* are inspired by the ruins of Palestinian villages and homes that were destroyed by Israel during and after the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestine. The images enable me to reflect on the unrelenting effort to annihilate a Palestinian culture that refuses to disappear and an indigenous people that refuse to go away. Drawings of the ruins of stone homes from destroyed Palestinian villages such as Kafr Bir'im, Lifta, Al Bassa, A'mka and Kuikat, are a declaration that in the face of looming cultural annihilation, the persistence of memory is a crucial act of political resistance and cultural survival.”

[Beginning with their displacement and dispossession from their ancestral lands to the continuing sin of occupation, these pages have presented the suffering of the Palestinian people. In spite of the separation wall and inhuman blockade of Gaza, continued seizure of land by Israeli settlements, daily humiliation at checkpoints, separation between family members, denial of access to holy places of worship, denial of refugees' right of return, imprisonment of thousands including children, discrimination against Palestinian Christian and Muslim citizens of Israel, the continued displacement of Christians and Muslims from Jerusalem, the unwillingness of the international community to insist that Israeli cease violating the human rights of the Palestinian people, the Christian community of Palestine on December 11, 2009, issued The Kairos Palestine Document, “A moment of truth: A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering.”³⁵⁶ In their words is the message of forgiveness and reconciliation:

[“We believe in God, one God . . . a good and just God, who loves each one of his creatures.” “Love is the commandment of Christ our Lord to us and it includes both friends and enemies. This must be clear when we find ourselves in circumstances where we must resist evil of whatever kind. Love is seeing the face of God in every human being.” “Hope within us means first and foremost our faith in God and secondly our expectation, despite everything, for a better future. One of the most important signs of hope is the steadfastness of the generations, the belief in the justice of their cause and the continuity of memory, which does not forget the ‘Nakba’ (catastrophe) and its significance.” “Love is the commandment of Christ our Lord to us and it includes both friends and enemies. This must be clear when we find ourselves in circumstances where we must resist evil of whatever kind.”

[“Our message to the Jews tells them: Even though we have fought one another in the recent past and still struggle today, we are able to love and live together. We can organize our political life, with all its complexity, according to the logic of this love and its power, after ending the occupation and establishing justice.”

[“In the absence of all hope, we cry out our cry of hope. We believe in God, good and just. We believe that God's goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and of death that still persist in our land. We will see here ‘a new land’ and ‘a new human being’, capable of rising up in the spirit to love each one of his or her brothers and sisters.”³⁵⁷

[We end this document with a prayer of Cedar Duaybis, a founding member of Sabeel, the Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, an international peace movement initiated by Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. The prayer was for our committee (the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Middle East Study Committee), for Palestinians, and for Israelis:

[We thank you, God, for this time that you have been with us. It has been a privilege to be able to meet with this Committee. We know how much they feel in their hearts for all the people of this land not just for one side. We know that they are very brave to have agreed in the first place to come on this trip knowing how complex this situation is. We know dear God that we belong to one side. We are Palestinian and sometimes we have to get out of our situation and look at it from the outside. So please, dear God, let us remain aware and look at the situation fairly and do your will. We know that all the people in this land have suffered at some time or another and that the only way to move forward is to make their problem ours and for them to make our problem theirs. We need to look at this way to try and solve the problem of the Jewish people and for them to take our problem and even try to solve ours. Lead us, dear God, in that way because it is the only way that will lead to peace. Help us to see that this land though very small can take both peoples. We know how much you love this land; we know how much we love this land; we know how much the Jewish people love this land. Help us, God, to work through our love so that we can all remain in this land and live peacefully together. Dear God lead this Study Group to the right decisions. Give them the courage, I know they are courageous, to do the right thing and leave the rest in your hands—your loving hands—so that we can come even one step closer to a peaceful solution for this very long and very painful conflict. Dear God, help all the leaders of this land to make the right decisions to do your will and help the people of this land to reach a peaceful, livable viable solution that will be to the good of all. In your name we ask it. Amen.³⁵⁸]

Endnotes

1. See Appendix 2, General Assembly Policy Review
2. Eph. 2:14.
3. 2 Cor. 5:16–20.
4. The Middle East Study Committee is deeply thankful for the gracious welcome and engaging conversations that we had during this time with our Middle Eastern Christian partners, their Jewish and Muslim neighbors, and other political and religious leaders.
5. The terminology for the two testaments of the Christian Bible used throughout this paper is “Older Testament” and “Newer Testament,” following a suggestion made in another paper that is before the 219th General Assembly (2010), “Christians and Jews: People of

God.” “Older”/“Newer” emphasizes that the relationship between the two testaments is one of chronology, not of supersession. That is, the Newer Testament has not superseded the Older and has not rendered the Older obsolete and without authority.

6. In Judaism, these books are divided into three sections: the Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy), first in its hierarchy of biblical authority; the Prophets (the books of the major and minor prophets, excluding Daniel, plus Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, and 1–2 Kings), second in its hierarchy of biblical authority; and the Writings (all the other books, including Daniel), third in its hierarchy of biblical authority.

7. *Mishnah*, Tractate Abot 1:18, as translated by Judah Goldin in *The Living Talmud* (Mentor Books, 1957), p. 75.

8. From “*Perek Ha-shalom*,” an appendix to “*Derek Eretz Zuta*,” a minor treatise in the *Babylonian Talmud*, as quoted from Avi Weinstein, “My Truth or Our Peace, You Choose!,” p. 3 of 4. Weinstein also provides a Hebrew text of the saying. His paper was accessed on October 26, 2009, at the website: www.hillel.org/NR/rdonlyres/729CB895-1832-4F6A-9585-3944D435E190/0/truth_or_peace.pdf.

9. Please note that in the Newer Testament, the Greek word *dikaïos* may often be translated “just” even in texts where the NRSV translates it “righteous,” and that *dikaïosune* may often be translated “justice” even in texts where the NRSV translates it “righteousness.” In many of the NT texts quoted below, “just” and “justice” translate *dikaïos* and *dikaïosune*. In others, “justice” translates the Greek word *krisis*.

10. See, for example, Suras 4:58, 4:105, 4:135; 5:9; 7:29; 16:90; and 57:25.

11. As preserved by Bayhaqi from ‘Umar’s son, according to the anthology of *hadith* entitled *Mishkat al-Masabih (Niches of Lamps)*, compiled by al-Khatib al-Tibrizi. Translated by John Alden Williams, in *Themes of Islamic Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 67.

12. Translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, in *The Holy Qur’an* (Islamic Propagation Centre International, 1946), p. 223; not printed stichometrically here, unlike Ali’s translation.

13. *Sifre Deut.* 16 (ed. Meir Friedmann, Vienna, 1864, p. 68b), as quoted by Wilhelm Bacher, in “Simeon (Ben Gamaliel II),” *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (Funk and Wagnalls, 1901–1906): accessed on October 26, 2009, at www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=732&letter=S.

14. Footnote 621 (p. 214) in Ali’s translation of *The Holy Qur’an* [see above, fn. 12].

15. Isa. 28:17; 59:14–15; Hos. 10:13; Mt. 22:16; Jn. 18:37–38.

16. Ex. 23:6; Deut. 10:18; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 5:28; 22:3, 16; Pss. 72:2–4, 82:3–4, 140:12, 146:7; Mt. 1:19, 25:37–40; Lk. 4:18–21, 7:22, 14:13, 16:19–31.

17. Deut. 10:18; 24:17, 19; Mt. 7:12; Lk. 7:1–10, 10:25–37.

18. Jer. 21:11, 22:3; Lk. 19:1–9.

19. Dan. 4:37; Mt. 23:12; Lk. 1:51.

20. Deut. 1:16–17, 16:19; Ezek. 18:8; 2 Chr. 19:7; Lk. 18:2–5. Unjust judgments are illustrated by Herod Antipas’ beheading of John the Baptist (Mt. 14:3–12) and Pilate’s crucifixion of Jesus (Lk. 23:13–25).

21. Isa. 1:17, 58:6; Jer. 21:12, 22:17; Ezek. 18:7; Pss. 72:4, 103:6, 146:7; Mk. 12:38–40; Lk. 1:51–53, 4:18, 19:1–8.

22. 1 Kings 11:38; Ezek. 18:5–9; Ps. 19:9; Mt. 5:17–20; Mk. 12:28–34; Lk. 1:5–6; Rom. 2:13, 8:4; Phil. 3:6b.

23. Lk. 23:50–51; Jn. 5:30; Eph. 5:9–10; 1 Jn. 3:7b.

24. Isa. 9:7, 32:16–17; Mk. 9:50; Lk. 1:78–79; Jas. 3:18.

25. Jer. 22:3, 17; Mt. 6:24; Lk. 19:1–8; Isa. 1:21, 5:7; Mt. 27:3–4; Lk. 13:1; Mt. 11:12; Acts 12:1–2; Hos. 10:13; Ps. 33:16–17.

26. *Islam: The Straight Path*, expanded ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 30–31.

27. 2 Sam 5:6–7a.

28. 2 Sam. 5:7b; 1 Kings 8:1.

29. Pss. 20:2–3, 76:2, 78:68–69.

30. Isa. 8:18; Pss. 48:12–14, 65:1–4, 74:2c, 76:2, 132:13–14; cf. Deut. 12:5; 1 Kings 8:28–29.

31. Pss. 50:2, 84:7; cf. Isa. 6:1–8.

32. 2 Kings 19:20–21, 31; Ps. 87:1–3; Isa. 10:24, 30:19, 33:20; Lam. 2:8–10.

33. Isa. 51:16; Zech. 2:7 NIV/KJV, 9:13.
34. Isa. 35:10; 46:13; 51:3, 11; 61:1–4; 62:1, 11–12; Joel 3:17; Zeph. 3:14–20; Zech. 1:14–17, 2:10–13, 8:3–8; Pss. 69:35–36, 102:12–22, 126:1–3.
35. Isa. 2:2–4; Micah 4:1–4; Zech. 9:9–10.
36. Jer. 50:4–5; Zech. 9:11–13.
37. Cf. Gen. 6:9, 17:1; Deut. 18:13 NIV. Zeph. 2:3MT (Masoretic Text). Jer. 9:5; Zech. 8:16. Jer. 32:31–32, 44:2–3. Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:37; Deut. 23:19. Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:19, 27:25; Prov. 17:23. Ps. 125:1.
38. Cf. Deut. 24:15MT (Masoretic Text); Hos. 4:8MT; Ex. 20:7MT, 23:1MT. Lev. 19:12; Jer. 5:2, 7:9; Mal. 3:5. Deut. 6:25MT, 24:13MT.
39. Quoting from the note on Ps. 87:4–6 by Patrick D. Miller, a professor emeritus of Princeton Theological Seminary, in *The Harper-Collins Study Bible*, fully revised and updated edition, edited by Harold W. Attridge *et al.* [HarperSanFrancisco, 2006], p. 803.
40. Jerusalem is holy to Muslims primarily because of the Prophet Muhammad’s Night Journey (*al-Isra’*), during which: he was transported on the winged beast *Buraq* from Mecca to Jerusalem; he prayed there with Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets; and he then ascended from the rock of the Jewish Temple Mount to the Divine Presence through the seven heavens (*al-Mi’raj*). Both the Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock were built at the end of the 7th century to commemorate that journey and experience.
41. This section has addressed only the biblical uses of the term “Zion” and does not at all address the phenomenon of either Jewish Zionism or Christian Zionism. Jewish Zionism is too complex and diverse a set of historical movements to be defined or described in brief. For a Jewish perspective, go to: www.mideastweb.org/zionism.htm. For a Palestinian perspective, see the presentation by Professor Munther S. Dajani, “Judaism and Zionism and Human Rights from a Palestinian Perspective.” Do a Google search by entering “Munther S. Dajani” and “Judaism and Zionism”; then click on “(Cached)”. For a PC(USA) document describing Christian Zionism, go to: www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/resources/21christianzionism.pdf.
42. The date was Sept. 10, 2000, and the four scholars were Tikvah Frymer-Kensky, David Novak, Peter Ochs, and Michael Signer. The text of “*Dabru ‘Emet*” can be found at: www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=1014.
43. Gen. 12:2, 7; 15:5–7, 18; 17:3–8; 24:7; 26:2–5; 28:4, 15; 35:11–12; 48:3–4, 21–22; 50:24–25.
44. Cf. Ex. 2:24–25, 6:8, 32:13, 33:1; Lev. 26:42; Deut. 1:8, 34:4; Ps. 105:7–11; 1 Chr. 16:14–18.
45. The Hebrew word *ger*, translated “stranger” or “sojourner” or “alien,” designates foreigners who live among the Israelites. “Strangers” were not full members of ancient Israelite society and were considered to be of lower status, but they were afforded a measure of legal protection. Needless to say, Palestinians do not consider themselves to be “strangers” in the land, and this term should not be interpreted as in any way describing them.
46. See, for example, the book by W. Eugene March, former dean of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, entitled *Israel and the Politics of Land: A Theological Case Study* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), pp. 53–57.
47. In the *Exodus* volume of the Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 149.
48. E.g., Deut. 2:31–36, 3:3–7, 7:1–6, 13:12–18, 20:16–18; Josh. 6:20–21, 8:24–29, 10:34–42, 11:10–12, 11:18–20; Judg. 1:17; 1 Sam. 15:1–3.
49. See the preface to the second edition of *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), by Walter Brueggemann, a professor emeritus of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, p. xiv.
50. “Is There a Counterpart in the Hebrew Bible to New Testament Antisemitism?” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 22 (1985), 242–260.
51. “Supersessionism” holds that Christians have supplanted Jews so that now Christians are the only legitimate heirs of God’s covenant with Abraham. See also fn. 5.
52. March, *Israel and the Politics of Land* (fn. 46 above), p. 68.
53. See the text above at fnn. 45 and 46.
54. Robert Wilken, in *No Religion Is an Island: The Nostra Aetate Dialogues*, ed. Edward Bristow (Fordham University Press, 1998), pp. 128–129. For much greater detail, see Wilken’s *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
55. Wilken, in *No Religion*, pp. 129–130.
56. See Sidney Griffith, “From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods,” in the *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51 (1997), 11–31.
57. See Wilken, in *No Religion*, p. 133.

58. See fn. 40.

59. See, for example, the General Assembly statements of 1974 (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1974, Part I, p. 584), 1978 (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, p. 276; *Minutes*, PCUS, 1978, Part I, p. 39), 1987 (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, p. 870), 1995 (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, pp. 688–89), and 2003 (*Minutes*, 2003, Part I, pp. 635–37, Item B.1.). The phrase “the right of Israel to exist” is a source of pain for some members of the 2009–2010 Middle East Study Committee, who are in solidarity with Palestinians who feel that the state of Israel has denied them their inalienable human rights.

60. See, for example, the General Assembly statements of 1974 (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1974, Part I, p. 584), 1978 (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1978, Part I, p. 39; *Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, p. 276), 1982 (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1982, Part I, p. 93), 2002 (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 732, Item 1.b.), and 2003 (*Minutes*, 2003, Part I, pp. 635–37, Item B.).

61. See, for example, the General Assembly statements of 1978 (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1978, Part I, p. 276; *Minutes*, PCUS, 1978, Part I, p. 39), 1987 (*Minutes*, PCUSA, 1987, Part I, p. 870), 1995 (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, pp. 688–89), 2002 (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 732, Item 1.c.), and 2003 (*Minutes*, 2003, Part I, pp. 635–37, Item B.1.).

62. See, for example, the General Assembly statements of 1978 (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1978, Part I, pp. 79, 190), 1997 (*Minutes*, PCUSA, 1997, Part I, pp. 560–84), 2001 (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 54–55), 2002 (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 732, Item 1.a.), and 2003 (*Minutes*, 2003, Part I, pp. 635–37, Item B.2. and C.).

63. See, for example, the General Assembly statements of 1974 (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1974, Part I, p. 584), 1995 (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, pp. 688–89), 1998 (*Minutes*, 1998, Part I, pp. 655–56), 2000 (*Minutes*, 2000, Part I, p. 498), and 2002 (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 733, Item 1.f.).

64. For the text, see www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/christians-jews.pdf.

65. See p. 17 of 40 in the pdf file (p. 13 of the paper).

66. See pp. 18–19 of 40 in the pdf file (pp. 14–15 of the paper).

67. See the final draft of “Christians and Jews: People of God.”

68. P. 19 of 40 in the pdf file (p. 15 of the paper).

69. See also 2 Cor. 5:14–15; 1 Tim. 4:6.

70. Intriguingly, several ancient witnesses to the text of John 12:32, quoted just above, reflect the same “cosmic” theology found here in Colossians, reading *panta* (all things) rather than *antas* (all people).

71. “The Second Letter to the Corinthians,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. XI (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), p. 98.

72. Within those congregations that follow the Revised Common Lectionary strictly, neither ch. 27 nor ch. 33 is ever read or preached on during worship. In fact only one passage about Jacob and Esau (their birth and Esau’s lost birthright) and three other episodes from the life of Jacob (his dream of the heavenly ladder at Bethel, his marriage to Leah and Rachel, and his wrestling with the “man” at Peniel), are ever read. For this reason, the story of these twins is summarized rather fully in the following paragraphs.

73. This parable is well known to Presbyterians. In churches following the Revised Common Lectionary it was just read on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 14, 2010, along with 2 Cor. 5:16–21 (see above, at fn. 68)! Still, the interpretation of the parable offered here may not be familiar to many.

74. This committee represents a considerable diversity in life experiences, theological perspectives, and views of current reality in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. This will become obvious through reading the four individual vignettes that have been written by committee members and are included in this section of the report. It has been encouraging to see how the committee has worked to respect the struggles, pains, experiences, and opinions of each of its members. We have worked hard to find consensus of opinion as we have proceeded with each section of this report and with our recommendations. As one can imagine given the complexity of the situation, this has not always been possible.

75. The Middle East Study Committee (MESC) met four times: April 1–3 (Washington, D.C.), August 17–September 1 (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine), November 11–13 (New York City), January 29–30 (Louisville, Ky.). A complete list of all the individuals with whom the committee met is available in Appendix 1. Great care was taken to assure that equal voice was given to all viewpoints.

76. The results of that survey are included in Appendix 3.

77. The MESC was not able to gain access to Gaza due to the recent war and blockade, under which Israeli forces have prevented most church representatives from entering that territory; and therefore we did not have the opportunity to hear the voice of Hamas. Our time limitations did not permit us to have conversations with members of the Likud in Israel or Hezbollah in Lebanon. From the time of the appointment of this committee in February 2009 until the submission of this report on March 5, 2010, the committee has attempted to make the best use of the limited time and resources that we have been provided.

78. Avraham Burg, *The Holocaust Is Over; We Must Rise From Its Ashes* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 5.

79. Abunimah, Ali, *One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006),
80. Burg, 8.
81. Burg, 9.
82. This is not the case with Avraham Burg and a growing number of American and Israeli Jews.
83. Sabeel is an ecumenical theological center in Jerusalem, which work for the liberation of Palestinians.
84. Ateek, Naim Stifan, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 3.
85. This is not the case with Naim Ateek or with Nahida Gordon, whose vignette follows.
86. Steven R. Feldman, *Compartments: How the Brightest, Best Trained, and Most Caring People can Make Judgments That are Completely and Utterly Wrong* (Xlibris, 2009), 10.
87. Feldman, 132.
88. Feldman, 147.
89. Feldman, 148.
90. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). *Christian Presence in Israel and Palestine, Resource Sheet 5 of 27: Developed February 2005, updated March 2006*, www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/resources.htm.
91. *Christians in the Middle East*, BBC News, Last Updated: Thursday, 15 December 2005. Can be accessed at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4499668.stm. Data sources were: World Christian Database, *Al-Nahar* (a major Lebanese national daily newspaper), the Government of Israel, U.S. State Department reports on religious freedom; CIA World Factbook, the UN special representative for Iran; UNDP, the World Bank, Egyptian government, the Palestinian Authority, the Government of Jordan, and the Government of Iran.
92. Collins, Rania Al Qass; Rifat Odeh Kassis; and Mitri Raheb, Editors, *Palestinian Christians: Facts, Figures and Trends 2008* (Bethlehem, Palestine: Diyar Consortium, 2008), 6.
93. Soudah' Romell. *Christians in the Holy Land: Across the Political and Economic Divide. The Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Israel, 2006*.
94. Khoury, Samia. Member of the board of Sabeel. Personal communication.
95. Feldman, 161.
96. <http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/PressReleases/2010/prn201002.html>
97. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/19/world/middleeast/19iran.html>
98. The Federation of American Scientist estimates the number less than 100 (<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/israel/nuke/>). The Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control reports that Israel is currently the sixth most powerful nuclear state, with a stockpile of over 100 nuclear weapons (<http://www.wisconsinproject.org/countries/israel/nuke.html>).
99. From September 29, 2000, to December 26, 2008, 4,860 Palestinians were killed (Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Israel) by occupation forces and 47 by Israeli civilians for a total of 4,907. (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>) We know that violence takes various forms, overt and then more structural, and these figures only portray the overt violence.
100. According to records from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the first recorded suicide bombing occurred in April 6, 1994. Total deaths recorded due to suicide bombings in Israel for the years 2000 to 2008 are listed as 553 from a total of 147 attacks. (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>). According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the population of Israel at the end of 2008 was composed of 1,487,600 ethnic Palestinians (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstracts of Israel 2009 No. 60*, Table 2.1) and there have been 147 suicide bombers, thus .0098 percent of Palestinians resort to this extreme violence.
101. B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, *2008 Annual Report: Human Rights in the Occupied Territories*, 15. Can be accessed at http://www.btselem.org/download/200712_annual_report_eng.pdf.
102. UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs *Occupied Palestinian Territory, The Humanitarian Impact on Palestinians of Israeli Settlements and other Infrastructure in the West Bank*, 48.
103. Israeli Committee Against House Demolition. See <http://www.icahd.org/eng/docs/ICAHD's%20updated%20House%20demolition%20statistics.pdf>.
104. *Ibid*, <http://www.icahd.org/eng/docs/Cast%20Lead%20demolitions.pdf>.
105. *Ibid*.

106. For example, the Middle East Council of Churches through its Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) continues to bear a strong and necessary Christian witness and to resist the occupation and the siege of the Gaza Strip by providing educational and vocational training and health services in Gaza. A detailed description of this work can be found in the DSPR–Gaza Area *Annual Report 2009*, see <http://www.neccgaza.org/>.

107. “The Amman Call” can be found in Appendix 3.

108. In August 2009, the Middle East Study Committee was invited to participate in part of a PIEF week of study in Bethlehem at the Dar Annadwa Conference Center.

109. “Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth” can be found in Appendix 5.

110. Feldman, 163.

111. Burg, xiv.

[112. Ben Gurion was Israel’s first prime minister and minister of defense and he was an inspiring leader and visionary of almost biblical proportions.

113. *Gesher VaKeshet, Bridges and Bonds, The Life of Leon Kronish*, by Henry A. Green. Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1995, p. 217.

114. *Ibid.*, (p. 217).

115. This United Nations resolution was passed in 1975 and revoked in 1991.

116. In the words of our national anthem, *Hatikvah, the Hope*.

117. *Treatate Independence* was published in an experimental edition by RABBIS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS in 2008.

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“By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, all peoples have the right freely to determine, without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development, and every State has the duty to respect this right in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.”

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225. For a discussion of closure during the Oslo Period, see Neve Gordon *Israel’s Occupation*, pp. 184–87.

226. The “checkpoints” at the exits through the Wall between East Jerusalem and the West Bank, such as for Ramallah in the north or Bethlehem in the south are far more like border crossings than what the term “checkpoint” suggests, costing many millions of dollars.

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300. Volumes of them have been published in Hebrew. See Neve Gordon *IO*, p. 246, footnote 39.
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- "Imprisonment has been one of the key strategies of Israeli control of the Palestinian population, and since 1967 more than half a million Palestinians were prosecuted through military courts that fall far short of international standards of due process.
- "Most convictions are based on coerced confessions, and for decades Israeli interrogation tactics have entailed the use of torture and ill treatment. Tens of thousands more Palestinians were never prosecuted, but were instead held in administrative detention for months or years....
- "In addition to the reliance on coercive interrogation to produce confessions and to justify continued detention, prisoners in Israeli custody can be held incommunicado for protracted periods, and lawyers face onerous obstacles in meeting with their clients.
- "While it is true that detainees are brought before an Israeli military judge at some point, this process is hardly impartial. Such hearings tend to be used to extend detention and often take place in interrogation facilities, not courts. Detainees are rarely represented by lawyers or apprised of their rights, including a right to complain about abuse or to assert innocence. Failure to assert innocence at this hearing can be used as evidence of guilt.
- "Any information, including hearsay and tortured accounts from other prisoners, can be used to convict or administratively detain Palestinians."
- For further information on the failure of the Israeli military court system to meet international standards of due process, see the report by Addameer (the Palestinian Prisoners' Support and Human Rights Association), entitled "The Israeli Military System." It may be accessed at: <http://addameer.info/?p=498>.
302. Neve Gordon describes the permit system in considerable detail, see *IO*, pp. 33–42.
303. *IO*, p. 28. For a concise and helpful discussion of the two different legal systems that govern Israeli citizens and Palestinians in the OPT, see Zertal and Eldar *LOL*, pp. 371–75 and Lein *Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank* (B'Tselem, 2002), pp. 65–67.
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- Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Years 2001–2007. Key: FMF, Foreign Military Financing (direct military aid); ESF, Economic Support Fund (open-ended monetary assistance that can be used to offset military spending and arms purchases); Supplementals are special one-time grants meant as a complement to already allocated aid; NADR-ATA, Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, & Related Programs.
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~~Emanating from the conviction of the Arab countries that a military solution to the conflict will not achieve peace or provide security for the parties, the council:~~

- ~~1. Requests Israel to reconsider its policies and declare that a just peace is its strategic option as well.~~
- ~~2. Further calls upon Israel to affirm:

 - ~~a. Full Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights to the lines of June 4, 1967 as well as the remaining occupied Lebanese territories in the south of Lebanon.~~
 - ~~b. Achievement of a just solution to the Palestinian Refugee problem to be agreed upon in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194.~~
 - ~~c. The acceptance of the establishment of a Sovereign Independent Palestinian State on the Palestinian territories occupied since the 4th of June 1967 in the West Bank and Gaza strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital.~~~~
- ~~3. Consequently, the Arab Countries affirm the following:

 - ~~a. Consider the Arab Israeli conflict ended, and enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and provide security for all the states of the region.~~
 - ~~b. Establish normal relations with Israel in the context of this comprehensive peace.~~~~
- ~~4. Assures the rejection of all forms of Palestinian partition which conflict with the special circumstances of the Arab host countries.~~
- ~~5. Calls upon the Government of Israel and all Israelis to accept this initiative in order to safeguard the prospects for peace and stop the further shedding of blood, enabling the Arab Countries and Israel to live in peace and good neighborliness and provide future generations with security, stability, and prosperity.~~
- ~~6. Invites the International Community and all countries and Organizations to support this initiative.~~
- ~~7. Requests the Chairman of the Summit to form a special committee composed of some of its concerned member states and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States to pursue the necessary contacts to gain support for this initiative at all levels, particularly from the United Nations, the Security Council, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the Muslim States and the European Union.~~

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357. See Appendix II for the full document.

358. Closing prayer by Cedar Duaybis, Sabeel, August 27, 2009: The committee spent the day of August 27, 2009, with Sabeel in Jerusalem. We ended our meeting with them with prayers. Cedar Duaybis, of Sabeel, prayed for us, for Israel and for Palestine.]

Appendixes

Appendix 1:

List of Contacts Made by Middle East Study Committee

April 1–3, 2009—Washington, D.C.

Bill Somplatsky-Jarman, associate for Mission Responsibility Through Investment, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Archbishop Viken Aykazian, Armenian Orthodox Church; then-president of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
The Reverend Dr. Canon John Peterson, representative of the Bishop of Washington and the Bishop of Jerusalem, Episcopal Church
Dr. Noura Erakat, adjunct professor, International Human Rights Law in the Middle East, Georgetown University
Dr. Stephen M. Colecchi, director, Office of International Justice and Peace, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
Attorney Mark Pelavin, associate director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
Rueben Brigety, director of the Sustainable Security Program, Center for American Progress
Dr. Marc Braverman, clinical psychologist and author, executive director of the Holy Land Peace Project
HE Ambassador Thomas Goldberger, director, Office of Israel and Palestinian Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State
HE Ambassador Warren Clark, director, Churches for Middle East Peace

August 16–30, 2009—Travel Trip to Middle East

1. Lebanon

Dr. Joseph Jabbra, president, Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon
Dr. Mary Mikheal, president, Near East School of Theology, Beirut, Lebanon
Dr. Paul Haidostian, president, Haigazian University, Beirut, Lebanon
HE Metropolitan Mar Theophilos George Saliba, archbishop of Mount Lebanon, Syrian Orthodox Church
The Reverend George Mourad, moderator, National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
The Reverend Fadi Dagher, general secretary, National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon Leadership (about twenty-five persons)
Guirgis Saleh, general secretary, The Middle East Council of Churches
The Reverend Dr. Habib Badr, presiding pastor, The National Evangelical Church of Beirut; representative of Middle East Council of Churches Executive Committee
The Reverend Dr. Riad Jarjour, general secretary, Arab Group for Christian-Muslim Relations; Participated in the Group's Monthly Meeting (Panel Presentations on the subject "The Diminishing Christian Presence in the Middle East") Beirut, Lebanon
Representatives of the Iraqi Presbyterian Church
HE Metropolitan Elias Audeh, Archbishop, The Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East, Beirut and Mount Lebanon

2. Syria

HE Archbishop Boulos Matar, archbishop of Beirut Maronite Bishopric, and president of the Catholic Member Churches of the Middle East Council of Churches
His Beatitude Igantius IV Hazim, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All of the East, Damascus, Syria
His Beatitude Gregorios III, Greek Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Damascus, Syria
The Reverend Boutrus Zaour, pastor, and a leadership group of the Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church of Damascus, Syria
Madame Colette Khoury, cultural advisor to President Bashar Al-Assad and author (also, a member of the Evangelical Church, Damascus)

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Presbyterian pastor and representative of the Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church of Iran

3. Jordan

His Excellency Senator Akel Biltaji, former minister of Tourism and Antiquities and special advisor to His Majesty King Abdullah II, Amman

Wafa Goussous, director, the Middle East Council of Churches' Amman Liaison Office

Father Nabil Haddad, the Jordanian Interfaith Co-existence Research Center, Amman

The Reverend Fadi Diab, pastor, Redeemer Church in Amman, Jordan (The committee also worshiped and engaged in a time of fellowship and conversation with the congregation.)

The Reverend Fa'eq Haddad, Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and Middle East, Amman

The Reverend Samer Azar, pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Good Shepherd Church, Amman, Jordan

4. Israel/Palestine

Dr. Mahdi Abdel Hadi, director of PASSIA (The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs), Jerusalem

His Beatitude Fouad Twail, Patriarch, Latin (Roman Catholic) Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish, director, The Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel

Rabbi Na'amah Kelman, dean, Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem

Rabbi Shelton Donnell, retired rabbi living in Jerusalem

Ophir Yarden, director, The Center for Interreligious Encounter with Israel, ICCI

Rabbi Navah Hefetz, director of Education, Rabbis for Human Rights

Stuart Schoffman, senior fellow, The Shalom Hartman Institute, Jerusalem

Yael Stein, research director at B'Tselem (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territory), Jerusalem

The Reverend Cannon Robert Edmunds, St. George the Martyr Episcopal Cathedral Church, Jerusalem. (The Committee also worshiped with the congregation of St. George's parish church.)

Judith Harel, Information and Advocacy Unit, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Territories, Jerusalem

Rabbi Edward Rettig, associate director for Legislative and Educational Affairs, The American Jewish Committee, Jerusalem

Daniel Rossing, director, The Jerusalem Center for Jewish Christian Relations

HE Avraham Burg, Former MK and Speaker of the Knesset and Cabinet Minister and author

David Wilder, spokesman, The Jewish Community (Israeli Settlement Association) of Hebron

Christian Peacemaker Team, Hebron

The Reverend Mark Brown, regional representative, The Lutheran World Federation, Jerusalem

Dr. Tawfiq Nasser, chief executive officer, Augusta Victoria Hospital, Mt. of Olives, Jerusalem

The Reverend Ian Alexander, international coordinator, SABEEL Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, Jerusalem

Nora Carmi, Cedar Duaybis, Samia Khoury, directors, SABEEL

Dar Annadwa's 5th Annual Conference: The Kairos and the Intersection of Theology and Politics, Bethlehem

Angela Godfrey-Goldstein, Israeli Committee Against Home Demolition, Jerusalem

November 11–13, 2009—New York

HE Ambassador Riyadh Mansour, permanent observer of the Palestine Authority to the United Nations

HE Ambassador Daniel Carmon, deputy permanent representative of Israel to the United Nations

Chris Ferguson, representative to the United Nations from the World Council of Churches

Appendix 2:
General Assembly Policy Review

A Continuing Witness for Middle East Peace with Current Application

Introduction:

This summary begins with a very brief historical review of the context for Presbyterian mission and relationships in the larger Middle East since 1856 and then concentrates on positions taken by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including its predecessor denominations, on Israel/Palestine and on the several wars that have occurred in the recent period (including the Iranian revolution, the first Gulf War, and the Iraq war begun in March 2003). Presbyterian-founded educational and medical institutions remain particularly notable in Cairo and Beirut but mission partnerships and ecumenical relations link us with 15 million Arab Christians throughout the region. Their presence, the importance of the “Holy Land” for our faith, the tragic frequency of violence, and enormous U.S. geostrategic investments in oil and Israel, have prompted frequent General Assembly attention, averaging a policy or shorter resolution every other year since 1967.

The General Assembly Social Witness Policy Compilation (available on the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) website: www.pcusa.org/acswp) includes excerpts from most of social policy statements of the General Assembly. The latest comprehensive statement on the Middle East dates from 1997; it shows great continuity with the statement of 1949 concerning Palestinian refugees and with the equally comprehensive policy statement of 1974. General Assembly statements generally consist of study or rationale sections (partly in appendices in this study) accompanied by recommendations for study, action, and witness. Copies of the 1997 statement may be downloaded free of charge from the ACSWP website. Similarly, resolutions on the Iraq war (2003, 2004, and 2008) and “Violence, Religion, and Terrorism” (2004) are available in both print and cyber form and in several issues of *Church & Society* magazine (2003, 2004, 2006). In shortest summary, this policy stream consistently finds the Israeli occupation of Palestine to be at or near the heart of too many regional conflicts, although the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq has created both new refugees and new forms of ideological response.

Context and History of Mission

Although the Orthodox Churches of the Middle East (Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Assyrian, and Byzantine [also known as Greek]), and Catholic churches (Coptic, Maronite, Melkite, Greek, and Latin Rite [Roman]) maintain continuity with the earliest Christian communities and have generally lived under Islamic governments since the early Islamic conquests of the late 600s and early 700s, any treatment of the Middle East must note the history of the Crusades and the fall of Constantinople, now Istanbul, the removal of Islam from most of Europe by 1492, and then the relatively brief European colonial history that followed the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire after Turkey’s defeat in WWI. The Protestant denominations entered the Middle East in the 19th century, with each denomination taking particular areas. The Presbyterians (with the Congregationalists) began work in Syria and Lebanon in the early mid 1820s, in Iran in the mid 1830s, in Iraq (jointly with the Reformed and Congregational Churches) in the mid 1840s, and in Egypt in the mid 1850s. The Anglicans (Church of England), as well as the Lutherans (i.e., the “German Mission” consisting of the German Lutheran “state church” and the German “Free Church,” i.e., Reformed) focused their mission activity in Jerusalem, Jordan, and the Holy Land. The post-WWII period was marked by the independence (decolonization) of a variety of Middle Eastern countries (some with relatively recent boundaries), the rise of the oil states generally, and through Saudi Arabia particularly, the influence of a very conservative Wahabist strain of Islam. Pan-Arab and Pan-Islamic movements have had some influence in the post-war period, but nationalism has been the prevailing model, with Islam providing a counterweight to Western cultural (if not economic) influence.

Overview of Positions on Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace Efforts

From 1948 forward, recognition of Israel has been accompanied by concern for the original refugees (about 750,000) displaced during the 1947–49 period. Statements note the role of Egypt and Jordan in controlling Gaza and the West Bank, respectively, until 1967. Historical summaries are found in the 1974 and 1997 church background reports. These note the 1956 Suez-Sinai war between Egypt and Britain and France, joined by an Israeli attack across Sinai and slow withdrawal. The Eisenhower administration effectively backed Egypt’s right to control the Suez canal, but Cold War and other developments led to Egypt and other Arab states aligning themselves more or less with the Soviet Union, while Israel’s ties with the U.S. became closer and included U.S. acceptance of Israel’s nuclear weapons development.

The major 1974 United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) statement was begun at the General Assembly’s request in 1971 and speaks consistently of the “Palestinians,” whose organizations were being developed in the 1964–65 period. The 1974 report summarizes the political-military situation in Israel/Palestine as follows:

In the 1967 war, Israel occupied positions in the Golan area of Syria, the whole of Sinai with its strategic position on the Suez Canal and at Sharm-el-Sheik, all of Jerusalem, and the West Bank of the Jordan. In 1970, Egypt, Jordan and Israel accepted the provisions of United Nations Resolution 242, adopted in November of 1967, which called for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory and Arab recognition of Israel and secure and recognized boundaries, but differing interpretations of these provisions and the means to implement them led to continual impasse . . . the stage was set for the October, 1973, fighting. (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1974, Part I, p. 15)

The 1974 recommendations include “criteria” for “the evaluation of any proposed settlement,” as well as encouragement for study, interfaith dialogue, advocacy, and ecumenical coordination. The presupposition was that the occupation should end in accordance with international law, even though the pattern of Israel’s resisting any United Nations involvement, except to care for refugees, was already visible.

The later 1970s were marked by the achievement of Camp David agreement in 1980 by Jimmy Carter, Menachem Begin, and Anwar Sadat, but no substantial progress followed. Thus the 1995 statement sums up many resolutions in this excerpt:

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The 207th General Assembly (1995)

1. Reaffirm[s] actions of previous General Assemblies (1974, 1984, 1988, 1990) supporting the status of Jerusalem. [A shared status, reflecting the “international city” status recommended by the UN—ed.]
2. Reaffirm[s the] actions of previous General Assemblies (1974, 1977, 1983, 1984, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991) acknowledging the right of Israel to exist within secure, internationally recognized borders and the right of the Palestinians to self-determination.
3. Urges the president and the United States Congress to:
 - a. support the United Nations in the implementation of its resolutions on the future of Jerusalem;
 - b. renew efforts to make U.S. aid to Israel conditional upon the cessation of the appropriation of Palestinian land in and around Jerusalem and the establishment of new settlements in the occupied territories, especially those that are a part of the ongoing efforts to create a Greater Jerusalem.

At that time, a new peace process had started in 1993 following the First Intifada (1987 forward) that, notwithstanding its non-violent origins, had been met with massive arrests, long term detentions, and deportations, leading to further violence. Here the pattern of disproportionately more Palestinian than Israeli civilian deaths is marked.

The 1997 PC(USA) policy continues the presumption that a two-state solution can be negotiated with the role of the U.S. as “honest broker,” although there is less faith about the role of the U.S. Recommendations include:

Call upon the United States to take effective measures, including withholding aid and joining in efforts of the United Nations Security Council, to oppose expansion of Israeli settlements in Gaza and the West Bank, and in the Jerusalem area, where unilateral action, without negotiations, exacerbates national and religious tensions, and runs the risk of generating violent confrontation. (*Minutes*, 1997, Part I, p. 14)

Unilateral Israeli settlement expansion continued and great violence continued in a Second Intifada partly triggered by Ariel Sharon’s provocative visit to the Dome of the Rock, following the failure of both the Oslo Accords and President Clinton’s attempt at a new Camp David agreement. The 2004 resolutions of the PC(USA) against the “security barrier” or “wall” and for “selective divestment” followed recognition of the role of continuing Israeli expansion and collective punishments of Palestinian people, including overwhelming military responses to sometimes terrorist acts of Palestinian resistance, coupled with passivity on the part of the Bush Administration, passivity that continued through Israel’s war on Lebanon in the summer of 2006 (after the General Assembly).

The 204th General Assembly (2006) rephrased and broadened the focus of PC(USA) corporate responsibility efforts, clarifying that “divestment” of stock in companies collaborating in the occupation would be the culmination of an explicit process of dialogue and shareholder proposals. Disagreement with “Christian Zionism” by the General Assembly remained in place, as did a call for justice for the Palestinian people and particular concern for Christians being squeezed out by the occupation. The 204th General Assembly (2006) almost supported the campaign to condemn suicide bombings sponsored most notably by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, but generalized the concern to include all innocents subject to bombing and effective terror. It should be noted that the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns spoke out against the war in Lebanon, and that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provided relief supplies afterward to Muslims and Christians alike. Many Christian churches, including several Presbyterian churches, as well as mosques and thousands of homes and fields were destroyed in the very widespread Israeli shelling. The survival of the Shiite Hezbollah forces was seen by them as a triumph, reinforcing religiously motivated Islamic parties throughout the region and leaving the government of Lebanon increasingly weak.

Particular Positions, Primarily as Expressed in the 1997 Middle East Policy

1. Concerning Political Violence

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes, “the legitimate right of the state to defend itself and the right of oppressed peoples to resistance and revolution”(*Resolution on the Middle East*, pp. 38–39). While the church recognizes these rights it also consistently called for cessation of violence. The admitted tension in these views is explored in a 1999 resolution that looks at the dilemmas of military intervention for humanitarian purposes and the development of “Just Peacemaking” rather than simply “Just War” criteria for primarily nonmilitary engagement (see Iraq War below). Complex political dynamics are present in the Middle East. Different factions of people within each nation support political violence and sometimes religious and ethnic cleansing. Governance (including in tribal and colonial times) has traditionally not been democratic; several states explicitly favor state religions and many discriminate. Thus struggles present within and among faith traditions aggravate an already volatile context.

2. Concerning Stereotypes

We recognize our biases and fears regarding our American understanding of the Middle East. Two dominant perspectives exist: one fearful of Islam through the portrayal of Islamic Fundamentalism, the other involving the “stereotyping of Arabs as shifty, sinister, and terrorist, reflecting ongoing patterns of racism in American life” (*Ibid.*, p. 38) At an emotional level, unhelpful rhetoric, labels, and other designations justify denials of human rights and the use of violence rather than negotiation. This is part of the church’s rationale for encouraging the U.S. government to support serious negotiation and open communication that may lead to peace(*Resolution on the Middle East*, p. 40). The church’s repeated condemnation of anti-Semitism can also be considered an opposition to anti-Jewish stereotypes.

3. Concerning Terrorism

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has consistently opposed terrorism by all entities and by all means. The “Resolution on Violence, Religion, and Terrorism”(2004) quotes the Federal Bureau of Investigation definition of terrorism as, “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance

of political or social goals” (FBI Terrorist Research and Analytical Center, *Terrorism in the United States: 1990*, Washington, D.C.:U.S. Department of Justice, 1991, p. 25). This operational definition includes the motivation of the groups involved, attempting to make the classification of who or what constitutes terrorism less dependent upon one’s own perspective and more on its impacts. Without equating coercive (and surveillance-monitored) situations with violent action itself, the paper addresses the legitimacy of official uses of force. It finds unilateral uses of force to be morally destabilizing. The resolution cautions against overreacting to the fear created by terrorism, advises on understanding and if possible removing its causes, advocates treating it as a form of crime when possible, and warns against possible misuses of the broad surveillance features of the U.S.A. Patriot Act of 2001.

4. Concerning Arms Control

Many governments, and in particular the United States, export weapons to countries in the region in order to support military efforts and existing regimes; others smuggle weapons to resist or change groups in power. The church has opposed the flood of weapons that weaken democracies and the development of new military and security technologies that imprison populations.

The actions of the 209th General Assembly (1997) stand clearly for the de-escalation of the arms race and call for further moderation, urging Congress to enact a Code of Conduct to govern the arms exports of the United States. We have called upon all Middle Eastern countries to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and other treaties (Ibid., p. 44). In the wake of claims about nonexistent “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq, repeated but disputed claims of nuclear weaponization by Iran, and the dangers of nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan, the church has stood by its pro-monitoring and comprehensive treaty positions.

5. Concerning Economic Issues

With much of the economy of the Middle East based upon the production and exportation of oil, there is great concern for the future sustainability of all nations in the region. Further, much of the land has been scarred by the impact of war and continuing strife. The economic burdens of war and costs of occupation are both unsustainable and unjust. The General Assembly urges all nations to assist in developing more sustainable, self-reliant, and socially equitable agricultural systems. We also encourage governments to support economic development by supporting non-petroleum trade with Middle Eastern countries, and call for a more equitable redistribution of U.S. aid funds that presently go mainly to Israel (\$3 billion plus) and Egypt (\$1 billion, based on the Camp David accord). Where the United States and other governments have compromised the infrastructure of countries in the region, especially in Iraq, the church calls for serious reconstruction and re-development (*Iraq: Our Responsibility and the Future*, approved by the 217th General Assembly [2006], pp. 9–10). The General Assembly has also urged caution in the use of economic sanctions to protect the least privileged even when such sanctions have international approval (*Resolution on the Middle East*, p. 52).

6. Concerning Water

Water is in precious, short supply for many in the Middle East. Wars and disputes have been waged over the control of water rights in order to provide growing populations with potable drinking sources and irrigation. The General Assembly has supported both equitable distribution and new technologies to create more sources of fresh water and food self-sufficiency (*Resolution on the Middle East*, pp. 57–58).

7. Concerning Petroleum, Energy, and the Environment

Given massive U.S. dependence on foreign oil, it has been hard to separate security needs from military commitments to “protect our way of life” (*Resolution on the Middle East*, p. 62). The PC(USA) has sought to distinguish our commitments to freedom and democracy from our oil-dependent and carbon-producing transportation, housing, and food production habits. The 1997 Middle East policy included the call to “reduce significantly the American demand for petroleum so as to conserve this nonrenewable resource, protect the environment, reduce balance of payments pressures, and lower energy costs for developing countries” (*Resolution on the Middle East*, p. 64), and thus reduce the need for military presence in the region. While the Iraq war reversed this direction, it was reinforced in the 218th General Assembly (2008) resolution on energy, *The Power To Change*. Along with consumption patterns, the PC(USA) has long been concerned for wise population control in the Middle East and other regions, noting these while calling upon “the United Nations and its member states to exercise their influence in . . . assisting Middle Eastern countries in their efforts to protect and preserve the environment” (*Resolution on the Middle East*, p. 69).

Recent Israeli-Palestinian and related developments

1. The Occupation, the Wall, and Questions about the “Two-State” Solution

The “two-state” solution remains the official international position of most nations, including Israel, the United States, and, at least implicitly, the main Palestinian parties and most Arab states. However, the scope of Israeli settler presence, the scale of the “security barrier” or Wall that largely follows their presence, and the network of roads almost exclusively for Jewish Israeli use, all call the Two-State solution into question. These matters, discussed extensively at the 2004, 2006, and 2008 General Assemblies, led the 218th General Assembly (2008) to authorize a new study of the Middle East with a focus on the Israel-Palestine struggle.

The economic and humanitarian stranglehold on Gaza, following the withdrawal of settlements, efforts to pressure the Hamas government, and finally a disproportionately devastating bombing and invasion in late December of 2008 and early 2009, has only made the two-state solution more remote. Yet, as it stands today (2009), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supports an economically and environmentally viable and contiguous Palestine existing peacefully next to an Israel that has internationally-recognized borders. The PC(USA) has been clear in its condemnation of terrorism and its concern for an end for violent attacks of Palestinians on Israelis and

vice versa. Rather than focusing on ethnic and religious hatreds, however, the church has understood Israel's fundamental security problem to be based in the injustice of the occupation of Palestinian land by now more than 450,000 settlers.

2. Christian Population Decline, Muslim Dialogue, and U.S. Re-engagement

Three other elements affect the current mission and witness of the church: the continued pressure on and at least relative decline of the Christian population in Israel/Palestine and elsewhere, the desire of moderate Muslim leaders across the region (and world) to develop an expanded conversation with Christian leaders (as seen in the public statement, "A Common Word"), and the tentative U.S. re-engagement with an Israeli-Palestinian peace process, due in part to international pressure on both the U.S. and Israel. The human rights and humanitarian law implications of the Gaza invasion (detailed in the Goldstone Report) continue to be debated even as a new U.S. administration commits millions of dollars to rebuild structures largely destroyed by U.S.-provided weapons. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) carries on a range of dialogues with Jewish and Muslim groups, trying to hear both perspectives, and is also conducting a study of Muslim-Christian relations similar to an earlier study of Jewish-Christian relations.

3. Public Witness and Corporate Engagement, Including Divestment of Securities

Along with other forms of public witness, since the early 1970s the PC(USA) has sought to "put its money where its mouth is," both in positive investment (such as Self-Development of People and OikouCredit) and by using the influence of its foundation and pension investments in companies. The push for corporate social responsibility generally has been very influenced by the churches; it is also controversial for the association of campaigns against South African apartheid—which included divestment—with the use of economic pressure on Israeli occupation and land annexation policies, or continuing violence by Israelis and Palestinians against innocent civilians. The 216th General Assembly (2004) stated that continued Israeli occupation and expansion of settlements required the church to examine which of its investments supported and profited from that occupation and hence posed questions of moral integrity for the church. The 216th General Assembly (2004) action also stated that "selective, phased" divestment (that is, aimed at companies supporting the occupation, not Israeli companies in general) should be a form of witness in a worsening situation. [The 2004 phrasing was the same language that had been used in 1985 for the South Africa policy: See Endnote].

The 217th General Assembly (2006) clarified that divestment was always part of a larger effort of dialogue and engagement with companies, but did not disavow corporate engagement, which continues through the work of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). The 217th General Assembly (2006) restated its commitment that "... financial investments of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as they pertain to Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank, be invested in only peaceful pursuits, and affirm that the customary corporate engagement process of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment ... is the proper vehicle for achieving this goal" (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 944).

Many but not all Jewish groups oppose any corporate pressure on Israeli policies. Conversely, most Palestinian groups, both Christian and Muslim, support such nonviolent pressure, as in "A Moment of Truth," December 11, 2009, statement by Palestinian Christians: Section 4-2-6 "*Palestinian civil organizations, as well as international organizations, NGO's and certain religious institutions call upon individuals, companies and states to engage in divestment and in economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation. We understand this to integrate the logic of peaceful resistance ...*"

Alongside concerns for the unity of the church and for friendship with the Jewish community, the basic issue is the right of the church to make its own moral decisions about what it will profit from or invest in. This was clearly stated by the 218th General Assembly (2008)'s invocation of the Barmen Declaration in its combined action on the Atlanta and other Middle East overtures. Barmen and other confessions make it quite clear that the church has every right and a basic responsibility under God to witness against any country, company, or policy that deprives God's children of justice. Of several overtures seeking to limit the assembly's voice to general statements deploring violence, one was affirmed that cautioned against "over-identification" with any party to conflicts. At the same time, in also affirming the Amman Call, one may judge the assembly to have identified itself with the ecumenical Christian community.

4. The Impacts of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and Iranian Developments

The 218th General Assembly (2008) "commended for study" a paper on the Iraq war entitled, *To Repent, To Restore, To Rebuild, and To Reconcile*. Attached to an overture clearly calling for responsible and timely withdrawal of U.S. and remaining "coalition" forces, the assembly recognized the need for massive reconstruction and the moral responsibility of the United States for thousands of Iraqi and U.S. deaths. Those actions also recognized the crisis caused by more than 4.5 million displaced Iraqis, 2 million internally and 2.5 million in Jordan, Syria, and other neighboring countries. Throughout the six years of this conflict, Arab TV and public commentary has compared the U.S. invasion and presence in Iraq to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. In some quarters, such linkage has fueled the appeal of terrorism and mixtures of anti-American and anti-Israel feeling.

Perhaps most clearly in the "Baker-Hamilton" Report, the U.S. government began to recognize the detrimental role played by the continued "impasse" between Israel and Palestine on other countries and popular attitudes within the region. Within the larger Middle East, the clear desire of many in Israel for an Israeli or U.S. attack on Iran has reinforced continued hostility to both countries in some quarters. The larger sets of issues raised by "preventive" or, conceivably in the Sudan, by humanitarian intervention, were addressed in the 1998 General Assembly policy on "Just Peacemaking," a phrase that has also been used in ecumenical circles for a set of war prevention and conflict resolution approaches.

As the U.S. returns its focus to the war in Afghanistan, attention focuses on the prosecution of the war, whose initial aims were widely supported: ending the Taliban support for Al Qaeda. The 217th General Assembly (2006) approved a "Resolution on Human Rights in a Time of Terrorism and Torture" critical of all weakening of Geneva Conventions, extraordinary rendition, and extraterritorial prison facilities. With the slow closure of the Guantanamo Bay indefinite prison facility, and clearer policies against torture, it is hoped that

diplomatic and development initiatives will replace the primary use of military force. In terms of church policy, it will be important to encourage support for humanitarian reconstruction despite the increasingly clear financial havoc wrought by carrying on both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as “emergency appropriations” rather than as part of the regular budget.

The General Assembly had in 2004 already determined that the invasion of Iraq was “unwise, immoral, and illegal,” a viewpoint confirmed in the subsequent tragic disaster of the occupation and neglect of Afghanistan. The 2008 Iraq study paper notes how the exploitation of Shia and Sunni religious differences was underestimated, and how “terrorism” has become a blanket phrase for all kinds of non-state violence.

The 2009–10 Middle East Study Committee received a briefing on geostrategic issues and discussed these framework questions with representatives of several religious communities, as well as with State Department officials. As in previous policies, it noted the predominant presence of undemocratic governments—often supported and allied to the U.S. government and oil interests—and the social tensions building among young, relatively uneducated populations throughout the region. The Sunni elites in some of these governments themselves look with apprehension at any growth in Iran’s power, although militant Islam throughout the region focuses on the trauma of Gaza and the West Bank, much more visible on their televisions. This overall context becomes most important in assessing the actual threat posed by Iran’s increasingly military-linked government, its links to Hezbollah and Hamas, and the results of previous preemptive military solutions.

Lebanon bears many scars from the military campaign carried out by Israel in the summer of 2006 that focused on Shiite areas in South Lebanon and Beirut but which also targeted many bridges and pieces of infrastructure serving all Lebanon. Hezbollah, while classified a “terrorist organization,” demonstrates through its social services and governmental participation that it is a more broadly political body guided by an Islamist viewpoint of some flexibility. Iran’s past support for Hezbollah is part of its appeal to Muslim Arab nonelites across the region who are willing to overlook its difference of sect and ethnicity (note: the dimensions of documented and alleged support for Hezbollah and Hamas by Iran, Syria, or other countries are subject to wide debate).

Lebanon’s recent history has seen the withdrawal of overt Syrian presence, following the assassination of Rafik Hariri (allegedly by Syrian forces, though this remains unconfirmed). Following the election of Barack Obama and hopes of progress in the Middle East, Hezbollah’s candidates were outvoted by more moderate parties, an outcome accepted peacefully. Lebanon’s politics have, in fact, been long interfered in by powerful neighbors, with Israel invading in the 1980s and occupying Southern Lebanon—perhaps the largest factor in the development of Hezbollah in the first place. Syria’s standing in the region has in fact grown since its overt withdrawal from Lebanon and it, like Lebanon and Jordan, remains stable and occupied with dealing with refugees from Iraq.

Iran and Hezbollah did not play a significant role in the threats to Israel made in the 1991 Gulf War and Israel’s subsequent focus on Iraq related to Saddam Hussein’s continuing in power. At the same time, since Iran’s Islamic revolution in 1979, the U.S. government and Israel cooperated in a “dual containment” strategy—the “axis of evil” identified by the second Bush Administration reflected some of that background, despite several efforts by moderates in Iran to make positive overtures to the West—particularly after 9/11. Iran remembers U.S. support for both the CIA coup against democratically-elected Mohammed Mossadeq in 1956 (installing the Shah’s dictatorship) and U.S. support for Saddam Hussein’s 1980–81 war with Iran (including the then un-protested use of chemical weapons). All of this background of invasion and interference in the affairs of neighbors—in which the U.S. and Israel have been major players since long before the current Iraq war—needs to be kept in mind when assessing Iran’s threat.

Iran’s current leaders have repeatedly shown their disdain for both democracy and public protest, but they have also been under repeated threat of “regime change” by U.S. political leaders and preemptive military strike by Israel. Israel’s stated willingness to bomb neighboring countries, as in the early 2009 case of a possible Syrian nuclear facility, may reinforce the Iran military’s desire for a deterrent, as Iran itself has not invaded any other country for centuries.

Conclusion

The church remains attentive to conflicts in the Middle East and remains painfully aware of the number of lives that have been lost as those conflicts continue. The church is committed to continuing to study the issues and pray for lasting peace. We are called upon to join in this prayer and to work on building networks of support for lasting peace among both members of our churches and within our nation, including support for transnational efforts at peace-building. The General Assembly has also called upon Presbyterians to create and maintain interreligious dialogue among Christians, Muslims, and Jews within their communities and has opposed the oversimplifications of Christian Zionism and other one-sided efforts. The church stands for the even-handed application of international humanitarian law and human rights protections, including protections for all religious and ethnic minorities (such as Armenians historically or Kurds today [*Resolution on the Middle East*, pp. 70–72]). Because there are various forms of violence and oppression, General Assembly policy has addressed religious and ethnic exclusivism, economic opportunities, ecological and especially water and energy issues, as well as formal peace processes and alternatives to military invasions and occupations.

ENDNOTE ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: The corporate engagement of the church in support of a just peace in Israel and Palestine clearly builds on a history—unknown to some—of Presbyterian “mission responsibility through investment” or MRTI going back to 1971. Notable in this is not only the “selective, phased divestment” related to South Africa and later Sudan, but the church’s “Military-Related Investment Guidelines,” adopted by the General Assembly in 1981. Reflecting the church’s commitment to the 1980 policy, “Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling,” these guidelines restrict the church from profiting from nuclear weapons producers and the largest and most war-dependent military contractors. There has also been corporate engagement with companies active in countries with repressive regimes in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, most notably the Sudan before this became an organized focus of divestment. (The church has traditionally also proscribed investments in alcohol, tobacco, and gambling: the “sin stocks.”)

In assessing any corporate engagement strategy, the 1984 General Assembly study, “The Divestment Strategy: Ethical and Institutional Context,” is an important analysis of trusteeship and Christian mission. The key factors of integrity (not unattainable purity), effectiveness (the full impact is not financial), and ecumenical solidarity were presented. A year later the assembly adopted its South Africa-related divestment policy. A 1991 review of the implementation of that policy found that the church had divested of securities in thirteen companies while joining in ecumenical ef-

forts that influenced the legitimacy of investment in South Africa for many more companies. In terms of effectiveness, church-led, nonviolent economic pressure of all kinds, including divestment, had led to the departure of 214 of 324 U.S. corporations in South Africa in 1981, representing an equity decline from \$2.6 billion to \$714 million, a substantial move toward isolating South Africa economically. Also, the churches played a key role in persuading international banks to stop long-term lending and accelerate repayment of short-term loans. As is well-known, after liberation, figures such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and Allan Boesak credited the churches with decisive impact, as did studies such as Robert K. Massie's *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years* (Doubleday, 1998). That 1991 review, "*The Dividends of Hope: An Evaluation of Divestment for South Africa: An Investment in Hope,*" led to the General Assembly action to "affirm a continued policy of selective, phased divestment until the South African Council of Churches and other ecumenical partners determine that irreversible change in the dismantling of apartheid ... has occurred or is occurring" (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 727).

This endnote does not review or duplicate MRT's work.

This policy review and application were prepared by the Reverend Christian Iosso, Ph.D., coordinator of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), serving as co-opted staff to the Middle East Study Committee.

Appendix 3: Presbyterian Panel

Appendix 3: Presbyterian Panel can be found in the Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps, pp. 1140–1150.

Appendix 4: The Amman Call

[The Amman Call was issued at the World Council of Churches' International Peace Conference, "Churches together for Peace and Justice in the Middle East," in Amman, Jordan, June, 18–20, 2007.]

Amman imperatives:

1. Almost sixty years have passed since the Christian churches first spoke with one voice about Arab-Israeli peace. For the last forty years the Christian churches have called for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. In the very place where Jesus Christ walked upon the earth, walls now separate families and the children of God—Christian, Muslim and Jew—are imprisoned in a deepening cycle of violence, humiliation and despair. The Palestinian Christians from Gaza to Jerusalem and to Nazareth, have called out to their brothers and sisters in Christ with this urgent plea: "Enough is enough. No more words without deeds. It is time for action."
2. We welcome the timely and prophetic statement of the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem. We affirm that "the Churches are part of the conflict, because the Churches cannot remain silent while there is still suffering. The role of the Churches is to heal and to bring all sides to reconciliation." Our belief in God reminds us "that all God's children of all religions and political parties are to be respected." We assure the Churches of Palestine and Israel of our prayers, collaboration and resources.
3. Thus, in Amman, Jordan 18-20 June 2007, days that have witnessed a deepening of the crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories, and also includes the United Nations World Refugee Day, we representatives of Christian churches and church-related organizations from every corner of the earth, affirm the decision of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and launch the "Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum" as an instrument to "*catalyze and co-ordinate new and existing church advocacy for peace, aimed at ending the illegal occupation in accordance with UN resolutions, and demonstrate its commitment to inter-religious action for peace and justice that serves all the peoples of the region.*"
4. This action has been taken in response to three fundamental imperatives that call us to action:
 - The ethical and theological imperative for a Just Peace
 - The ecumenical imperative for unity in action
 - The Gospel imperative for costly solidarity
5. The premises of this action are the following:
 - 5.1. That UN resolutions are the basis for peace and the Geneva conventions are applicable to the rights and responsibilities of the affected people.
 - 5.2. That Palestinians have the right of self-determination and the right of return.
 - 5.3. That a two-state solution must be viable politically, geographically economically and socially.
 - 5.4. That Jerusalem must be an open, accessible, inclusive and shared city for the two peoples and three religions.
 - 5.5. That both Palestine and Israel have legitimate security needs.
 - 5.6. That the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal, and constitute an obstacle to peace.
 - 5.7. That the "Separation Barrier" constructed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories is a grave breach of international law and must be removed from the occupied territory.
 - 5.8. That there is no military solution for this conflict. Violence in all its forms cannot be justified whether perpetrated by Israelis or Palestinians.

- 5.9. That comprehensive regional peace is indivisible from a just peace in Israel and Palestine.
- 5.10. That the life and witness of local churches is at the center of worldwide church advocacy for a just peace.

6. We understand the mandate of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum to be a space where we will develop comprehensive strategic approaches to the two processes of peace making and peace building. An inclusive core group convened urgently by the WCC should be mandated to facilitate this and also ensure improved coordination between all actors. The core group will be informed by the reports of the working groups of the Amman conference, and that its composition and mechanism be designed and announced by the WCC.

7. Peace building will include the following:

- 7.1. Furthering theological and biblical perspectives and Christian education resources around those issues central to the conflict.
- 7.2. Developing strategies that will support the processes of justice and reconciliation, including inter-religious dialogue and cooperation.
- 7.3. Strengthening the churches' responses to the occupation.
- 7.4. Recognizing, encouraging and cooperating with all efforts of Israeli and Palestinian civil society that are in accord with the vision and goals of the PIEF.

8. Peace making will include the following:

- 8.1. Defining and promoting measures, including economic ones, that could help end the occupation and enhance sustainable growth and development.
- 8.2. Strengthening existing efforts and identifying new models of church solidarity in action. Supporting local churches and church related organizations not only to survive and continue their powerful ministries, including educational, health, cultural and social services, but also to thrive and be witnesses of hope.
- 8.3. Developing a long-term advocacy strategy in order to mobilize all of our constituencies and influence change.

Amman challenges:

9. We have heard the voices of the Christian churches of Palestine and Israel challenging and saying to us:

- 9.1. Act with us to liberate all peoples of this land from the logic of hatred, mutual rejection and death, so that they see in the other the face and dignity of God.
- 9.2. Pray with us in our efforts to resist evil in all of its guises.
- 9.3. Raise your voices along with ours as we speak "truth to power" and name with courage the injustices we see and experience. The illegal occupation has stolen two generations of lives in this tortured place, and threatens the next with hopelessness and rage.
- 9.4. Risk the curses and abuse that will be aimed at you and stand in solidarity with us and with our Palestinian brothers and sisters of all faiths as we defiantly reject the possibility that occupation will continue.
- 9.5. Help us to tear down walls and build and rebuild bridges among all peoples in the region. Extremism on all sides produces chaos. It threatens to divide us and to destroy bridges among peoples that would lead to reconciliation and peace.
- 9.6. Add your hope to ours in the knowledge that evil and despair have been overcome through the death of our Lord on the Cross and through His Resurrection.
- 9.7. Insist with us that all dispossessed peoples, all refugees, have the right to return.
- 9.8. Partner with us as we seek peace and pursue it. Peace is possible. Christians and Muslims and Jews have, can and will understand one another and live together as neighbors.

10. And we representatives of Christian churches and church-related organizations from every corner of the earth, we respond:

11. Yes, we will. Together we will act and pray and speak and work and risk reputations and lives to build with you bridges for an enduring peace among the peoples of this tortured and beautiful place -Palestine and Israel- to end these decades of injustice, humiliation and insecurity, to end the decades of living as refugees and under occupation. We will work with you to seek peace and pursue it. We have allowed too much time to pass. Time has not served the cause of peace but has served the cause of extremism. This is our urgent cause that cannot wait.

Appendix 5:

Kairos Palestine: A Moment of TruthA word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering

[Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth was issued by a group of Palestinian Christians at the meeting of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum, in Bethlehem, December 11, 2009.]

Introduction

We, a group of Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in our country, under the Israeli occupation, with a cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God ever vigilant, in God's divine providence for all the inhabitants of this land. Inspired by the mystery of God's love for all, the mystery of God's divine presence in the history of all peoples and, in a particular way, in the history of our country, we proclaim our word based on our Christian faith and our sense of Palestinian belonging – a word of faith, hope and love.

Why now? Because today we have reached a dead end in the tragedy of the Palestinian people. The decision-makers content themselves with managing the crisis rather than committing themselves to the serious task of finding a way to resolve it. The hearts of the faithful are filled with pain and with questioning: What is the international community doing? What are the political leaders in Palestine, in Israel and in the Arab world doing? What is the Church doing? The problem is not just a political one. It is a policy in which human beings are destroyed, and this must be of concern to the Church.

We address ourselves to our brothers and sisters, members of our Churches in this land. We call out as Christians and as Palestinians to our religious and political leaders, to our Palestinian society and to the Israeli society, to the international community, and to our Christian brothers and sisters in the Churches around the world.

1. The reality on the ground

1.1 *"They say: 'Peace, peace' when there is no peace"* (Jer. 6:14). These days, everyone is speaking about peace in the Middle East and the peace process. So far, however, these are simply words; the reality is one of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, deprivation of our freedom and all that results from this situation:

1.1.1 The separation wall erected on Palestinian territory, a large part of which has been confiscated for this purpose, has turned our towns and villages into prisons, separating them from one another, making them dispersed and divided cantons. Gaza, especially after the cruel war Israel launched against it during December 2008 and January 2009, continues to live in inhuman conditions, under permanent blockade and cut off from the other Palestinian territories.

1.1.2 Israeli settlements ravage our land in the name of God and in the name of force, controlling our natural resources, including water and agricultural land, thus depriving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and constituting an obstacle to any political solution.

1.1.3 Reality is the daily humiliation to which we are subjected at the military checkpoints, as we make our way to jobs, schools or hospitals.

1.1.4 Reality is the separation between members of the same family, making family life impossible for thousands of Palestinians, especially where one of the spouses does not have an Israeli identity card.

1.1.5 Religious liberty is severely restricted; the freedom of access to the holy places is denied under the pretext of security. Jerusalem and its holy places are out of bounds for many Christians and Muslims from the West Bank and the Gaza strip. Even Jerusalemites face restrictions during the religious feasts. Some of our Arab clergy are regularly barred from entering Jerusalem.

1.1.6 Refugees are also part of our reality. Most of them are still living in camps under difficult circumstances. They have been waiting for their right of return, generation after generation. What will be their fate?

1.1.7 And the prisoners? The thousands of prisoners languishing in Israeli prisons are part of our reality. The Israelis move heaven and earth to gain the release of one prisoner, and those thousands of Palestinian prisoners, when will they have their freedom?

1.1.8 Jerusalem is the heart of our reality. It is, at the same time, symbol of peace and sign of conflict. While the separation wall divides Palestinian neighbourhoods, Jerusalem continues to be emptied of its Palestinian citizens, Christians and Muslims. Their identity cards are confiscated, which means the loss of their right to reside in Jerusalem. Their homes are demolished or expropriated. Jerusalem, city of reconciliation, has become a city of discrimination and exclusion, a source of struggle rather than peace.

1.2 Also part of this reality is the Israeli disregard of international law and international resolutions, as well as the paralysis of the Arab world and the international community in the face of this contempt. Human rights are violated and despite the various reports of local and international human rights' organizations, the injustice continues.

1.1.2 Palestinians within the State of Israel, who have also suffered a historical injustice, although they are citizens and have the rights and obligations of citizenship, still suffer from discriminatory policies. They too are waiting to enjoy full rights and equality like all other citizens in the state.

1.3 Emigration is another element in our reality. The absence of any vision or spark of hope for peace and freedom pushes young people, both Muslim and Christian, to emigrate. Thus the land is deprived of its most important and richest resource – educated youth. The shrinking number of Christians, particularly in Palestine, is one of the dangerous consequences, both of this conflict, and of the local and international paralysis and failure to find a comprehensive solution to the problem.

1.4 In the face of this reality, Israel justifies its actions as self-defence, including occupation, collective punishment and all other forms of reprisals against the Palestinians. In our opinion, this vision is a reversal of reality. Yes, there is Palestinian resistance to the occupation. However, if there were no occupation, there would be no resistance, no fear and no insecurity. This is our understanding of the situation. Therefore, we call on the Israelis to end the occupation. Then they will see a new world in which there is no fear, no threat but rather security, justice and peace.

1.5 The Palestinian response to this reality was diverse. Some responded through negotiations: that was the official position of the Palestinian Authority, but it did not advance the peace process. Some political parties followed the way of armed resistance. Israel used this as a pretext to accuse the Palestinians of being terrorists and was able to distort the real nature of the conflict, presenting it as an Israeli war against terror, rather than an Israeli occupation faced by Palestinian legal resistance aiming at ending it.

1.5.1 The tragedy worsened with the internal conflict among Palestinians themselves, and with the separation of Gaza from the rest of the Palestinian territory. It is noteworthy that, even though the division is among Palestinians themselves, the international community bears an important responsibility for it since it refused to deal positively with the will of the Palestinian people expressed in the outcome of democratic and legal elections in 2006.

Again, we repeat and proclaim that our Christian word in the midst of all this, in the midst of our catastrophe, is a word of faith, hope and love.

2. A word of faith

We believe in one God, a good and just God

2.1 We believe in God, one God, Creator of the universe and of humanity. We believe in a good and just God, who loves each one of his creatures. We believe that every human being is created in God's image and likeness and that every one's dignity is derived from the dignity of the Almighty One. We believe that this dignity is one and the same in each and all of us. This means for us, here and now, in this land in particular, that God created us not so that we might engage in strife and conflict but rather that we might come and know and love one another, and together build up the land in love and mutual respect.

2.1.1 We also believe in God's eternal Word, His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God sent as the Saviour of the world.

2.1.2 We believe in the Holy Spirit, who accompanies the Church and all humanity on its journey. It is the Spirit that helps us to understand Holy Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, showing their unity, here and now. The Spirit makes manifest the revelation of God to humanity, past, present and future.

How do we understand the word of God?

2.2 We believe that God has spoken to humanity, here in our country: *"Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days God has spoken to us by a Son, whom God appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds"* (Heb. 1:1-2)

2.2.1 We, Christian Palestinians, believe, like all Christians throughout the world, that Jesus Christ came in order to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, and in his light and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we read the Holy Scriptures. We meditate upon and interpret Scripture just as Jesus Christ did with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. As it is written in the Gospel according to Saint Luke: *"Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures"* (Lk 24:27)

2.2.2 Our Lord Jesus Christ came, proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was near. He provoked a revolution in the life and faith of all humanity. He came with *"a new teaching"* (Mk 1:27), casting a new light on the Old Testament, on the themes that relate to our Christian faith and our daily lives, themes such as the promises, the election, the people of God and the land. We believe that the Word of God is a living Word, casting a particular light on each period of history, manifesting to Christian believers what God is saying to us here and now. For this reason, it is unacceptable to transform the Word of God into letters of stone that pervert the love of God and His providence in the life of both peoples and individuals. This is precisely the error in fundamentalist Biblical interpretation that brings us death and destruction when the word of God is petrified and transmitted from generation to generation as a dead letter. This dead letter is used as a weapon in our present history in order to deprive us of our rights in our own land.

Our land has a universal mission

2.3 We believe that our land has a universal mission. In this universality, the meaning of the promises, of the land, of the election, of the people of God open up to include all of humanity, starting from all the peoples of this land. In light of the teachings of the Holy Bible, the promise of the land has never been a political programme, but rather the prelude to complete universal salvation. It was the initiation of the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

2.3.1 God sent the patriarchs, the prophets and the apostles to this land so that they might carry forth a universal mission to the world. Today we constitute three religions in this land, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Our land is God's land, as is the case with all countries in the world. It is holy inasmuch as God is present in it, for God alone is holy and sanctifier. It is the duty of those of us who live here, to respect the will of God for this land. It is our duty to liberate it from the evil of injustice and war. It is God's land and therefore it must be a land of reconciliation, peace and love. This is indeed possible. God has put us here as two peoples, and God gives us the capacity, if we have the will, to live together and establish in it justice and peace, making it in reality God's land: *"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it"* (Ps. 24:1).

2.3.2 Our presence in this land, as Christian and Muslim Palestinians, is not accidental but rather deeply rooted in the history and geography of this land, resonant with the connectedness of any other people to the land it lives in. It was an injustice when we were driven out. The West sought to make amends for what Jews had endured in the countries of Europe, but it made amends on our account and in our land. They tried to correct an injustice and the result was a new injustice.

2.3.3 Furthermore, we know that certain theologians in the West try to attach a biblical and theological legitimacy to the infringement of our rights. Thus, the promises, according to their interpretation, have become a menace to our very existence. The "good news" in the Gospel itself has become "a harbinger of death" for us. We call on these theologians to deepen their reflection on the Word of God and to rectify their interpretations so that they might see in the Word of God a source of life for all peoples.

2.3.4 Our connectedness to this land is a natural right. It is not an ideological or a theological question only. It is a matter of life and death. There are those who do not agree with us, even defining us as enemies only because we declare that we want to live as free people in our land. We suffer from the occupation of our land because we are Palestinians. And as Christian Palestinians we suffer from the wrong interpretation of some theologians. Faced with this, our task is to safeguard the Word of God as a source of life and not of death, so that "the good news" remains what it is, "good news" for us and for all. In face of those who use the Bible to threaten our existence as Christian and Muslim Palestinians, we renew our faith in God because we know that the word of God can not be the source of our destruction.

2.4 Therefore, we declare that any use of the Bible to legitimize or support political options and positions that are based upon injustice, imposed by one person on another, or by one people on another, transform religion into human ideology and strip the Word of God of its holiness, its universality and truth.

2.5 We also declare that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is a sin against God and humanity because it deprives the Palestinians of their basic human rights, bestowed by God. It distorts the image of God in the Israeli who has become an occupier just as it distorts this image in the Palestinian living under occupation. We declare that any theology, seemingly based on the Bible or on faith or on history, that legitimizes the occupation, is far from Christian teachings, because it calls for violence and holy war in the name of God Almighty, subordinating God to temporary human interests, and distorting the divine image in the human beings living under both political and theological injustice.

3. Hope

3.1 Despite the lack of even a glimmer of positive expectation, our hope remains strong. The present situation does not promise any quick solution or the end of the occupation that is imposed on us. Yes, the initiatives, the conferences, visits and negotiations have multiplied, but they have not been followed up by any change in our situation and suffering. Even the new US position that has been announced by President Obama, with a manifest desire to put an end to the tragedy, has not been able to make a change in our reality. The clear Israeli response, refusing any solution, leaves no room for positive expectation. Despite this, our hope remains strong, because it is from God. God alone is good, almighty and loving and His goodness will one day be victorious over the evil in which we find ourselves. As Saint Paul said: *"If God is for us, who is against us? (...) Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long' (...) For I am convinced that (nothing) in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God"* (Rom. 8:31, 35, 36, 39).

What is the meaning of hope?

3.2 Hope within us means first and foremost our faith in God and secondly our expectation, despite everything, for a better future. Thirdly, it means not chasing after illusions – we realize that release is not close at hand. Hope is the capacity to see God in the midst of trouble, and to be co-workers with the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in us. From this vision derives the strength to be steadfast, remain firm and work to change the reality in which we find ourselves. Hope means not giving in to evil but rather standing up to it and continuing to resist it. We see nothing in the present or future except ruin and destruction. We see the upper hand of the strong, the growing orientation towards racist separation and the imposition of laws that deny our existence and our dignity. We see confusion and division in the Palestinian position. If, despite all this, we do resist this reality today and work hard, perhaps the destruction that looms on the horizon may not come upon us.

Signs of hope

3.3 The Church in our land, her leaders and her faithful, despite her weakness and her divisions, does show certain signs of hope. Our parish communities are vibrant and most of our young people are active apostles for justice and peace. In addition to the individual commitment, our various Church institutions make our faith active and present in service, love and prayer.

3.3.1 Among the signs of hope are the local centres of theology, with a religious and social character. They are numerous in our different Churches. The ecumenical spirit, even if still hesitant, shows itself more and more in the meetings of our different Church families.

3.3.2 We can add to this the numerous meetings for inter-religious dialogue, Christian–Muslim dialogue, which includes the religious leaders and a part of the people. Admittedly, dialogue is a long process and is perfected through a daily effort as we undergo the same sufferings and have the same expectations. There is also dialogue among the three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as different dialogue meetings on the academic or social level. They all try to breach the walls imposed by the occupation and oppose the distorted perception of human beings in the heart of their brothers or sisters.

3.3.3 One of the most important signs of hope is the steadfastness of the generations, the belief in the justice of their cause and the continuity of memory, which does not forget the “Nakba” (catastrophe) and its significance. Likewise significant is the developing awareness among many Churches throughout the world and their desire to know the truth about what is going on here.

3.3.4 In addition to that, we see a determination among many to overcome the resentments of the past and to be ready for reconciliation once justice has been restored. Public awareness of the need to restore political rights to the Palestinians is increasing, and Jewish and Israeli voices, advocating peace and justice, are raised in support of this with the approval of the international community. True, these forces for justice and reconciliation have not yet been able to transform the situation of injustice, but they have their influence and may shorten the time of suffering and hasten the time of reconciliation.

The mission of the Church

3.4 Our Church is a Church of people who pray and serve. This prayer and service is prophetic, bearing the voice of God in the present and future. Everything that happens in our land, everyone who lives there, all the pains and hopes, all the injustice and all the efforts to stop this injustice, are part and parcel of the prayer of our Church and the service of all her institutions. Thanks be to God that our Church raises her voice against injustice despite the fact that some desire her to remain silent, closed in her religious devotions.

3.4.1 The mission of the Church is prophetic, to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily events. If she does take sides, it is with the oppressed, to stand alongside them, just as Christ our Lord stood by the side of each poor person and each sinner, calling them to repentance, life, and the restoration of the dignity bestowed on them by God and that no one has the right to strip away.

3.4.2 The mission of the Church is to proclaim the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice, peace and dignity. Our vocation as a living Church is to bear witness to the goodness of God and the dignity of human beings. We are called to pray and to make our voice heard when we announce a new society where human beings believe in their own dignity and the dignity of their adversaries.

3.4.3 Our Church points to the Kingdom, which cannot be tied to any earthly kingdom. Jesus said before Pilate that he was indeed a king but *“my kingdom is not from this world”* (Jn 18:36). Saint Paul says: *“The Kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”* (Rom. 14:17). Therefore, religion cannot favour or support any unjust political regime, but must rather promote justice, truth and human dignity. It must exert every effort to purify regimes where human beings suffer injustice and human dignity is violated. The Kingdom of God on earth is not dependent on any political orientation, for it is greater and more inclusive than any particular political system.

3.4.4 Jesus Christ said: *“The Kingdom of God is among you”* (Luke 17:21). This Kingdom that is present among us and in us is the extension of the mystery of salvation. It is the presence of God among us and our sense of that presence in everything we do and say. It is in this divine presence that we shall do what we can until justice is achieved in this land.

3.4.5 The cruel circumstances in which the Palestinian Church has lived and continues to live have required the Church to clarify her faith and to identify her vocation better. We have studied our vocation and have come to know it better in the midst of suffering and pain: today, we bear the strength of love rather than that of revenge, a culture of life rather than a culture of death. This is a source of hope for us, for the Church and for the world.

3.5 The Resurrection is the source of our hope. Just as Christ rose in victory over death and evil, so too we are able, as each inhabitant of this land is able, to vanquish the evil of war. We will remain a witnessing, steadfast and active Church in the land of the Resurrection.

4. Love

The commandment of love

4.1 Christ our Lord said: *“Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another”* (Jn 13:34). He has already showed us how to love and how to treat our enemies. He said: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous (...) Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”* (Matt. 5:45–47). Saint Paul also said: *“Do not repay anyone evil for evil”* (Rom. 12:17). And Saint Peter said: *“Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called”* (1 Pet. 3:9).

Resistance

4.2 This word is clear. Love is the commandment of Christ our Lord to us and it includes both friends and enemies. This must be clear when we find ourselves in circumstances where we must resist evil of whatever kind.

4.2.1 Love is seeing the face of God in every human being. Every person is my brother or my sister. However, seeing the face of God in everyone does not mean accepting evil or aggression on their part. Rather, this love seeks to correct the evil and stop the aggression.

The aggression against the Palestinian people which is the Israeli occupation, is an evil that must be resisted. It is an evil and a sin that must be resisted and removed. Primary responsibility for this rests with the Palestinians themselves suffering occupation. Christian love invites us to resist it. However, love puts an end to evil by walking in the ways of justice. Responsibility lies also with the international community, because international law regulates relations between peoples today. Finally responsibility lies with the perpetrators of the injustice; they must liberate themselves from the evil that is in them and the injustice they have imposed on others.

4.2.2 When we review the history of the nations, we see many wars and much resistance to war by war, to violence by violence. The Palestinian people has gone the way of the peoples, particularly in the first stages of its struggle with the Israeli occupation. However, it also engaged in peaceful struggle, especially during the first Intifada. We recognize that all peoples must find a new way in their relations with each other and the resolution of their conflicts. The ways of force must give way to the ways of justice. This applies above all to the peoples that are militarily strong, mighty enough to impose their injustice on the weaker.

4.2.3 We say that our option as Christians in the face of the Israeli occupation is to resist. Resistance is a right and a duty for the Christian. But it is resistance with love as its logic. It is thus a creative resistance for it must find human ways that engage the humanity of the enemy. Seeing the image of God in the face of the enemy means taking up positions in the light of this vision of active resistance to stop the injustice and oblige the perpetrator to end his aggression and thus achieve the desired goal, which is getting back the land, freedom, dignity and independence.

4.2.4 Christ our Lord has left us an example we must imitate. We must resist evil but he taught us that we cannot resist evil with evil. This is a difficult commandment, particularly when the enemy is determined to impose himself and deny our right to remain here in our land. It is a difficult commandment yet it alone can stand firm in the face of the clear declarations of the occupation authorities that refuse our existence and the many excuses these authorities use to continue imposing occupation upon us.

4.2.5 Resistance to the evil of occupation is integrated, then, within this Christian love that refuses evil and corrects it. It resists evil in all its forms with methods that enter into the logic of love and draw on all energies to make peace. We can resist through civil disobedience. We do not resist with death but rather through respect of life. We respect and have a high esteem for all those who have given their life for our nation. And we affirm that every citizen must be ready to defend his or her life, freedom and land.

4.2.6 Palestinian civil organizations, as well as international organizations, NGOs and certain religious institutions call on individuals, companies and states to engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation. We understand this to integrate the logic of peaceful resistance. These advocacy campaigns must be carried out with courage, openly sincerely proclaiming that their object is not revenge but rather to put an end to the existing evil, liberating both the perpetrators and the victims of injustice. The aim is to free both peoples from extremist positions of the different Israeli governments, bringing both to justice and reconciliation. In this spirit and with this dedication we will eventually reach the longed-for resolution to our problems, as indeed happened in South Africa and with many other liberation movements in the world.

4.3 Through our love, we will overcome injustices and establish foundations for a new society both for us and for our opponents. Our future and their future are one. Either the cycle of violence that destroys both of us or peace that will benefit both. We call on Israel to give up its injustice towards us, not to twist the truth of reality of the occupation by pretending that it is a battle against terrorism. The roots of "terrorism" are in the human injustice committed and in the evil of the occupation. These must be removed if there be a sincere intention to remove "terrorism." We call on the people of Israel to be our partners in peace and not in the cycle of interminable violence. Let us resist evil together, the evil of occupation and the infernal cycle of violence.

5. Our word to our brothers and sisters

5.1 We all face, today, a way that is blocked and a future that promises only woe. Our word to all our Christian brothers and sisters is a word of hope, patience, steadfastness and new action for a better future. Our word is that we, as Christians we carry a message, and we will continue to carry it despite the thorns, despite blood and daily difficulties. We place our hope in God, who will grant us relief in His own time. At the same time, we continue to act in concord with God and God's will, building, resisting evil and bringing closer the day of justice and peace.

5.2 We say to our Christian brothers and sisters: This is a time for repentance. Repentance brings us back into the communion of love with everyone who suffers, the prisoners, the wounded, those afflicted with temporary or permanent handicaps, the children who cannot live their childhood and each one who mourns a dear one. The communion of love says to every believer in spirit and in truth: if my brother is a prisoner I am a prisoner; if his home is destroyed, my home is destroyed; when my brother is killed, then I too am killed. We face the same challenges and share in all that has happened and will happen. Perhaps, as individuals or as heads of Churches, we were silent when we should have raised our voices to condemn the injustice and share in the suffering. This is a time of repentance for our silence, indifference, lack of communion, either because we did not persevere in our mission in this land and abandoned it, or because we did not think and do enough to reach a new and integrated vision and remained divided, contradicting our witness and weakening our word. Repentance for our concern with our institutions, sometimes at the expense of our mission, thus silencing the prophetic voice given by the Spirit to the Churches.

5.3 We call on Christians to remain steadfast in this time of trial, just as we have throughout the centuries, through the changing succession of states and governments. Be patient, steadfast and full of hope so that you might fill the heart of every one of your brothers or sisters who shares in this same trial with hope. *“Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you”* (1 Pet. 3:15). Be active and, provided this conforms to love, participate in any sacrifice that resistance asks of you to overcome our present travail ..

5.4 Our numbers are few but our message is great and important. Our land is in urgent need of love. Our love is a message to the Muslim and to the Jew, as well as to the world.

5.4.1 Our message to the Muslims is a message of love and of living together and a call to reject fanaticism and extremism. It is also a message to the world that Muslims are neither to be stereotyped as the enemy nor caricatured as terrorists but rather to be lived with in peace and engaged with in dialogue.

5.4.2 Our message to the Jews tells them: Even though we have fought one another in the recent past and still struggle today, we are able to love and live together. We can organize our political life, with all its complexity, according to the logic of this love and its power, after ending the occupation and establishing justice.

5.4.3 The word of faith says to anyone engaged in political activity: human beings were not made for hatred. It is not permitted to hate, neither is it permitted to kill or to be killed. The culture of love is the culture of accepting the other. Through it we perfect ourselves and the foundations of society are established.

6. Our word to the Churches of the world

6.1 Our word to the Churches of the world is firstly a word of gratitude for the solidarity you have shown toward us in word, deed and presence among us. It is a word of praise for the many Churches and Christians who support the right of the Palestinian people for self determination. It is a message of solidarity with those Christians and Churches who have suffered because of their advocacy for law and justice.

However, it is also a call to repentance; to revisit fundamentalist theological positions that support certain unjust political options with regard to the Palestinian people. It is a call to stand alongside the oppressed and preserve the word of God as good news for all rather than to turn it into a weapon with which to slay the oppressed. The word of God is a word of love for all His creation. God is not the ally of one against the other, nor the opponent of one in the face of the other. God is the Lord of all and loves all, demanding justice from all and issuing to all of us the same commandments. We ask our sister Churches not to offer a theological cover-up for the injustice we suffer, for the sin of the occupation imposed upon us. Our question to our brothers and sisters in the Churches today is: Are you able to help us get our freedom back, for this is the only way you can help the two peoples attain justice, peace, security and love?

6.2 In order to understand our reality, we say to the Churches: Come and see. We will fulfil our role to make known to you the truth of our reality, receiving you as pilgrims coming to us to pray, carrying a message of peace, love and reconciliation. You will know the facts and the people of this land, Palestinians and Israelis alike.

6.3 We condemn all forms of racism, whether religious or ethnic, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and we call on you to condemn it and oppose it in all its manifestations. At the same time we call on you to say a word of truth and to take a position of truth with regard to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. As we have already said, we see boycott and disinvestment as tools of non violence for justice, peace and security for all.

7. Our word to the international community

7. Our word to the international community is to stop the principle of “double standards” and insist on the international resolutions regarding the Palestinian problem with regard to all parties. Selective application of international law threatens to leave us vulnerable to a law of the jungle. It legitimizes the claims by certain armed groups and states that the international community only understands the logic of force. Therefore, we call for a response to what the civil and religious institutions have proposed, as mentioned earlier: the beginning of a system of economic sanctions and boycott to be applied against Israel. We repeat once again that this is not revenge but rather a serious action in order to reach a just and definitive peace that will put an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and will guarantee security and peace for all.

8. Jewish and Muslim religious leaders

8. Finally, we address an appeal to the religious and spiritual leaders, Jewish and Muslim, with whom we share the same vision that every human being is created by God and has been given equal dignity. Hence the obligation for each of us to defend the oppressed and the dignity God has bestowed on them. Let us together try to rise up above the political positions that have failed so far and continue to lead us on the path of failure and suffering.

9. A call to our Palestinian people and to the Israelis

9.1 This is a call to see the face of God in each one of God's creatures and overcome the barriers of fear or race in order to establish a constructive dialogue and not remain within the cycle of never-ending manoeuvres that aim to keep the situation as it is. Our appeal is to reach a common vision, built on equality and sharing, not on superiority, negation of the other or aggression, using the pretext of fear and security. We say that love is possible and mutual trust is possible. Thus, peace is possible and definitive reconciliation also. Thus, justice and security will be attained for all.

9.2 Education is important. Educational programs must help us to get to know the other as he or she is rather than through the prism of conflict, hostility or religious fanaticism. The educational programs in place today are infected with this hostility. The time has come to begin a new education that allows one to see the face of God in the other and declares that we are capable of loving each other and building our future together in peace and security.

9.3 Trying to make the state a religious state, Jewish or Islamic, suffocates the state, confines it within narrow limits, and transforms it into a state that practices discrimination and exclusion, preferring one citizen over another. We appeal to both religious Jews and Muslims: let the state be a state for all its citizens, with a vision constructed on respect for religion but also equality, justice, liberty and respect for pluralism and not on domination by a religion or a numerical majority.

9.4 To the leaders of Palestine we say that current divisions weaken all of us and cause more sufferings. Nothing can justify these divisions. For the good of the people, which must outweigh that of the political parties, an end must be put to division. We appeal to the international community to lend its support towards this union and to respect the will of the Palestinian people as expressed freely.

9.5 Jerusalem is the foundation of our vision and our entire life. She is the city to which God gave a particular importance in the history of humanity. She is the city towards which all people are in movement—and where they will meet in friendship and love in the presence of the One Unique God, according to the vision of the prophet Isaiah: “*In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it (...) He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more*” (Is. 2: 2–5). Today, the city is inhabited by two peoples of three religions; and it is on this prophetic vision and on the international resolutions concerning the totality of Jerusalem that any political solution must be based. This is the first issue that should be negotiated because the recognition of Jerusalem’s sanctity and its message will be a source of inspiration towards finding a solution to the entire problem, which is largely a problem of mutual trust and ability to set in place a new land in this land of God.

10. Hope and faith in God

10. In the absence of all hope, we cry out our cry of hope. We believe in God, good and just. We believe that God’s goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and of death that still persist in our land. We will see here “a new land” and “a new human being,” capable of rising up in the spirit to love each one of his or her brothers and sisters.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 14-08 with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

- That the section of the Middle East Report providing the mandate and outline of the report (beginning with the second paragraph in the Rationale, and ending with the last paragraph before the introduction) be approved as the summary introduction to its recommendations, to be printed prior to those recommendations, as is done in the separately printed report.

- That section 3.c. reflect the action taken on the Caterpillar recommendation in the ACSWP Advice and Counsel comment on Item 14-03, the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) report:

“3.c. [~~Strongly denounces Caterpillar’s continued profit making from non peaceful uses of its products and presses Caterpillar to review carefully its involvement in obstacles to a just and lasting peace in Israel Palestine and to take affirmative steps to end its complicity in the violation of human rights.~~] [Affirms the divestment of securities in Caterpillar, Inc. until that corporation ceases the sale and use of its armored bulldozers in the maintenance of the occupation, understanding this action to be based on the careful report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment’s six years of unsuccessful efforts to change corporate policy as a shareholder, and on the PC(USA)’s steady response to Christian Palestinian calls for solidarity and non-violent pressure to end the occupation. Continued corporate engagement with other companies is also to focus on their roles in helping maintain and thereby profit from the occupation of Palestine.]

- That section 3.f. be amended as follows and that this advice be consistent with the action taken on 14-05, if that item is approved:

“3.f. Endorses the Kairos Palestine document (“A Moment of Truth”), [~~and~~] [noting] its emphases on hope for liberation, nonviolence, love of enemy, and reconciliation[, and seeking to honor its moral claim for Christian solidarity through nonviolent economic witness for change (including corporate engagement with the possibility of divestment) and other means]; lifts the document up for study and discussion by Presbyterians; and directs the creation of a study guide for the document through the appropriate channel of the General Assembly Mission Council.”

- That section 4.b. be amended as follows:

“4.b. Calls on the U. S. government [~~to exercise strategically its international influence, including the possible withholding of military aid as a means of bringing Israel to compliance with international law and peacemaking efforts.~~] [in principle and in accord with international law, to suspend all economic and military aid to the government of Israel until the occupation is ended with an internationally recognized peace agreement, recognizing that the occupation itself is a security threat to both Israeli and U.S. interests, that Israel is currently imposing economic sanctions on Palestine while its own economy is strong, and that specific new military aid would need to be justified in terms of its contribution to the peace process.]”

- That section 5h. be amended as follows:

“5.h. Calls on the U.S. government, [~~to exercise strategically its international influence and the withholding of financial, economic, and military aid to countries other than Israel, as we might with Israel, until such a time as the civil, religious, and other freedoms of their peoples are fully exercised; and to end U. S. taxpayer support for regimes that perpetuate inequality and popular frustration.~~] [in principle and in accord with international law, to suspend all military aid to undemocratic countries in the Middle East region until such a time as the civil, religious, and other freedoms of their peoples are fully exercised, recognizing that militarization of autocratic regimes creates a security threat, that support for such regimes perpetuates inequality and popular frustration, and that economic cooperation is a long-term anchor for regional security.]”

- That section 6a. be amended as follows:

“6.a. [~~Calls on the U. S. government to repent of its sinful behavior vis à vis the Middle East, including its ongoing war in Iraq, its selectively undermining or supporting the democratic process in such places as Iran and the Palestine National Authority, its continuing support of non-democratic regimes for the sake of oil or leverage over oil, or its involvement with security services and contractors who engage in torture, surveillance, and other human rights violations.~~] [Calls upon the president and State Department to re-state the goals of U.S. policy in the Middle East so as to renounce: the use of war under false pretenses as in Iraq, inconsistent support for democratic processes in Iran and Palestine, continuing support for undemocratic regimes for the sake of oil or leverage over oil, and the use of security services and contractors who engage in torture, assassination, and other human rights violations. Such a re-affirmation of legality and integrity in U.S. policy would constitute an act of institutional repentance and help restore the reputation of the United States.]”

Rationale

This rationale addresses the six points in order, commending the report overall as a strong witness, directly challenging efforts to deny the reality of on-going oppression, to divert attention from the great imbalance of military power and wealth, and to disregard for the near demise of Palestinian Christianity.

1. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has expressed consistent and sustained concern for peace between Israel, the Palestinian people, and the Arab states, and for U.S. policies to encourage and help bring to fruition negotiations for comprehensive, just, and lasting peace (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1969, Part I, p. 595; *Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1974, Part I, p. 584; *Minutes*, PCUS, 1976, Part I, p. 218; *Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1977, Part I, pp. 430, 484; *Minutes*, 1984, Part I, p. 338; *Minutes*, 1986, Part I, p. 877; *Minutes*, 1988, Part I, p. 365; *Minutes*, 1990, Part I, pp. 105, 106; *Minutes*, 1995, Part I, pp. 688, 718; a major report in 1997, and additional reports in 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2008). The Report of the Study Committee includes a policy review and application as an appendix, while also summarizing policy in relation to its biblical bases of covenantal justice in the use of the land.

The summary we recommend moving forward gives coherence to the recommendations and identifies new elements in this policy for this time of urgency, when new settlements and new policies to strip Palestinians of residency heighten tensions throughout the region. Given the March 16, 2010 statement by General Petraeus about the security concern represented by the continued lack of peace, and the range of Jewish groups now expressing some criticism of the occupation and its moral consequences, those first seven paragraphs succinctly state the overall themes that guide the listing of particulars. As an opening section it would also clarify the assignment given by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and indicate the attempt at consensus by the theologically diverse Middle East Study Committee—a consensus that held through much of its work, despite the final demurral by one member.

2. The proposed policy statement and study, together called the Report of the Middle East Study Committee, present a sustained theological, ethical, and pragmatic case for “breaking down the walls” that are shown to block progress toward a viable Palestinian state. The necessity for urgent action is based on the accelerating disappearance of Christians from the Palestinian population and the effective end of the possibility of a “two-state” solution due to the severe limitations on human rights and economic opportunity for the Palestinians, especially in Gaza. If there continues to be only one state controlling the lives of Palestinians, then comparisons with South Africa become only more pointed. The report puts extensive documen-

tation into appendices, including a review and application of previous policy, and data from the Presbyterian Panel, a research instrument on Presbyterian opinion.

The recommendation for divestment that we present in the Advice and Counsel on Item 14-03, as the proper culmination of the work of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI), also fits better the sustained argument that is laid out in section D., Our Witness: “What We Have Seen and Heard.” In addition to the comment made with regard to the Kairos’ document’s call for economic pressure; “we struggle with its call for solidarity in this area and confess that we have not fully answered it” (D.7.), there is a strong statement that indicates the direction of the report’s overall analysis:

We also recognize that our concern to end support for both violence in all its forms and the ongoing occupation and settlement of Palestine places demands of integrity on how the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) uses its own resources and investments. Let us be clear: we do affirm the legitimacy of Israel as a state, but consider the continuing occupation of Palestine ... to be illegitimate, illegal under international law, and an enduring threat to peace in the region. Furthermore, we recognize that any support for that occupation weakens the moral standing of our nation internationally and our security. (Item 14-08, Introductions to Recommendations)

In the light of these statements and the consistent goal of ending the occupation, divestment—as the principled use of the church’s voice after serious engagement—is fully consistent with the Middle East Report.

It is also significant that data on Presbyterian member opinion from the Presbyterian Panel research instrument provided in an appendix shows considerable support for both corporate engagement and for divestment if the activity or sales in question continue.

At least three in five panelists in each group (members, 66%; elders, 66%; pastors, 64%; specialized clergy, 80%) agree that the PC(USA) should shift its investment funds away from such corporations if it is unable to dissuade them from doing things that directly or indirectly support violence against Israeli or Palestinian civilians...” (Appendix 3—Presbyterian Panel, Israel/Palestine and the Rest of the Middle East)

3. The amended recommendation proposed for “A Moment of Truth,” Item 14-05 unites its moral and theological appeal for Christian solidarity in non-violence with specific action that would make that support real.

4. The Presbyterian church has, since 1997, had a stronger position than the one being recommended by the committee. This call for suspending military aid to Israel, as part of the strategic exercise of U.S. international influence, calls into question the seriousness of the situation the rest of the report describes. Is it not past time to stop enabling continued settlement growth, fence or wall building, detention without trial of thousands of Palestinians? Clearly we support Israel’s security through a whole range of security guarantees, but the language of “in principle” strengthens the witness and focuses the issue on international law. Certainly, Israel has long been by far the largest beneficiary of U.S. government support, on a per capita basis in excess of what many U.S. citizens receive from their government.

5. The same principles hold for the aid we have spread around the Middle East for stability, cooperation, balance of power, etc. The amended recommendation makes a stronger and more consistent case than the previous, somewhat convoluted language. The effort to end double standards is clear.

6. In proposing this rewording, ACSWP hopes it has clarified the intent of the Middle East Study Committee while also providing a reasonable request for the redirection of U.S. policy. At the same time, the appeal for repentance by a nation is not inappropriate, given the symbolic importance of such statements by German, U. S., and various nations in relation to Truth and Reconciliation processes.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 14-08 be approved.

Rationale

The ACREC thanks and commends the Middle East Study Committee (MESC) for its work on this expansive report. The ACREC thinks it is unfortunate that the report stops at endorsing BDS (Boycott Divestment & Sanctions) as a way of living out the title of the report. They leave us wondering how we are to “break down the walls,” practically speaking, without BDS, a nonviolent tool that has been used successfully in the past on other issues.

Item 14-09

[The assembly approved Item 14-09. See pp. 51, 54.]

On Seeking Compliance to U.S. Government Policy in the Use of Military Aid by All Parties in the Middle East—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

The Presbytery of Chicago respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take the following actions:

1. Express its enduring and heartfelt commitment to security, justice and lasting peace for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.
2. Express its support for the U.S. government policy of carefully vetting the funds distributed to foreign countries in ways that ensure peaceful development and are consistent with international law, human rights protections, and U.S. foreign policy, namely:
 - a. the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 which prohibits giving assistance to the government of any country which engages in a consistent pattern of human rights violations;
 - b. the U.S. Arms Export Control Act of 1976 which prohibits using U.S. weapons against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and
 - c. the U.S. foreign policy insofar as it pertains to recommendations for steps toward peace, in this instance, between Israelis and Palestinians.
3. Call for the allocation of U.S. military aid funds to be contingent on compliance with the above-mentioned statutes and/or to the peace process.
4. Express its extreme disappointment with the U.S. government that while the State of Israel has been found not to comply with the above statutes, it continues to be the recipient of U.S. military aid.
5. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to communicate these recommendations to all members of the U.S. Congress, in particular the chairs of the Foreign Relations Committees for the House and Senate and to all appropriate members of the U.S. administration, including the president, vice-president, secretary of state and secretary of defense.

Rationale

The church is called to seek justice when there is injustice, to struggle to free people from oppression, and to counter violence with strong messages to reconcile and heal. Countenancing any such wrongs without protest makes the church complicit if not culpable. We find this call in many places in the Bible:

- “[God] shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Is. 2:4).
- “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Mt. 5:9).

Since WWII, Israel has received more direct aid from the United States than any other country—and since 1965, nearly \$3 billion annually in aid. In a 2007 agreement, the U.S. pledged to provide military aid totaling \$30 billion over the next ten years (Ref. 1). Taxpayers would expect that the recipient of such generous amounts would have a solid international presence and would be in alliance with U.S. foreign policy; however, this is not the case. This overture calls into serious question the wisdom of such a financial arrangement by virtue of Israel’s pattern of human rights violations, its use of U.S. weapons against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and its disregard of U.S. foreign policy.

The current Congress and administration should be urged to correct its foreign aid disbursement policy and to send a message to both parties that funds from U.S. taxpayers are not to be used for any activity which violates human rights or impedes peace. Rather than sending a mixed message to Israel and the world that exceptions are tolerated, conditions should be placed on any aid allocations until that country’s policy conforms.

The State of Israel has been cited by several organizations including the United Nations, B’Tselem (an Israeli organization), Amnesty International, and the Human Rights Watch—as engaging in human rights violations. U.S. weapons have been used to kill and injure Palestinian civilians and to destroy Palestinian infrastructure: specific violations include the use of cluster bombs in Lebanon in 2006, and the use of white phosphorous in the 2009 Gaza incursion (Refs. 6 and 7, also

<www.amnestyusa.org>, <<http://www.hrw.org/en/middle-east/n-africa>>. Israel's access to U.S. military aid enhances its capacity to commit human rights abuses (<www.ifamericansknew.org>, statistics updated Dec 3, 2009).

U.S. foreign policy contains strict procedures to build a peaceful solution one of which is halting settlement development. The current Israeli government resists such calls (Ref. 8). The Palestinian Authority must continue its efforts to resolve internal leadership issues, as well.

In regards to Israel/Palestine, the congressional committees responsible for fund allocation have been careful to assure that no funds go to Hamas or any organization advocating violence, and have from time to time delayed funds conditionally (Ref. 2).

The U.S. Congress has been faulted for not applying these strictures to Israel. Four times during the past thirty years, the PC(USA) has spoken out. The following are excerpts from overtures on this topic (Ref. 3.)

- In 1983, "... denying all forms of aid to Israel as long as that nation persists in creating new West Bank settlements..." (*Minutes*, PC(USA) 1983, Part I, p. 796.)
- In 1990, "... make continuation of U.S. aid ...contingent upon an end to further settlements...and an end to human rights violations as enumerated by the U.S. State Department ..." (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 105).
- In 1995, "... renew efforts to make U.S. aid to Israel conditional upon cessation of the appropriation of Palestinian land, ... [u]rge the Israeli government to lift the military closures of Jerusalem that deny Christians, Muslims, and others access to their places of worship ..." (*Minutes*, 1995, Part I, p. 689).
- In 1998, "... make continued aid and military assistance to Israel contingent on its fulfilling the terms of the Oslo Accords ..." (*Minutes*, 1998, Part I, p. 655).

In addition, the Middle East Study Team, commissioned by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2008, reports the need to account for the percentage of U.S. foreign aid that supports human rights violations (Ref. 4). Other organizations have joined their voices to this call (see below).

Members of the U.S. Congress and several U.S. administrations have from time to time also challenged the disbursement of aid to Israel by withholding or delaying it conditionally, though never in a sustained manner and ultimately ineffectively (Refs. 1 and 5).

Any criticism of Israeli policy must be understood as criticism of government policy and not as anti-Jewish; many Jewish individuals agree with the arguments presented in this overture (see statement below from Jewish Voice for Peace.) While the Jewish people have suffered from persecution and have been victims of violence perpetrated by Palestinians, the Israeli government's abuse of human rights, illegal land acquisition, and disregard for the peace process cannot serve as excuses and should not be subsidized by U.S. funds.

This overture communicates concern for Israel's long-term secure place in the international community and for the Palestinians' rights to unified leadership pledged to non-violence. Suspension of aid until conditions are met is intended as a strategy to move peace-making forward, and not as a punishment. Should Israeli aid be suspended, that country would be able to defend itself given strategic agreements and a strong military.

This overture also communicates our concern that the United States not be viewed as disrespectful to Muslims. For the U.S. government to have different standards for different countries implies discrimination. The international Muslim community holds the belief that the U.S. is inconsistent in its posture toward the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and, by virtue of the Palestinians being predominantly Muslim, disrespects Islamic believers (Ref. 9). It is hoped that, by achieving sound, consistent standards in its aid policies toward the Israelis and the Palestinians, the United States would be judged as a more fair and consistent nation.

Calls by Other Organizations for Conditions on Aid

Jewish Voice for Peace, January 2010

"Despite President Barack Obama's very clear position against Israel's blockade on Gaza and continued settlement expansion, Israel continues to forbid humanitarian assistance from entering Gaza and expand its West Bank. We are asking Congress, why is Israel being rewarded with almost three billion dollars in aid when it ignores American policies and continues to use our money to build settlements and maintain the blockade of Gaza? Shouldn't our aid come [with strings attached?](http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/publish/campaigns.shtml)" (<<http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/publish/campaigns.shtml>>).

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), 1991

“... to relate U.S. foreign assistance to the willingness of those nations to negotiate with one another in good faith and to adhere to international law and human rights conventions; and to oppose further housing loan guarantees to Israel unless and until the construction and expansion of settlements in the occupied territories is stopped” (Conflict in the Middle East, passed by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly in Orlando, Florida, found at <<http://archive.elca.org/socialpolicyresolutions/resolution.asp?id=19&ref=hts>>).

Churches for Middle East Peace, September 7, 2005

“The US should condition special funds—grants, loans and loan guarantees—on Israel’s compliance with its Road Map obligations” (See particularly: <<http://www.cmep.org/Alerts/2005/2005Sept7.htm>>).

References:

1. Sharp, Jeremy M., Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs. “U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel,” December 4, 2009, CRS-Congressional Research Service, Report for Congress, RL33222, <http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL33222_20091204.pdf>.
2. Zanoliti, Jim, Analyst, Middle Eastern Affairs, “US Foreign Aid to the Palestinians,” July 16, 2009 CRS-Congressional Research Service, Report for Congress, RL22967, <<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/128341.pdf>>.
3. “A Brief Summary of General Assembly Statements by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its Predecessors,” developed February 2005, updated March 2006, <www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/resources.htm>.
4. “Middle East study team nears release of its final report,” Presbyterian News Service, <<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2010/10099.htm>>.
5. Stevenson, Adlai E. III, *The Black Book*, Chicago: 2009.
6. B’TSelem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories: “Human Rights in the Occupied Territories: Jerusalem, Israel. Annual Report 2007.
7. Dugard, J., Special Rapporteur for the United Nations, “Question of Violations of Human Rights in Occupied Arab Territories including Palestine,” Sept 2003. 59th Session of U.N. General Assembly, NY: Oct 28, 2004.
8. *The Economist*, Dec. 5–11, 2009.
9. Esposito, John L. and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*. New York: Gallup Press, 2007.

Acknowledgements

The Presbytery of Chicago gratefully acknowledges the Presbyteries of Newark and Detroit for the helpfulness of their prior work in this area and for the remarks of the ACSWP to 11-01, 218th General Assembly (2008), in the drafting of the current overture.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-09—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 14-09 be approved.

Rationale

The overture begins appropriately by asking the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to express its enduring commitment to the peoples of Israel and Palestine. The concerns that generated the overture draw attention to violations of U.S. law and policy by the United States. Its critique is directed primarily at the practices of our own nation.

Subsequent to the submission of this overture to the Office of the General Assembly, however, the problems of U.S. Middle East Policy and practice have assumed greater urgency. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee General David Petraeus, United States Central Command, reported:

The enduring hostilities between Israel and some of its neighbors present distinct challenges to our ability to advance our interests in the AOR. Israeli-Palestinian tensions often flare into violence and large-scale armed confrontations. The conflict foments anti-American sentiment, due to a perception of U.S. favoritism for Israel. Arab anger over the Palestinian question limits the strength and depth of U.S. partnerships with governments and peoples in the AOR and weakens the legitimacy of moderate regimes in the Arab world. Meanwhile, al-Qaeda and other militant groups exploit that anger to mobilize support. The conflict also gives Iran influence in the Arab world through its clients, Lebanese Hizballah and Hamas. (General David Petraeus, Senate Armed Services Committee, March 16, 2010 <<http://www.lobelog.com/petraeus-confirms-link-between-israel-palestine-and-u-s-security/>>)

The perception of U.S. favoritism for Israel, which foments anger, complicates partnerships with moderate Arab regimes, and weakens their legitimacy, is further exacerbated by continued allocation of U.S. funds for military purposes and foreign assistance in violation of U.S. law and internationally recognized standards for human rights. The PC(USA)'s long history of partnership with Christians in the Middle East, concern for a just peace in the region, and our support for the State of Israel require that this overture be read carefully for what it says and hopes to accomplish.

Item 14-10

[The assembly approved Item 14-10. See pp. 51, 54.]

Toward Peace and Reconciliation in the Middle East—From the Presbytery of Baltimore.

The Presbytery of Baltimore respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take the following actions and direct the Stated Clerk to communicate them appropriately to the various parties:

1. Call upon the government of Israel to establish an independent commission, whose findings it could accept, to investigate the allegations of inappropriate behavior contained in the Goldstone Report regarding actions of the Israeli Defense Force in Operation Cast Lead, and to report its findings to the government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the Hamas authorities in Gaza, and the secretary general of the United Nations.

2. Call upon the Hamas authorities in Gaza to work together to establish an independent commission, whose findings it could accept, to investigate the allegations of inappropriate behavior contained in the Goldstone Report regarding actions of Hamas and its military, and to report its findings to the Hamas authorities in Gaza, the Palestinian Authority, the government of Israel, and the secretary general of the United Nations.

3. Call on the United States government, its president and Congress, to actively engage with all authorities involved in the Gaza conflict to initiate and sustain the proposed independent investigations.

4. Urge the U.S. government to continue to work actively through the presence of its special envoy to further peace negotiations between the Palestinian Authority, the Hamas authorities in Gaza, and the government of Israel.

Rationale

This overture arises from the Gaza Conflict, including Hamas firing rockets into Israel (2008) and Israel responding with a military assault called "Operation Cast Lead" (December 2008 – January 2009).

Concerned about possible violations of International Law on the both sides of the conflict, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations commissioned a Fact-Finding Team to investigate, chaired by Justice Richard Goldstone.

Its findings were published (September 2009) in what is now known as the Goldstone Report, which was rejected by Israel. Two months later, just this past November, the U.S. House of Representatives, in House Resolution 867, called on "... the President and the Secretary of State to continue to strongly and unequivocally oppose any endorsement of the 'Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'" (the Goldstone Report) (H.Res. 867 EH, 111th Congress).

In its sweeping denunciation of this report, the U.S. Congress overlooked two of its major recommendations: namely, that should Israel and Hamas not agree with the findings, they initiate their own independent investigations. This overture seeks to rectify this oversight.

1. The U.S. Arms Export Control Act of 1976 prohibits using U.S. weapons against civilians and civilian infrastructure. Sources vary in the particulars, but as a result of Operation Cast Lead, there were more than one thousand persons killed, mostly women and children (with thousands more wounded). Thousands of homes were destroyed with many more damaged. There was extensive destruction and damage to businesses, universities, colleges, schools, medical facilities, the central supply for water, electricity, and sewage treatment. Scores of mosques were destroyed or damaged. Preceding and during the attack upon Gaza, the Hamas military fired rockets into Israeli civilian communities and used the presence of civilians in Gaza as protection for their efforts.¹

2. U.S. taxpayers are contributing \$7.6 million per day to the Israeli military and have a right to know whether that money was used appropriately in the defense of Israel.

3. Human rights groups within Israel, such as B'Tselem and Breaking the Silence, are calling on Israel to have an independent investigation of these events.

4. Both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have released detailed reports based on field research and witness testimony, but urge Israel and Hamas to conduct their own independent studies.

5. The European Parliament urges Israel and the Palestinians to conduct investigations into the Gaza Conflict that "... meet international standards of independence, impartiality, transparency, promptness, and effectiveness" within five months and calls on the European Union to "... work towards a strong E.U. common position on the follow-up to this report" (From a Press Release, March 10, 2010, circulated by *al Haq*, "Defending Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories).

Endnote

1. Sources include: Amnesty International; Human Rights Watch; B'Tselem (Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories); "Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict" (The Goldstone Report); and *Steadfast Hope*, published by the Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2009.

Middle East Study Committee Art, Charts, and Maps



Cover art (Lilies of the Field II [2003], 24" by 36" acrylic, by Lucy Janjigian); submitted for use on the cover by Lucy Janjigian.

Figure 1



Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

Figure 2



Figure 3

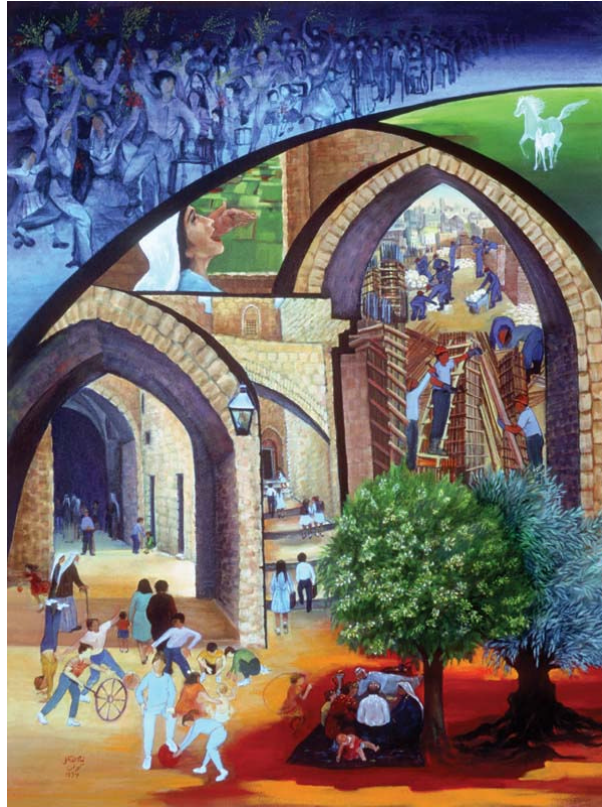


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

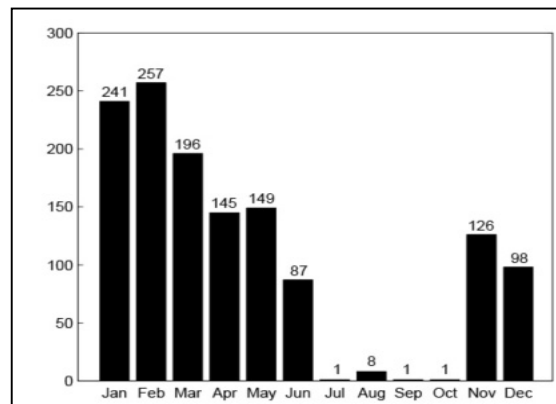


Figure 7. Number of Palestinian rockets fired monthly in 2008, (adapted from [the Israeli Consulate in NYC](#))

Figure 8



Expulsion from Lydda by Ismail Shamout

Figure 9



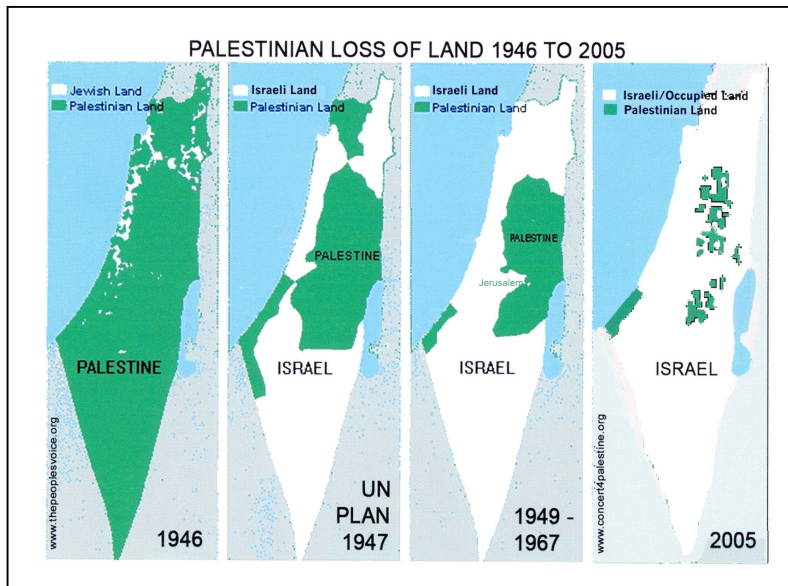
Stripped of Their Identity and Driven from Their Land by John Halaka (www.johnhalaka.com)

Figure 10



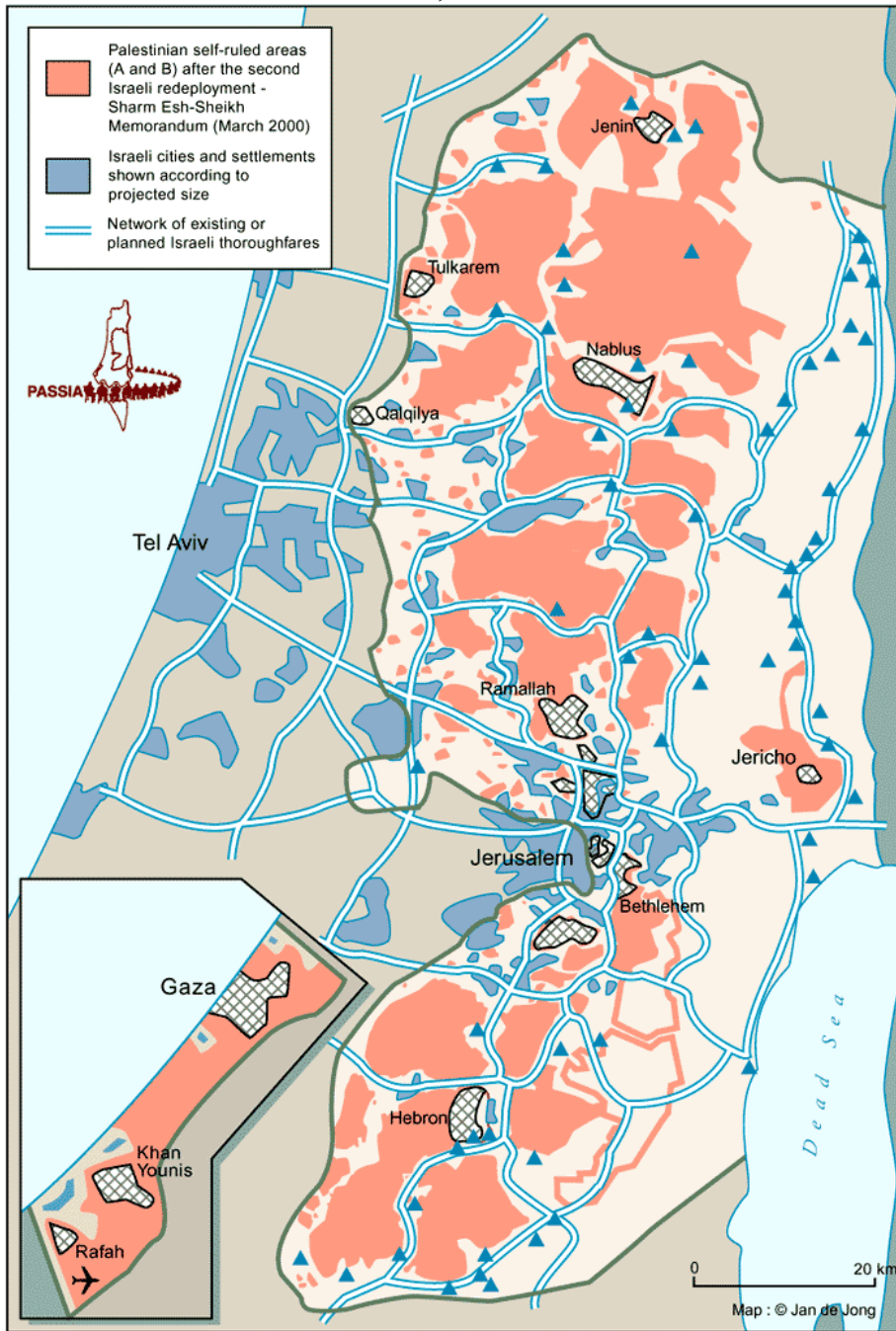
Samia Halaby "Kafr Qasem Massacre: The Women Embrace in Death" 2006.
Acrylic on linen, 84 x 126 inches, or 188 x 250 cm.

Figure 11



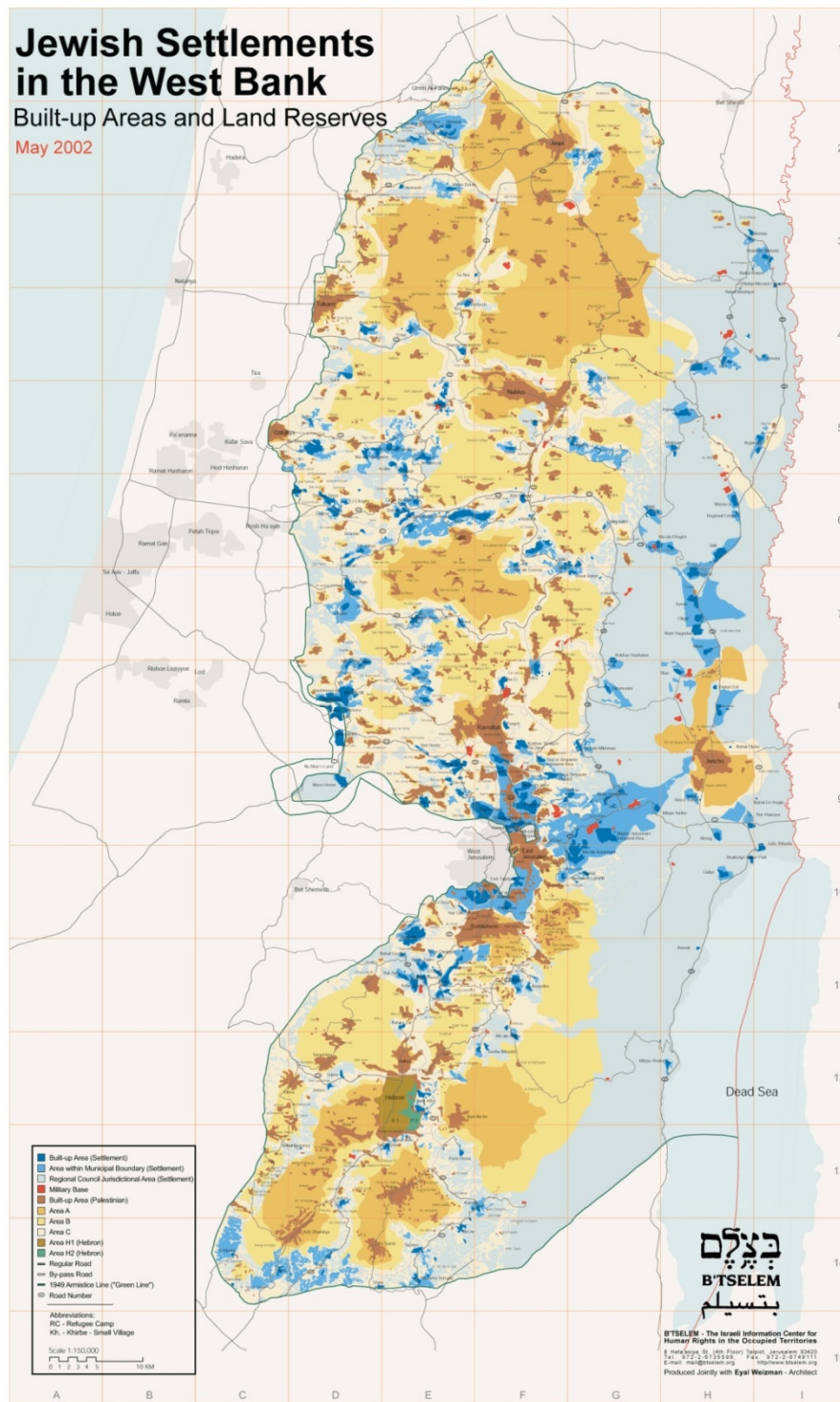
ATTACHMENT I MAPS

MAP 1. THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP, MARCH 2000.

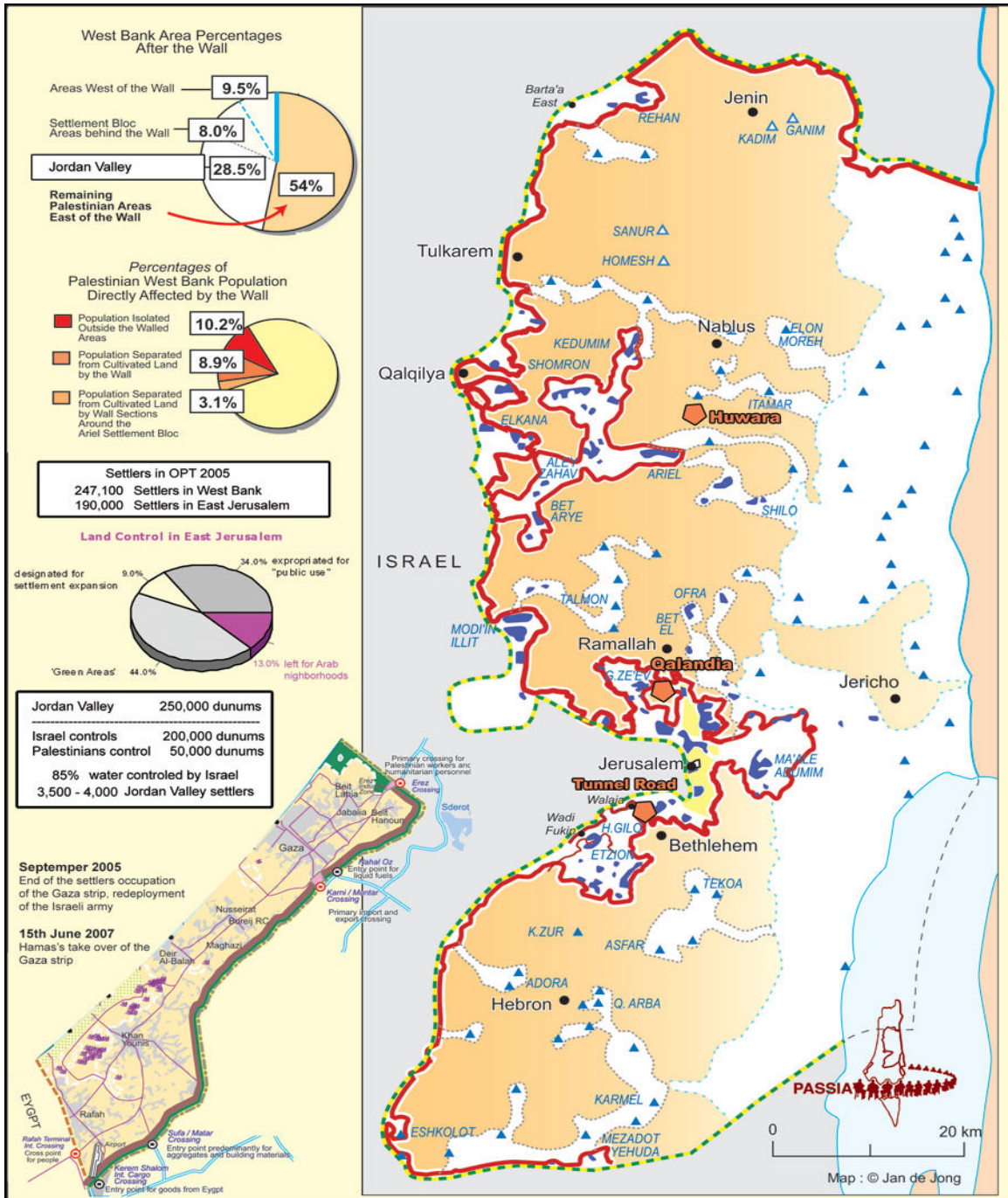


**Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
(PASSIA)**

MAP 2. JEWISH SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK

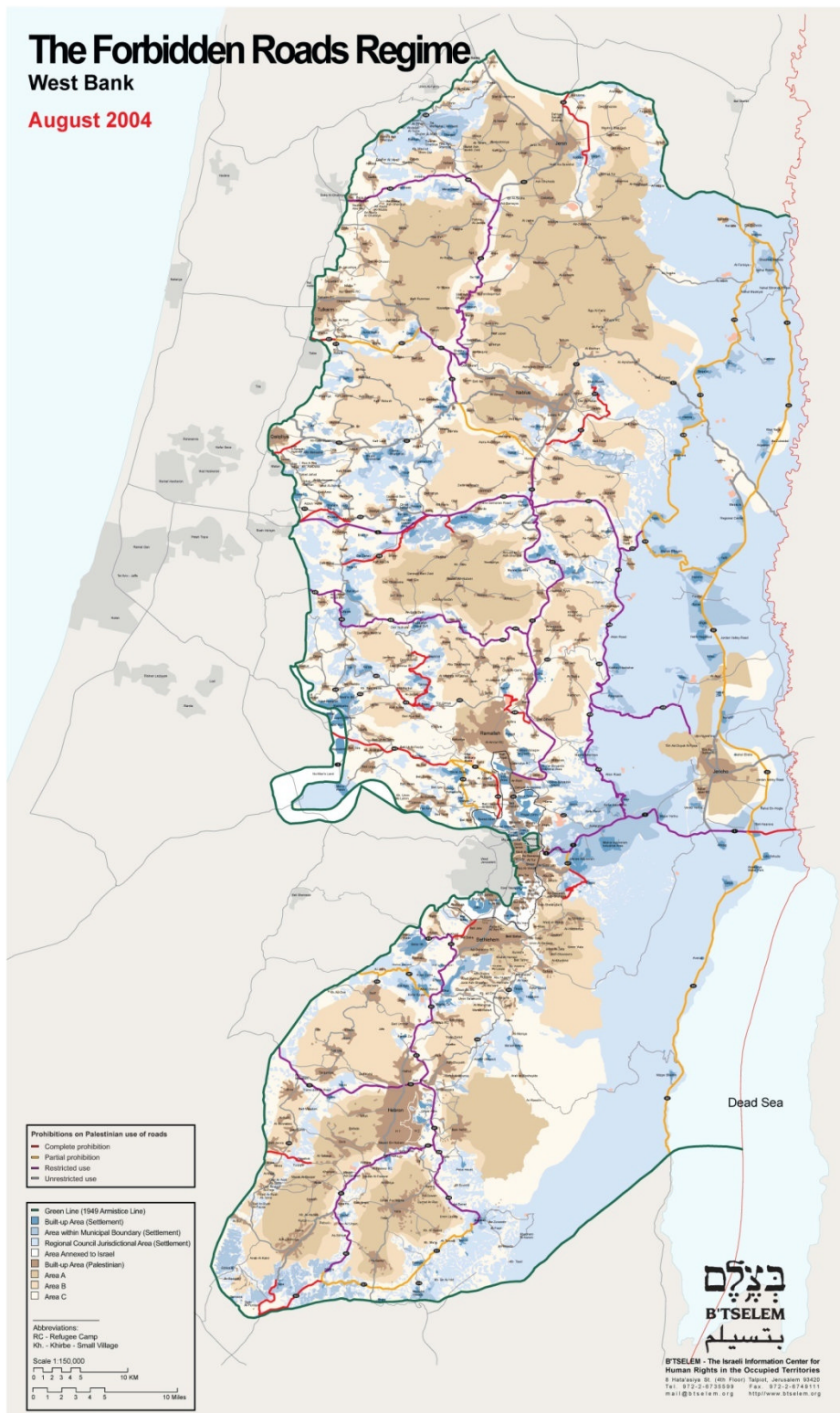


MAP 3. WEST BANK WALL—MAP 2006.



PALESTINIAN ACADEMIC SOCIETY FOR STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
PASSIA

MAP 4. THE FORBIDDEN ROADS REGIME.



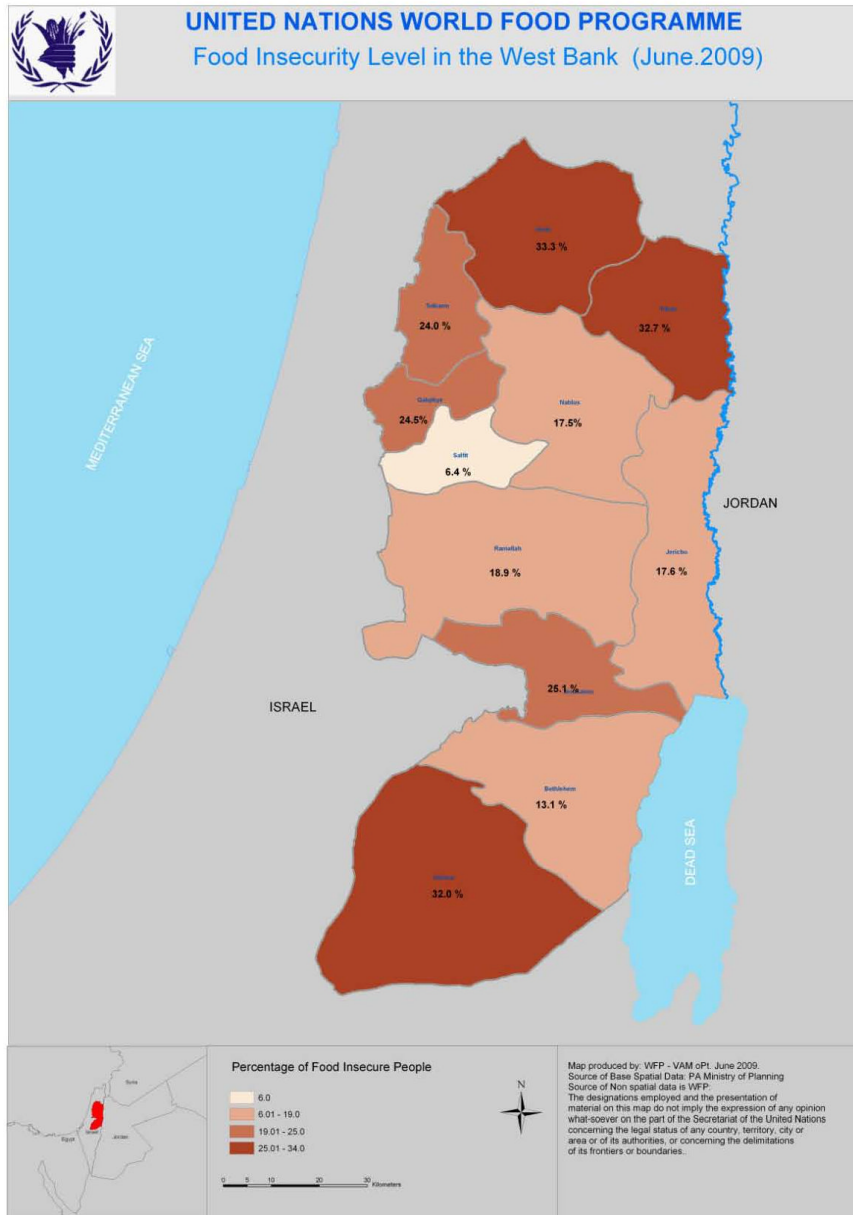
MAP 5. WATER RESOURCES



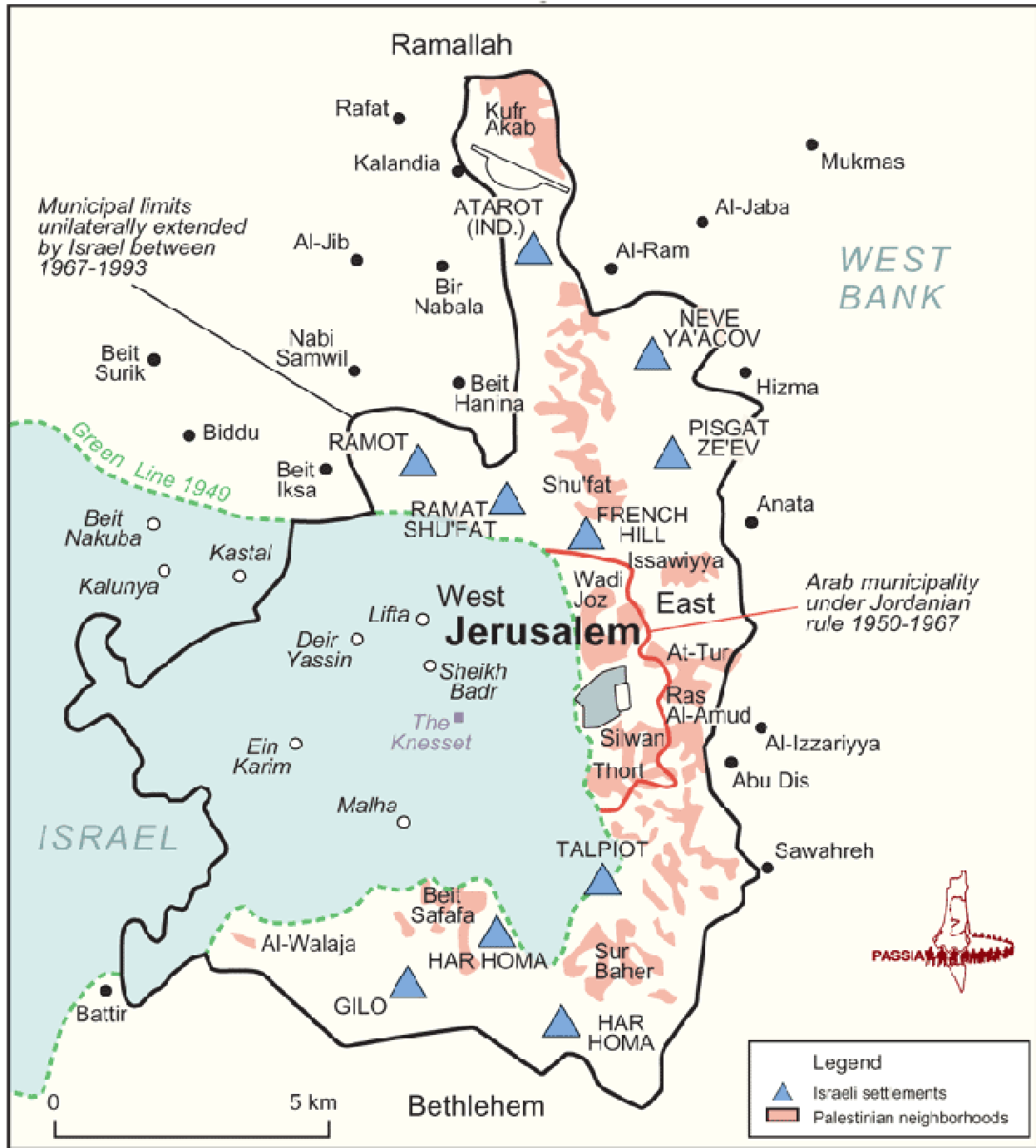
Adapted from: 'Water and War in the Middle East' Info Paper no.5, July 1996, Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine/ The Jerusalem Fund, Washington D.C.

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

MAP 6. FOOD INSECURITY LEVEL IN THE WEST BANK (JUNE, 2009), BY THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD PROGRAM.

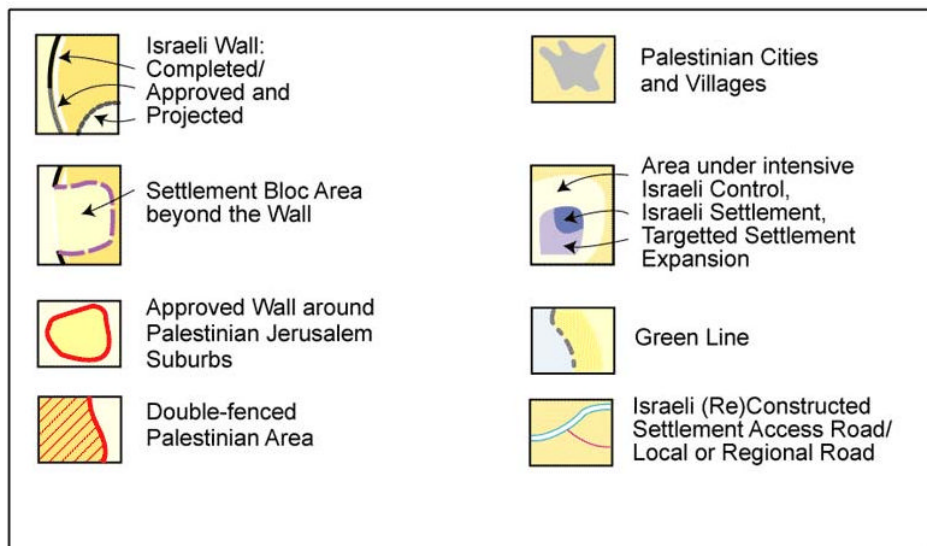
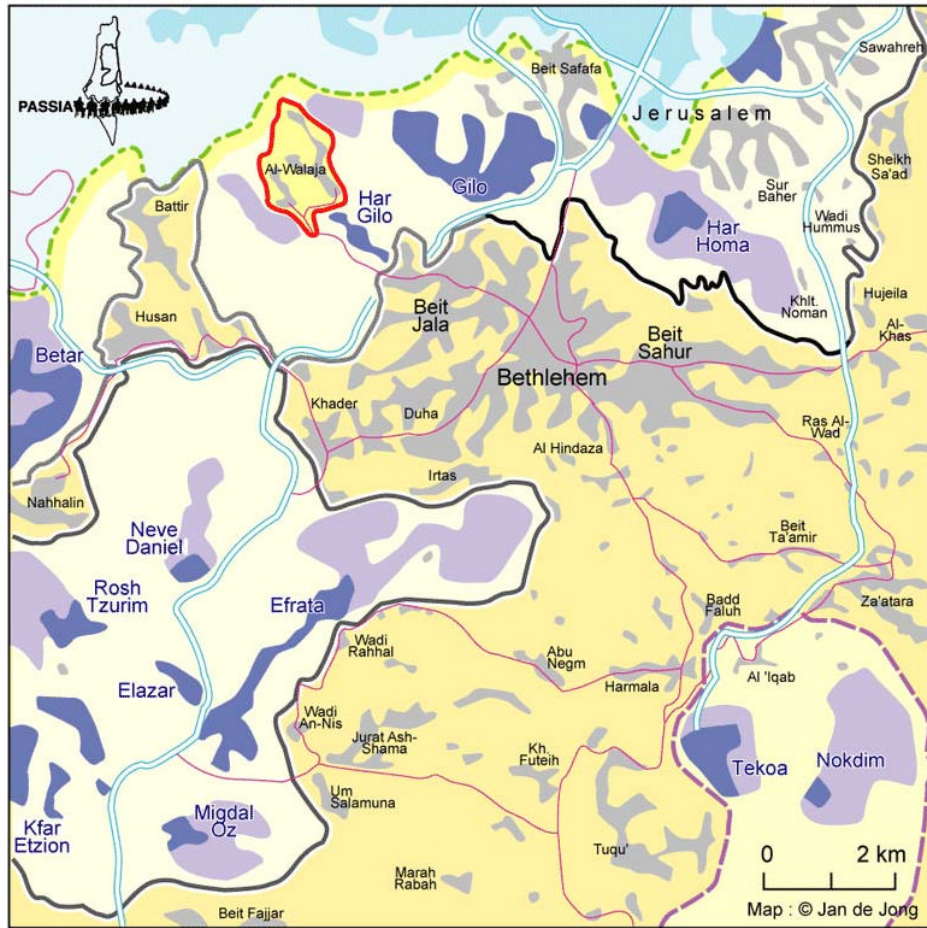


MAP 7. ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS AND PALESTINIAN NEIGHBORHOODS IN EAST JERUSALEM, 2000.



**PALESTINIAN ACADEMIC SOCIETY FOR STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
PASSIA**

MAP 8. THE WALL, BETHLEHEM DISTRICT—DECEMBER 2003.



**PALESTINIAN ACADEMIC SOCIETY FOR STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
PASSIA**

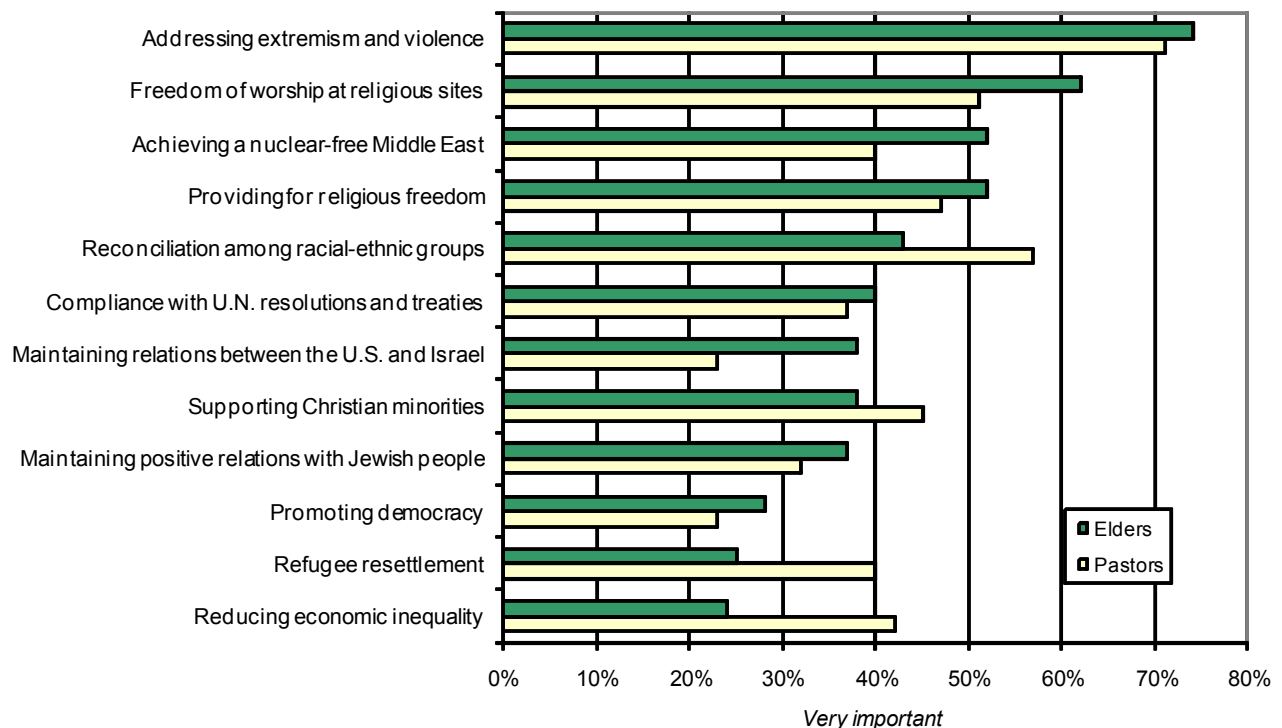
Appendix 3: Presbyterian Panel

ISRAEL/PALESTINE AND THE REST OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Priorities for Improving the Situation in the Middle East

- ✓ At least one-third of panelists in each group believe that pursuing the following actions is *very important* for improving the situation in Israel/Palestine and the rest of the Middle East:
 - Addressing extremism and the threat of violence (members, 72%; elders, 74%; pastors, 71%; specialized clergy, 70%).
 - Freedom of worship at all major religious sites (65%; 62%; 51%; 62%).
 - Achieving a nuclear-free Middle East (59%; 52%; 40%; 40%).
 - Providing for religious freedom throughout the Middle East (52%; 52%; 47%; 51%).
 - Reconciliation among racial-ethnic groups within Middle Eastern countries (45%; 43%; 57%; 57%).
 - Compliance with United Nations resolutions and human rights treaties (41%; 40%; 37%; 46%).
 - Supporting Christian minorities in Israel/Palestine (36%; 38%; 45%; 42%).
- ✓ More than one-third of laypeople—but fewer ministers—view as *very important* both maintaining positive relations between Presbyterians and members of the U.S. Jewish community (members, 40%; elders, 37%; pastors, 32%; specialized clergy, 27%) and maintaining the close diplomatic and military relationship between the U.S. and Israeli governments (38%; 38%; 23%; 22%).
- ✓ Two other principles are seen as *very important* by at least two in five ministers, but by fewer laypeople: reducing economic inequality within Middle Eastern countries (members, 25%; elders, 24%; pastors, 42%; specialized clergy, 48%) and refugee resettlement (26%; 25%; 40%; 47%).
- ✓ Relatively few panelists (members, 27%; elders, 28%; pastors, 23%; specialized clergy, 19%) believe that promoting democracy throughout the Middle East is *very important* (see also Figure 1).

Figure 1. Importance of Various Actions for Improving the Situation in Israel/Palestine and the Rest of the Middle East

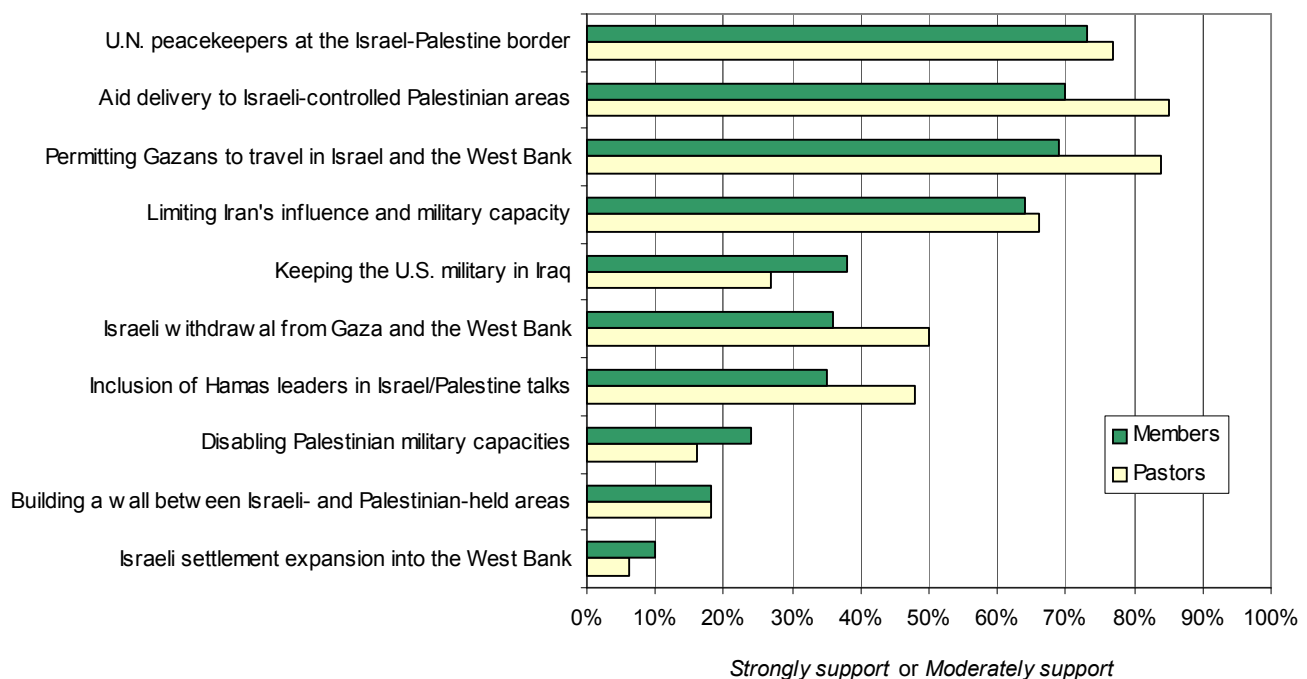


ISRAEL/PALESTINE AND THE REST OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Possible Peacemaking Strategies

- ✓ Large majorities of panelists in each group *strongly support* or *moderately support* the following peacemaking strategies:
 - Permitting Gaza residents to enter the West Bank and Israel for trade or other legitimate purposes (members, 69%; elders, 72%; pastors, 84%; specialized clergy, 87%).
 - Delivery by international organizations of humanitarian aid to people living in Palestinian territory occupied or controlled by Israel (70%; 68%; 85%; 90%).
 - The presence of United Nations peacekeepers to help supervise the borders between Israel and Palestine (73%; 70%; 77%; 85%).
 - Limiting the influence and military capacity of the Iranian government (64%; 66%; 66%; 60%).
- ✓ Almost half or more of ministers—but fewer members and elders—*strongly support* or *moderately support*:
 - Permanent Israeli withdrawal from all of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem (members, 36%; elders, 33%; pastors, 50%; specialized clergy, 61%).
 - The inclusion of democratically elected Hamas leaders in negotiations about the future of Israel/Palestine (35%; 41%; 48%; 61%).
- ✓ Around two in five members (38%) and elders (43%)—but fewer ministers (pastors, 27%)—*strongly support* or *moderately support* maintaining a U.S. military presence in Iraq.
- ✓ Few panelists in each group *strongly support* or *moderately support*:
 - Construction of a separation barrier between territory that the Israeli government administers and the Palestinian authorities administer (members, 18%; elders, 24%; pastors, 18%; specialized clergy, 17%).
 - Expansion of Israeli settlements further into the West Bank and East Jerusalem on Palestinian land (10%; 10%; 6%; 5%). (Figure 2 provides additional information.)

Figure 2. Support for Various Peacemaking Strategies in the Middle East



A Two-State Solution?

- ✓ Seven in eight specialized clergy (86%), four in five pastors (78%), and two-thirds of members (65%) and elders (68%) support a two-state solution in the Middle East, with both a state of Israel and a state of Palestine.
- ✓ Three in ten members (30%) and one-quarter of elders (24%)—but fewer ministers (pastors, 15%; specialized clergy, 11%)—don’t know whether or not they support this solution.

Comparing Responses of 2009 Panelists with Those of Earlier Panelists

Presbyterians’ opinions about issues related to Israel/Palestine and the Middle East have been relatively stable, results of the August 2009 Panel survey and earlier surveys suggest.

The May 2002 Panel survey on Peacemaking, International Conflict, and Related Issues and the August 2009 survey asked virtually identical questions about support for a two-state solution in the Middle East, with both a state of Israel and a state of Palestine.

The November 2004 Panel survey on Current Issues in Church and Society and the August 2009 survey asked somewhat similar questions about support for the building of a wall between Israeli- and Palestinian-held areas.

The 2004 survey asked panelists whether they *favor*, *oppose*, or have *no opinion* about the “current construction by Israel of a security barrier or wall between it and occupied Palestinian territories.” The 2009 survey asked panelists whether they *strongly support*, *moderately support*, *neither support nor oppose*, *moderately oppose*, *strongly oppose*, or have *no opinion* about the “construction of a separation barrier between territory that the Israeli government administers and the Palestinian authorities administer.”

The levels of support for a two-state solution and building a wall have not changed over time with two exceptions. Members’ support for building a wall declined over time, and specialized clergy’s support for a two-state solution declined. (Table 1 provides additional information.)

**Table 1
Support for a Two-State Solution and for Building a Wall**

	% Favor a Two-State Solution		% Support the Building of a Wall	
	2002	2009	2004	2009
Members	71%	65%	30%	18%†
Elders	72%	68%	29%	24%
Pastors.....	82%	78%	22%	18%
Specialized Clergy	92%	86%†	17%	17%

† statistically significant difference (p < .001)

ISRAEL/PALESTINE AND THE REST OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Support for Israeli Withdrawal Among Presbyterians with Different Theological and Political Leanings

Presbyterians with different theological orientations and those linked with different political parties have very different opinions about permanent Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.

Table 2 shows that larger fractions of panelists in each group who are theologically *liberal* or *very liberal* than are theologically *moderate* *strongly support* or *moderately support* Israeli withdrawal, and more theologically *moderate* panelists support withdrawal than *very conservative* or *conservative* panelists. This is also the case among panelists who have different political preferences. More Democrats than Independents support withdrawal, and more Independents than Republicans support withdrawal.

Table 2
Support for Israeli Withdrawal from Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, by Theological Orientation and by Political Party

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Theological orientation †				
Very conservative or conservative.....	20%	16%	26%	34%
Moderate.....	29%	37%	50%	52%
Liberal or very liberal.....	62%	61%	72%	76%
Political party †				
Democratic.....	54%	49%	68%	69%
Independent.....	38%	41%	43%	62%
Republican.....	22%	22%	22%	25%

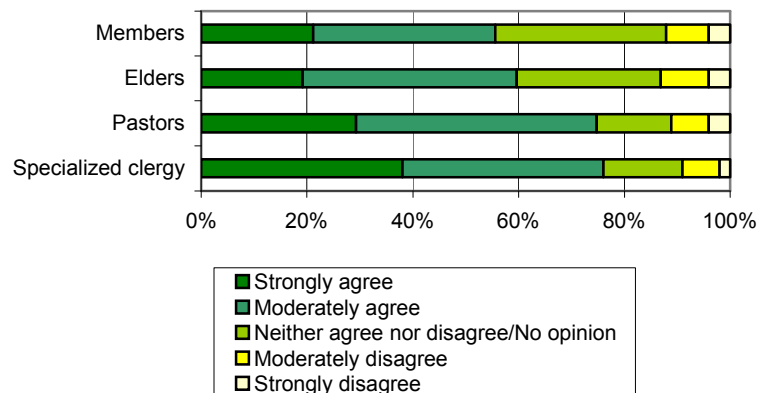
† statistically significant difference within each of the four constituencies (p < .001)

Presbyterian Involvement?

- ✓ At least three in five panelists in each group (members, 61%; elders, 66%; pastors, 74%; specialized clergy, 76%) *strongly agree* or *moderately agree* that Presbyterians *can* contribute to building peace in Israel/Palestine and the rest of the Middle East.
- ✓ Majorities of panelists in each group (members, 55%; elders, 59%; pastors, 74%; specialized clergy, 76%) *strongly agree* or *moderately agree* that Presbyterians *should* try to improve the situation in Israel/Palestine and the rest of the Middle East.

Figure 3. Opinion about Presbyterian Engagement in Middle East Issues

Presbyterians should try to improve the situation in Israel/Palestine and the rest of the Middle East.



ISRAEL/PALESTINE AND THE REST OF THE MIDDLE EAST

PC(USA) Investments and Israel/Palestine

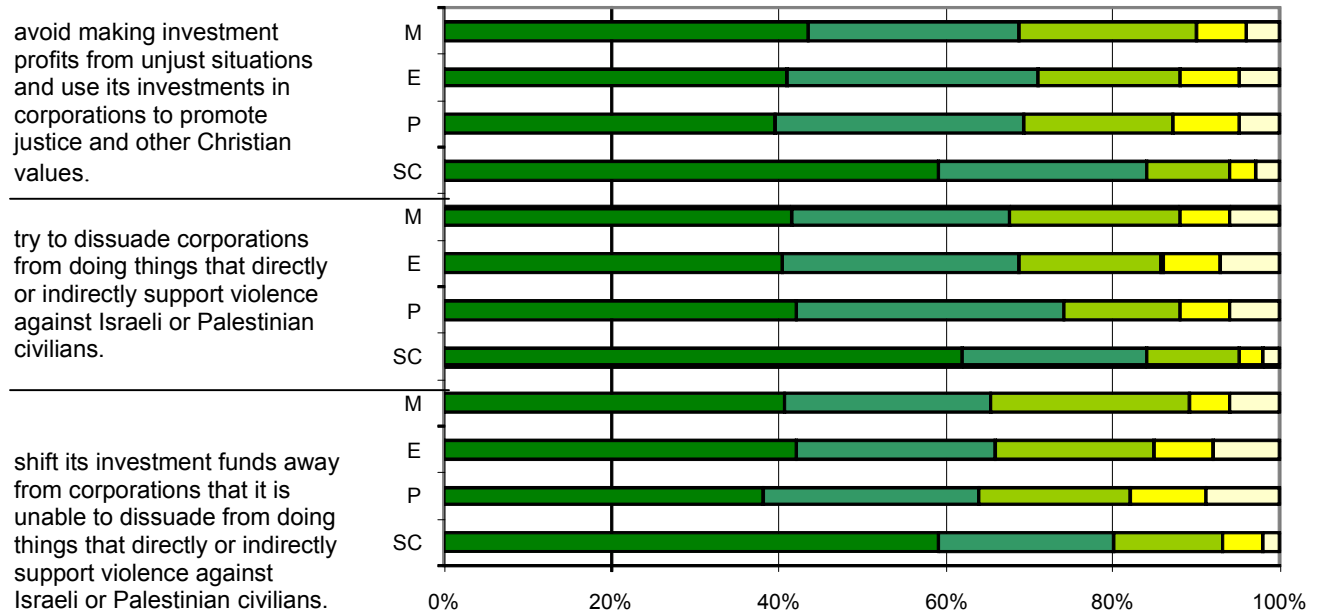
- ✓ At least two-thirds of panelists in each group (members, 68%; elders, 71%; pastors, 70%; specialized clergy, 84%) *strongly agree* or *moderately agree* that the PC(USA) should avoid making investment profits from unjust situations and should use its investments in corporations to promote justice and other Christian values.

- ✓ Similar proportions of panelists in each group (members, 67%; elders, 68%; pastors, 74%; specialized clergy, 84%) *strongly agree* or *moderately agree* that the PC(USA) should try to dissuade corporations from doing things that directly or indirectly support violence against Israeli or Palestinian civilians.

- ✓ At least three in five panelists in each group (members, 66%; elders, 66%; pastors, 64%; specialized clergy, 80%) agree that the PC(USA) should shift its investment funds away from such corporations if it is unable to dissuade them from doing things that directly or indirectly support violence against Israeli or Palestinian civilians (as it already does from corporations involved in tobacco, military-related production, and human rights violations). (Figure 4 provides additional information.)

Figure 4. Opinion about PC(USA) Investment Policies

The PC(USA) should . . .



M = Members
 E = Elders
 P = Pastors
 SC = Specialized clergy

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Moderately agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree/No opinion
 ■ Moderately disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree

THE PRESBYTERIAN PANEL
CONFESSIONS AND OTHER TOPICS
AUGUST 2009 SURVEY

Survey Questions and Responses

	Members	Elders	Ministers
Number of survey invitations sent	888	1,083	1,454
Number of undeliverable surveys and ineligible respondents	9	7	11
Number of surveys completed	354	533	785 ‡
Response rate	40%	49%	54%
‡525 pastors; 251 specialized clergy			

Israel/Palestine and the Middle East

Q18. How important is each of these for improving the situation in Israel/Palestine and the rest of the Middle East?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. Achieving a nuclear-free Middle East				
Very important	59%	52%	40%	40%
Important	23%	30%	34%	36%
Slightly important.....	7%	9%	14%	12%
Not at all important.....	4%	4%	6%	3%
No opinion.....	7%	6%	7%	9%
b. Addressing extremism and the threat of violence				
Very important	72%	74%	71%	70%
Important	20%	19%	23%	25%
Slightly important.....	3%	3%	2%	2%
Not at all important.....	1%	1%	*	*
No opinion.....	5%	3%	4%	2%
c. Compliance with United Nations resolutions and human rights treaties				
Very important	41%	40%	37%	46%
Important	37%	37%	39%	36%
Slightly important.....	10%	12%	14%	10%
Not at all important.....	5%	7%	4%	2%
No opinion.....	7%	5%	6%	5%
d. Freedom of worship at all major religious sites				
Very important	65%	62%	51%	62%
Important	26%	29%	36%	28%
Slightly important.....	3%	4%	7%	5%
Not at all important.....	*	1%	1%	1%
No opinion.....	6%	4%	5%	2%

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

— = zero (0.0); no cases in this category

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more on this question (reported percentages for all questions omit nonresponses)

n = number of respondents eligible to answer this question

◆ = percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response

Q18. How important is each of these for improving the situation in Israel/Palestine and the rest of the Middle East?
[cont.]

e. Maintaining positive relations between Presbyterians and members of the U.S. Jewish community

Very important	40%	37%	32%	27%
Important	36%	40%	37%	39%
Slightly important.....	15%	15%	22%	23%
Not at all important.....	3%	4%	5%	9%
No opinion.....	6%	4%	4%	2%

f. Maintaining the close diplomatic and military relationship between the U.S. and Israeli governments

Very important	38%	38%	23%	22%
Important	36%	37%	36%	32%
Slightly important.....	14%	17%	28%	30%
Not at all important.....	4%	4%	7%	10%
No opinion.....	8%	4%	6%	5%

g. Promoting democracy throughout the Middle East

Very important	27%	28%	23%	19%
Important	34%	36%	32%	34%
Slightly important.....	24%	23%	32%	31%
Not at all important.....	7%	8%	8%	12%
No opinion.....	8%	6%	6%	3%

h. Providing for religious freedom throughout the Middle East

Very important	52%	52%	47%	51%
Important	34%	35%	38%	39%
Slightly important.....	7%	8%	9%	6%
Not at all important.....	1%	1%	1%	1%
No opinion.....	7%	4%	5%	2%

i. Reconciliation among racial-ethnic groups within Middle Eastern countries

Very important	45%	43%	57%	57%
Important	36%	38%	32%	35%
Slightly important.....	10%	10%	5%	6%
Not at all important.....	2%	3%	1%	—
No opinion.....	8%	6%	4%	2%

j. Reducing economic inequality within Middle Eastern countries

Very important	25%	24%	42%	48%
Important	38%	36%	35%	33%
Slightly important.....	23%	25%	15%	12%
Not at all important.....	4%	6%	3%	3%
No opinion.....	10%	9%	5%	4%

Q18. How important is each of these for improving the situation in Israel/Palestine and the rest of the Middle East?
[cont.]

k. Refugee resettlement				
Very important	26%	25%	40%	47%
Important	37%	40%	40%	36%
Slightly important.....	20%	22%	13%	10%
Not at all important.....	4%	4%	2%	2%
No opinion.....	12%	10%	6%	4%
l. Supporting Christian minorities in Israel/Palestine				
Very important	36%	38%	45%	42%
Slightly important.....	17%	14%	12%	14%
Not at all important.....	2%	2%	2%	2%
No opinion.....	8%	5%	5%	3%

Q19. Do you support a two-state solution in the Middle East with both a state of Israel and a state of Palestine?

Yes	65%	68%	78%	86%
No.....	5%	8%	7%	3%
Don't know	30%	24%	15%	11%

Q20. How much do you support or oppose each of the following?

a. Construction of a separation barrier between territory that the Israeli government administers and the Palestinian authorities administer				
Strongly support	5%	8%	6%	6%
Neither support nor oppose	25%	28%	14%	15%
Moderately oppose	19%	17%	22%	18%
Strongly oppose.....	16%	17%	37%	42%
No opinion.....	21%	15%	9%	9%
b. Delivery by international organizations of humanitarian aid to people living in Palestinian territory occupied or controlled by Israel				
Strongly support	34%	34%	58%	65%
Moderately support.....	36%	34%	27%	25%
Neither support nor oppose	13%	18%	6%	5%
Moderately oppose	3%	3%	1%	1%
Strongly oppose.....	2%	3%	1%	—
No opinion.....	13%	9%	7%	4%
c. Expansion of Israeli settlements further into the West Bank and East Jerusalem on Palestinian land				
Strongly support	4%	3%	2%	1%
Moderately support.....	6%	7%	4%	4%
Neither support nor oppose	20%	22%	14%	6%
Moderately oppose	18%	20%	19%	15%
Strongly oppose.....	33%	34%	53%	68%
No opinion.....	19%	14%	8%	6%

Q20. How much do you support or oppose each of the following?

[cont.]

d. The inclusion of democratically elected Hamas leaders in negotiations about the future of Israel/Palestine				
Strongly support	13%	11%	13%	24%
Moderately support.....	22%	30%	35%	37%
Neither support nor oppose	22%	24%	18%	15%
Moderately oppose	8%	8%	14%	7%
Strongly oppose.....	10%	14%	12%	7%
No opinion.....	24%	13%	9%	9%
e. Limiting the influence and military capacity of the Iranian government				
Strongly support	35%	40%	30%	24%
Moderately support.....	29%	26%	36%	36%
Neither support nor oppose	12%	17%	16%	24%
Moderately oppose	4%	4%	5%	5%
Strongly oppose.....	5%	3%	3%	3%
No opinion.....	15%	10%	9%	9%
f. Maintaining a U.S. military presence in Iraq				
Strongly support	14%	13%	7%	3%
Moderately support.....	24%	30%	20%	18%
Neither support nor oppose	12%	15%	14%	11%
Moderately oppose	24%	18%	28%	28%
Strongly oppose.....	18%	17%	26%	35%
No opinion.....	9%	6%	5%	5%
g. Permanent Israeli withdrawal from all of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem				
Strongly support	14%	11%	20%	35%
Moderately support.....	22%	22%	30%	26%
Neither support nor oppose	23%	28%	20%	18%
Moderately oppose	11%	13%	12%	6%
Strongly oppose.....	11%	11%	11%	6%
No opinion.....	19%	15%	8%	9%
h. Permanently disabling the military capacities of any Palestinian government				
Strongly support	10%	8%	5%	6%
Moderately support.....	14%	12%	11%	8%
Neither support nor oppose	24%	33%	28%	23%
Moderately oppose	18%	23%	32%	29%
Strongly oppose.....	11%	10%	16%	25%
No opinion.....	22%	14%	9%	9%
i. Permitting Gaza residents to enter the West Bank and Israel for trade or other legitimate purposes				
Strongly support	34%	32%	46%	59%
Moderately support.....	35%	40%	38%	28%
Neither support nor oppose	11%	15%	8%	6%
Moderately oppose	1%	1%	2%	1%
Strongly oppose.....	1%	1%	1%	*
No opinion.....	18%	11%	6%	5%

Q20. How much do you support or oppose each of the following?

[cont.]

j. The presence of United Nations peacekeepers to help supervise the border between Israel and Palestine

Strongly support	33%	29%	38%	50%
Moderately support.....	40%	41%	39%	35%
Neither support nor oppose	11%	14%	13%	8%
Moderately oppose	3%	3%	3%	2%
Strongly oppose.....	3%	4%	3%	1%
No opinion.....	10%	8%	4%	4%

Q21. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

a. Presbyterians can contribute to peace-building in Israel/Palestine and the rest of the Middle East.

Strongly agree.....	18%	21%	30%	38%
Moderately agree.....	43%	45%	44%	38%
Neither agree nor disagree.....	20%	22%	11%	12%
Moderately disagree	9%	5%	7%	8%
Strongly disagree.....	3%	3%	4%	2%
No opinion.....	7%	5%	3%	2%

b. Presbyterians should try to improve the situation in Israel/Palestine and the rest of the Middle East.

Strongly agree.....	21%	19%	29%	38%
Moderately agree.....	34%	40%	45%	38%
Neither agree nor disagree.....	25%	23%	11%	13%
Moderately disagree	8%	9%	7%	7%
Strongly disagree.....	4%	4%	4%	2%
No opinion.....	7%	4%	3%	2%

c. The PC(USA) should avoid making investment profits from unjust situations and should use its investments in corporations to promote justice and other Christian values.

Strongly agree.....	43%	41%	40%	59%
Moderately agree.....	25%	30%	30%	25%
Neither agree nor disagree.....	12%	13%	14%	7%
Moderately disagree	6%	7%	8%	3%
Strongly disagree.....	4%	5%	5%	3%
No opinion.....	9%	4%	4%	3%

d. The PC(USA) should try to dissuade corporations from doing things that directly or indirectly support violence against Israeli or Palestinian civilians.

Strongly agree.....	41%	40%	42%	62%
Moderately agree.....	26%	28%	32%	22%
Neither agree nor disagree.....	13%	13%	10%	9%
Moderately disagree	6%	7%	6%	3%
Strongly disagree.....	6%	7%	6%	2%
No opinion.....	7%	4%	4%	2%

Q21. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
 [cont.]

e. If the PC(USA) is unable to dissuade corporations from doing things that directly or indirectly support violence against Israeli or Palestinian civilians, it should shift PC(USA) investment funds away from those corporations (as it already does from corporations involved in tobacco, military-related production, and human rights violations).

Strongly agree.....	41%	42%	38%	59%
Moderately agree.....	25%	24%	26%	21%
Neither agree nor disagree.....	16%	13%	13%	9%
Moderately disagree.....	5%	7%	9%	5%
Strongly disagree.....	6%	8%	9%	2%
No opinion.....	8%	6%	5%	4%

Q22. Please use this space or another page for any additional comments.

[Not tabulated]

Response from:

Paper.....	70%	65%	50%	56%
Web.....	30%	35%	50%	44%

Item 15-01

[The assembly approved Item 15-01 with amendment. See pp. 6–7.]

On Transferring Community Church of Seattle from the Presbytery of Seattle to the Presbytery of North Puget Sound—From the Synod of Alaska-Northwest.

The Synod of Alaska Northwest overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to concur with the request that the Community Church of Seattle Presbyterian Church (PIN10580) be transferred to North Puget Sound Presbytery from Seattle Presbytery.

Note: It is understood the effective date [is January 1, 2011] [will be upon favorable action of the General Assembly].

Rationale

Community Church of Seattle Presbyterian Church, (known hereafter as “Community Church of Seattle PC”), was chartered in 1980 and is a member of the Presbytery of Seattle. In 2002, Community Church of Seattle PC purchased twenty-five acres of land in Bothell, Washington at 3727 240th Street SE, Bothell, WA, 98011. They moved to the new location in 2003 after twenty-three years of ministry at 3902 Woodland Park Ave. N in Seattle, Washington. The new location in Bothell is within the geographic boundaries of the Presbytery of North Puget Sound.

In 2003, North Puget Sound Presbytery and Seattle Presbytery worked with Community Church of Seattle PC to draft an agreement to transfer the church to North Puget Sound Presbytery. That agreement was declined by North Puget Sound Presbytery citing lack of ability to guarantee the \$4 million loan Community Church of Seattle PC acquired to construct Phase 1 of the new facility. Community Church of Seattle PC has remained a member of Seattle Presbytery since that time.

North Puget Sound Presbytery is now ready and delighted to welcome Community Church of Seattle PC and able to assume loan guarantees previously assumed by Seattle Presbytery. North Puget Sound Presbytery embraces Community Church of Seattle PC as a valuable partner in Christ’s ministry in North Puget Sound Presbytery.

Community Church of Seattle PC has requested a transfer to North Puget Sound Presbytery.

On May 19, 2009, Seattle Presbytery voted to transfer Community Church of Seattle PC to North Puget Sound Presbytery.

On May 20, 2009, North Puget Sound Presbytery voted to welcome Community Church of Seattle PC.

The Synod of Alaska-Northwest voted at its July 13–15, 2009, Stated Meeting to approve the transfer, and to overture the General Assembly to concur.

Item 15-02

[The assembly approved Item 15-02. See pp. 6, 7.]

On Establishing the United Church of the San Juans in Ridgway, Colorado, as a Union Church—From the Presbytery of Western Colorado.

The Presbytery of Western Colorado overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to approve the action taken by the Presbytery of Western Colorado, the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church, and the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ, to establish the United Church of the San Juans in Ridgway, Colorado (Ouray County), as a union church. The United Church of the San Juans will be responsible and accountable to all four denominations.

Rationale

The Presbytery of Western Colorado, the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church, and the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ seek “... to manifest more visibly the unity of the church of Jesus Christ ... ” and strengthen the witness of our Lord and Savior in the Ridgway area, by this action (*Book of Order*, G-15.0101).

Notes: The United Church of the San Juans was initiated as a new church development in a partnership agreement between the four denominations; it is not a union of previously existing churches. The PC(USA) is in full communion with the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ; and in correspondence with the United Methodist Church.

All of the needed legal and ecclesiastical steps have been taken to assure a full and joyful union according to the constitutions of the four supporting denominations.

The Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will vote on the affiliation agreement at its meeting in May 2010.

The Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church approved the affiliation agreement at its meeting June 17–20, 2009.

The Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ approved the affiliation agreement at its meeting June 13, 2009.

The Presbytery of Western Colorado approved the affiliation agreement at its meeting on February 17, 2009. It then adopted this overture on February 23, 2010.

Item 15-03

[The assembly approved Item 15-03 with amendment. See pp. 6, 7.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) renew its commitment to help grow Christ’s Church deep and wide by doing the following:

1. Extend a churchwide commitment to participate in God’s activity through Jesus Christ in transforming the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the 2011–2012 biennium.

2. Encourage synods, presbyteries, sessions, and all agencies, entities, and networks of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to commit to foster the growth of Christ’s Church deep and wide in the following areas:

a. Grow in Evangelism: Share the good news of Jesus Christ. Invite persons to join in the church’s worship and fellowship. Baptize children and adults (Mt. 28:19–20; Lk. 15).

b. Grow in Discipleship: Rediscover Scripture, including daily reading and study. Nurture relationships with Jesus Christ in the context of our Reformed heritage (Lk. 14:33; Jn. 8:31, 13:35, 15:8).

c. Grow in Servanthood: Stand alongside the wider community to promote the well-being and love of neighbor. Embrace stewardship in all of life (Jn. 13:12–17; Mt. 25:34–40).

d. Grow in Diversity: Welcome everyone. Learn from others. Reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of God’s peoples in the world [including leadership] (Gal. 3:26–29; Rev. 7:9–10).

3. Encourage the General Assembly Mission Council to support the whole church’s commitment to foster the growth of Christ’s Church deep and wide in its ministries and mission.

4. Request each session to commit time on its agenda during 2011–2012 to cast a vision for each of the four “Growing Christ’s Church Deep and Wide” areas.

Rationale

“Growing Christ’s Church Deep and Wide” was created by the 218th General Assembly (2008) as a churchwide commitment to participate in God’s activity through Jesus Christ in transforming the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The original rationale for this action stands as true today, as it did two years ago:

The persistent decline in membership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) over the past forty years is a concern to the church at large and to the General Assembly Mission Council. While membership has declined, many congregations and PC(USA) ministries are flourishing. As Christians, we are called to “make disciples of all peoples.” Rather than give in to a climate of decline, the General Assembly Mission Council believes that a more faithful stance is to take affirmative steps that renew our commitment to advance Christ’s gospel in word and deed in our churches, our communities, and throughout the world.

In addition, it is important that we keep all aspects of church growth in biblical and theological perspective. In this regard, it is worth noting that if the opposite of our current situation in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) were true—if we were growing exponentially in attendance and members—our situation might be no more satisfying. This is because church growth for its own sake is never the aim of the Christian Church. Instead, our growth as Christians, whether quantitative or qualitative, is to take place so that God may be glorified as the body of Christ is drawn into ever-closer communion with God. (“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” 2 Peter 3:18.)

15 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH GROWTH, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, & PILP

Growth is the natural consequence of the Christian life. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul identifies growth in the church as the necessary process of spiritual health: "... we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love" (Eph. 4:15b-16).

Rightly understanding growth in the life of the church is as important as the growth itself. When growth occurs in any aspect of the church, we may be tempted to take credit for it. Scripture makes clear, however, that God is the ultimate giver of growth and life. Jesus said, "Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me" (John 15:4b). Being a part of God's family and abiding in Christ is a necessary aspect of spiritual growth. A multiplicity of human ministries contributes to spiritual growth in people's lives, thus emphasizing God's ultimate role in the gift of spiritual life. Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Cor. 3:6).

Conversely, history has shown that religious organizations or groups may experience rapid and large growth in adherents, even though the wider Church may not affirm that God was behind that growth or that the growth was based on dubious theological motivations.

Finally, growth is a central aspect of our Reformed heritage. Together with the Scots Confession, "We most surely believe that God preserved, instructed, multiplied, honored, adorned, and called from death to life his Kirk in all ages ..." (The Book of Confessions, The Scots Confession, 3.05). Thus, although we are unable to determine growth, and unable to affirm in all circumstances exactly where and when God will cause growth, we do have a role in the healthy, spiritual growth of our members, attendees, churches, and programs. Indeed, in the same way that we feed our children and ourselves to engender greater physical health and growth, the Scriptures are filled with examples and admonitions urging us to nurture, foster, and cultivate spiritual health and growth within the community of Christ's church (1 Sam. 2:26; Mt. 13:31-33; 2 Cor. 10:15; Col. 1:10; 2 Pet. 3:18). Stating our desire and intention to nurture healthy spiritual growth is the first step in contributing toward that result. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 1238-39)

During the 2009-2010 period, many presbyteries dedicated a significant portion of their meetings to casting a vision for "Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide" in their congregations. As with any grassroots movement, initial progress can be slow. Some presbyteries have had no awareness of the initiative.

The General Assembly Mission Council responded to this effort by coordinating a variety of ministries. An evangelism consultation for "Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide" was held at Stony Point with seventy-five key church leaders. The consultation produced a wiki page with resources and hosted a follow up conversation at Big Tent.

The GAMC partnered with the Board of Pensions to "Cast the Vision" of "Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide" at each of the three regional benefit consultations.

A community web site has created a nationwide grassroots conversation. Videos of churches Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide in evangelism, discipleship, servanthood, and diversity have been produced to tell our story of hope: God is alive in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). An education curriculum, developed for these videos can be ordered through Presbyterian Distribution Center, PDS #13102-010-1.

During the fall of 2009, GAMC Executive Director Linda Valentine and Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons hosted telephone conference calls with church leaders on each of the four Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide areas, so that participants could exchange ideas.

In addition, more than sixty news stories of congregations growing deep and wide have been published.

At least four websites have been extensive focus on "Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide":

- Wiki page: <http://e.vangelize.us/>;
- Community web site: www.pcusa.org/deepandwide;
- Videos of churches growing Deep and Wide: www.pcusa.org/goodnews ; www.pcusa.org/evangelism;
- Sixty news stories: <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/deepandwide.htm>.

The "Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide" initiative is gaining momentum. As the original rationale for "Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide" stated, "Growth is the natural consequence of the Christian life" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1238). The words of Ephesians 4:15-16 reminds us: "... speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love."

Extending the initiative for two more years will allow the church build upon its initial progress, and move us further into the deeper and wider growth that God has planned for us.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 15-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 15-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the recommendation in Item 15-03 be approved.

Rationale

The ACREC appreciates the emphasis in the recommendation on building diverse elements and would like to see this emphasis strengthened.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 15-03

Comment on Item 15-03—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 15-03 with the following change in Section 2.d.: [Text to be added is shown in brackets and with an underline.]

“d. Grow in Diversity: Welcome everyone. Learn from others. Reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of God’s peoples in the world [including leadership] (Gal. 3:26–29; Rev. 7:9–10)” (Item 15-03).

Rationale

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) supports the emphasis on diversity in growing the church deep and wide, with thanks and appreciation. At the 217th General Assembly (2006), the assembly committee reviewing GACOR recommended, and the General Assembly approved, that the General Assembly Council (now the General Assembly Mission Council) consider designating a year to celebrate diversity in their planning for a year-long emphases. This referral from 2006 fits nicely within Item 15-03, if the addition is made to connect diversity to church leadership.

The GACOR would also like to remind the assembly that growth in diversity within the leadership of the denomination is needed in a wider expression of diversity than just the “cultural and ethnic diversity of our membership” cited in item 15-03, but rather includes the fuller definition of diversity found in G-4.0403:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as different marital conditions (married, single, widowed, or divorced) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church. (*Book of Order*, G-9.0104ff)

Item 15-04

[The assembly approved Item 15-04. See pp. 6, 7.]

The General Assembly Mission Council, upon recommendation by the Presbyterian Multicultural Network (PMN), recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) do the following:

- 1. Affirm the multicultural church growth strategy and encourage all governing bodies of the PC(USA) to consider the PMN as a ministry partner and resource.**
- 2. Affirm the PMN’s work to cultivate a Pentecost vision for the PC(USA) through the Multicultural Church Growth Strategy.**
- 3. Encourage all governing bodies of the PC(USA) to consider multicultural church growth and transformation as one of their top priorities.**
- 4. Invite sessions, presbyteries, and other entities of the PC(USA) to utilize the PMN as a resource for growing into a multicultural vision for the church.**
- 5. Pray during the plenary gathering of the 219th General Assembly (2010) for the PC(USA) to open itself up to the healing opportunities that God brings to us when all of God’s diverse people worship and live together.**

Rationale

Presbyterian Multicultural Network (PMN) Church Growth Report

“*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.*”—Acts 2:1

“*... and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues ...*”—Isa. 66:18

1. *Background*

In August 2008, after the General Assembly passed the “Growing Christ’s Church Deep and Wide” initiative, a team of leaders of the Presbyterian Multicultural Network (PMN) and the staff of Multicultural Congregational Support (at that time

called Multicultural Ministries) met at Ghost Ranch Conference Center for seven days of prayer and engaging in a visioning process to develop a way to support the General Assembly strategy of Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide.

The same team, in addition to new members of the board, met again in June 2009, for two days to complete their strategic visioning. Both events were co-sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Congregational Support and PMN. The result of these efforts is the attached report. The PMN is also open to any suggestions as they seek to support the church's efforts in this area of church growth in an increasingly multicultural world.

2. *An Introduction to the PMN*

Description: The PMN is a grassroots network in our denomination that connects and nurtures multicultural ministries all over the United States. Our individual memberships include members, clergy, seminary students, and staff. Our institutional memberships include churches and governing bodies. We are ambassadors of a Pentecost vision for the PC(USA). We cultivate ways to empower and embody churches of "all nations and tongues." We are in partnership and covenant relationship with the Office of Multicultural Congregational Support in the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/PW ministry area of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).¹ We also affirm and partner with ethnic-specific and language-specific congregations.

The PMN, in partnership with the Office of Multicultural Ministries, does consultations for presbyteries, sessions, and other church entities to help them minister more effectively in a variety of multicultural contexts. It also offers scholarships for multicultural conferences, institutes, and regional trainings. The PMN has a website (www.PresbyterianMulticulturalChurch.net) and is linked to the Office of Multicultural Ministries webpage (www.pcusa.org/multicultural). These websites list opportunities for multicultural conferences, training, vocational opportunities, and resources. We are on Facebook, and we are always seeking new and creative ways to reach out and communicate with our members. The PMN seeks relationships and experiences that encourage healing and reconciliation in all of our work. Its mission statement reads as follows:

Presbyterian Multicultural Network is to serve Jesus Christ and Christ's mission through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by:

- **Connecting** multicultural ministries through the development of a grass roots network,
- **Nurturing** the PC(USA) vision of multicultural ministry and the evangelism and church growth strategies adopted by all PC(USA) governing bodies, and
- **Igniting** the Church to imagine and embody God's Pentecost vision through sharing ideas and resources, learning together, and seeking intentional multicultural experiences.

Rationale for the Recommendations

In light of the biblical mandate for a Pentecost vision,² our Reformed theological heritage and the *Book of Order*³, actions from previous General Assemblies⁴, and the growing diversity in the United States, the PMN offers the following strategy to support the General Assembly initiative to "Grow Christ's Church Deep and Wide."

Strategy of the Presbyterian Multicultural Network:

1. *Principles of Multicultural Ministry:* Multicultural ministries⁵ encourage the growth of Christ's Church deep and wide, through:

a. *Evangelism*

- Following Jesus across every human boundary, intentionally forming interpersonal relationships with those we consider "the other."
- Sharing resources in a multicultural, globalized world that calls for redefining evangelism beyond reaching people "like us."
- Embracing the missional and multicultural nature of the church in its origin, proclaiming a holistic message of the Gospel with equal commitment to personal/communal transformation and sweeping social justice.

b. *Discipleship*

- Upholding the centrality of Scripture as the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ.⁶ We particularly affirm its message that the beloved community is intended to be both diverse and inclusive.
- Learning to pray, praise, work, play, and enjoy our lives in Christ in ways that both embody and demonstrate mutuality, partnership, and the celebration of each other's personhood and gifts.

- Growing in our commitment to follow Jesus Christ personally, communally, and institutionally. We encourage the church to be filled with the Holy Spirit and open to God’s leading.

c. *Servanthood*

- Creating a culture of reconciliation that draws from the sacred practices of repentance, confession, and forgiveness.
- Engaging in dialogue and service with the Church across denominational lines and cultural boundaries.
- Intentionally fostering a culture that practices and celebrates shared power, with leadership that incorporates diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

d. *Diversity*

- Building a multicultural vision of Christian community that is regularly celebrated, practiced, and embodied.
- Listening and learning from familiar and emerging voices and from diverse contexts, affirming their unique value to the Church.
- Risking new ways of being church by practicing sincere hospitality, without co-opting someone else’s culture, engaging in deep mutuality, and honoring God’s wondrous diversity in our midst.

2. *Initiatives:* Guided by the above principles, the PMN partners with the Office of Multicultural Ministries to cultivate God’s Pentecost vision through work in the following initiatives as well as others. These initiatives all seek to develop leadership, ignite church growth, and nurture transformation.

a. We seek partnerships with seminaries through our Seminary Action Team and other PMN Board initiatives. We encourage and support efforts to cultivate and nurture aptitude for multicultural ministries in our seminaries.

- Our Seminary Action Team :
 - Inventories what is happening on seminary campuses.
 - Seeks one-on-one conversations with people in the seminary community who are interested in and/or already working on multicultural issues.
 - Makes recommendations for how the PMN can better support multicultural movements in our seminaries.
- In the next five years the PMN seeks to designate a Seminary Action Team member on every Presbyterian-affiliated seminary campus.

b. The PMN seeks partnerships with executive and general presbyters and presbytery leaders.

- The PMN is extending invitation to every executive and general presbyter and to presbytery leaders with an invitational mailing that introduces the PMN.
- In the next five years, it seeks to identify and resource a “multicultural awareness resource champion” in every presbytery.

c. The PMN seeks partnership at presbytery and regional levels.

- Seven presbytery multicultural teams already exist.
- In the next five years it seeks to double that number.

d. The PMN has an active Multicultural Institute at Ghost Ranch Conference Center and a continuing partnership with Stony Point.

- The PMN is establishing a new Multicultural Institute at Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina, beginning in November 2010.

- In the next five years. the PMN seeks to increase our funding and participation in these institutes.

e. The PMN supports and facilitates internships in multicultural contexts.

- The PMN currently provides two to three multicultural church internships a year.
- In the next five years it will seek to provide five multicultural church internships a year.

f. The PMN, in partnership with the GAMC Office of Multicultural Ministries support, offers annual national multicultural conferences providing people and presbyteries opportunities for training, learning, and connecting.

- The PMN has already moved from a workshop model to a more intensive track system allowing focused training in church growth, leadership development, and transformation.
- Within five years it will have two coaching teams in place focusing on evangelism in diverse contexts and transformation of existing congregations.

For these reasons, it is crucial that the Presbyterian Multicultural Network, working in conjunction with the Office of Multicultural Ministries and the whole church take initiative and provide impetus for transformation and growth of multicultural congregations and ministries in the church.

Respectfully Submitted,

PMN Board

The Reverend Dr. Marcia Mount Shoop, moderator, Chapel Hill, N.C.R
 The Reverend Jake Kim, vice moderator, Cleveland, Ohio
 The Reverend Magdalena Garcia, secretary, Chicago, Ill.
 Rashid Gill, treasurer, Dallas, Tex.
 The Reverend Victor Aloyo, board member, Princeton, N.J.
 The Reverend James Lee, board member, Austin, Tex.
 The Reverend Dr. Mary Newburn-Williams, board member, Springfield, Mo.
 The Reverend Nibs Stroupe, board member, Decatur, Ga.
 The Reverend Gustavo Vasquez, board member, West New York, N.J.

Office of Multicultural Ministries Staff

The Reverend Raafat Girgis, associate, Louisville, Ky.
 The Reverend Dr. Randy Lee, field staff, Los Angeles County, Calif.
 The Reverend Carlene Hyrams, field staff, Chicago, Ill.
 Melissa Johnson, multicultural assistant, Louisville, Ky.
 Aldenice Lemes, administrative assistant, Louisville, Ky.

Endnotes

1. The PMN partners with Office of Multicultural Ministries in various ways including: funding support, sharing resources, strategic planning, consultative service, planning team partnerships, conference design teams, Institute funding and planning, and spiritual support and relationship.
2. Some verses that inform the biblical mandate: “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place”(Acts 2:1), “... no longer Jew or Greek, ... slave or free, ... male or female ...”(Gal. 3:28), “... a house of prayer for all peoples” (Isa. 56:7b), “... a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, [tribe, people and language] ...”(Rev. 7:9), “... [all] are one in Christ ...”(Gal. 3:28), “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ...”(Mt. 28:19) (NRSV).
3. The *Book of Order* mandates the following: “[The Church is called] to a new openness to its own membership, by affirming itself as a community of diversity, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, and conditions, and by providing for inclusiveness as a visible sign of the new humanity” (G-3.0401b). “The church in its witness to the uniqueness of the Christian faith is called to mission and must be responsive to diversity in both the church and the world. Thus the fellowship of Christians as it gathers for worship and orders its corporate life will display a rich variety of form, practice, language, program, nurture, and service to suit culture and need” (G-4.0401). “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as different marital conditions (married, single, widowed, or divorced) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church. (G-9.0104a)” (G-4.0403).
4. Particularly the 1998 Racial Ethnic Immigrant Evangelism Church Growth Strategy and the 2008 Strategy, Growing God’s Church Deep and Wide.
5. Multicultural congregations intentionally recognize, celebrate, and incorporate diverse membership in worship, power sharing, and evangelism. These ministries may reflect this multicultural vision by utilizing diverse languages, arts, spiritual practices, and theological expressions in worship. Power Sharing may be reflected in equal representation on sessions, church boards, and executive positions, as well inclusive modes of conversation and decision-making. Evangelism reflects multicultural intentions when the Good News is provided in a cup that people recognize with great respect and appreciation to their racial and cultural backgrounds.
6. The *Book of Order* has the following language for ordination vows: “Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God’s Word to you?” (W-4.4003b).

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 15-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 15-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 15-04 be approved.

Rationale

The fastest growing church communities are in the multicultural area.

Resources are needed to aid the church in growing and resourcing multicultural, multiracial churches in these fast growing communities.

New models are needed for growing multicultural churches because of diverse needs that cannot be tracked or cultivated in the traditional ways.

Multicultural community members are asking the church for church development models and strategies as they move forward with growing the church.

Item 15-05

[The assembly approved Item 15-05. See pp. 6, 7.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) confirm the following named individuals to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Board of Directors:

Class of 2012

Conrad Rocha	HME	56-65	Santa Fe	SW	ALP	New nomination
Louise Westfall	WFC	46-55	Western Reserve	PAC	FND	New nomination

Class of 2014

Sam McNairy	WME	56-65	New Hope	SCH	FND	New Nomination
William Nelson	WME	56-65	Cascades	PAC	AL	Renomination
James B. Rea, Jr.	OML	46-55	Pacific	SCH	P	Renomination
Linda Bailey	WFE	56-65	Grand Canyon	SW	AL	New nomination
Margaret Jorgenson	WFC	56-65	Mid-South	LW	AL	New nomination
Terry Nall	WME	56-55	Greater Atlanta	SA	ALP	New nomination
Linda Scholl	WFE	56-65	Mid South	LW	ALP	New nomination
Joyce Smith	BFE	65+	Scioto Valley	COV	GAMC	New nomination

Rationale

The Deliverance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., assigns to the General Assembly Mission Council the responsibility for elections to the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program's Board of Directors.

Key to report:

HME=Hispanic/Latino Male Elder	AL=At Large
WFC=White Female Clergy	ALP=At Large PILP Corporation Nominee
WFE=White Female Elder	FND=Foundation Representative
WME=White Male Elder	P=Presbytery Representative
OML= Other Male Church Member	GAMC=General Assembly Mission Council Representative

Statistical Information

Total membership of PILP is fifteen members—eight nominated by the GANC (six at-large, one synod representative, one presbytery representative); 2 GAMC members—nominated by GAMC; 2 Foundation nominees—nominated by Foundation; and 3 PILP nominated at-large.

Item 15-06

[The assembly approved Item 15-06. See pp. 6, 7.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the revised Partnership Covenant Between the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Rationale

The covenant agreement between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through the GAMC, and the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions (HPREIs) is reviewed on a four-year cycle.

In 2009, the Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges Covenant Task Force met, consisting of representatives from the GAMC and the Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges Presidents' Roundtable ("Presidents' Roundtable"). The Partnership Covenant Between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions ("the covenant") was revised and is presented for your approval. The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved Institutional Standards for Participating in the Christmas Joy Offering ("Institutional Standards"). Information concerning the dissemination of funds from the Christmas Joy Offering designated for racial ethnic education is found in the Institutional Standard and thus, this information is not found in the covenant. The covenant, instead, focuses on the relationship and partnership of the GAMC and the HPREIs. In affirmation of this covenant, the GAMC and the Presidents' Roundtable pledge to be mutually supportive of each other through our shared emphasis of educating and equipping racial ethnic women and men for lives of committed leadership within society and the church.

**PARTNERSHIP COVENANT BETWEEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) AND THE HISTORICALLY
PRESBYTERIAN RACIAL ETHNIC INSTITUTIONS**

Preamble:

The strong investment of the Presbyterian Church in education reflects John Calvin's conviction that education should be an integral part of the church's mission. Since colonial times the American Presbyterian Church, reflecting Calvin's conviction, has sought: (1) to develop an educated clergy and provide educational service to the community of faith and (2) to educate for responsible citizenship and to serve the public good through education. Many institutions, colleges, and universities in the United States owe their beginnings to this heritage and were founded for these two purposes.

Westward expansion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction gave rise to new obligations and opportunities. The Church expanded its mission by providing access to education for those persons previously excluded. The establishment of African American, Native American, and Hispanic educational institutions became a central mission thrust of the entire Presbyterian Church.

Through the institutions it established, the Presbyterian Church provided educational opportunities which racial ethnic people had been denied. The institutions developed racial ethnic leaders who served society at large and the Church as well as their own racial ethnic constituency. These leaders espoused the Christian faith and the Presbyterian tradition. This mission has become a sacred trust for the Church and an investment in young people and adults who are challenged to serve the Church, the community, and society as a whole.

The Presbyterian Church's commitment to this historic mission produced over 150 educational institutions, of which seven racial ethnic educational institutions continue to relate directly to the General Assembly through a covenant of understanding. They are as follows:

Institutions:	Location:	Year:
Barber-Scotia College	Concord, NC	1867
Cook Native American Ministries	Tempe, AZ	1911
Knoxville College	Knoxville, TN	1875
Menaul School	Albuquerque, NM	1881
Presbyterian Pan American School	Kingsville, TX	1911
Sheldon Jackson College	Sitka, AK	1878
Stillman College	Tuscaloosa, AL	1876

The Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions listed above ("Institutions") are essential to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s mission of educating and equipping women and men for lives of committed leadership within society and the Church. These Institutions seek to guide and challenge individuals and to affirm them in their quest for values, knowledge and truth. The Institutions endeavor to provide students with the knowledge and understanding to make ethical decisions and to be responsible to family, community, church, and nation. Each Institution integrates faith and learning in a Christian environment and each is committed to meeting special needs in order to develop the unique potential of their students.

MUTUAL AFFIRMATIONS

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Institutions uphold education as a continuing priority of the Church. The General Assembly officially names the General Assembly Mission Council (“GAMC”) and its programmatic offices as its representative for program administration and ongoing relations. The General Assembly recognizes the Presidents’ Roundtable as the instrument through which the relationship of the Institutions is affected.

The parties to this covenant therefore mutually affirm that:

1. Our involvement in education is rooted in the Bible and the Reformed tradition and grows out of our commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord.
2. Our common mission is guided by “The Great Ends of the Church” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0200).
3. Our continuing commitment is to be involved together in service to God and society through education.
4. Our continuing partnership in mission is declared in this covenant, setting the basic guidelines for the joint and separate responsibilities of the General Assembly and the GAMC and the Institutions through their association named the Presidents’ Roundtable.

THE COMMITMENT OF HISTORICALLY PRESBYTERIAN RACIAL ETHNIC INSTITUTIONS

In affirmation of this covenant, the Institutions pledge (individually and mutually) to extend the Gospel of Jesus Christ through education which is open to all people. Each Institution is an instrument of witness for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), implementing a vision of people who “enter to learn and depart to serve” (Dr. Charles Stillman). In fulfillment of this shared mission and in support of the continuing relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Institutions pledge to be loyal to this mission of education.

1. We will continue the Church’s commitment to education and maintain the heritage of the racial ethnic mission of each school by emphasizing quality educational experiences for people of color within Institutions that are open to all. We will continue the commitment through programs that teach and model Christian values that adhere to standards of academic freedom, that maintain high standards of education, and that emphasize individual and corporate service to humankind.
2. We will interpret our collective and individual missions on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Throughout the Church, we will lift up this covenant relationship in publications and other communications of each Institution and will cooperate with efforts which provide interpretation of and advocacy for our Institutions within the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
3. We will provide opportunities for the guidance and interpretation of the mission and program of each Institution by having members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on each school’s Board of Trustees as is appropriate for each Institution.
4. Through a biennial report to the General Assembly, we will share the accomplishments and concerns of each Institution, in fulfillment of its mission and this covenant.
5. We will develop relationships with other entities within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for mutual support and affirmation. These relationships include but are not limited to the synods and presbyteries within which the Institutions are located, the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries area of the GAMC, the Mission Interpretation area of the GAMC, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, and the Board of Pensions. We will encourage them to explore avenues of mutual partnership.
6. We will exercise responsible stewardship of the resources provided through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by way of the Christmas Joy Offering and other designated funds and continue the pursuit of financial strength for ongoing fiscal operations. We will document our efforts through annual independent audits and annual program reports to the GAMC.
7. We will encourage use of the facilities, faculty and staff of each Institution by various entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

THE COMMITMENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly, in covenant partnership with the Institutions, will work through the Discipleship Committee of the GAMC and its appropriate ministry areas to affirm this commitment. The commitment of the General Assembly is ex-

pressed in several documents of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). 8.4 of the Articles of Agreement, the document that guided the Church in the Reunion of the two streams in 1983, is clear:

Racial ethnic educational institutions have been the primary source from which racial ethnic church leadership has developed. Consistent with the dire need for racial ethnic church leadership, the General Assembly Council shall propose to the General Assembly ways whereby the General Assembly shall be able to fulfill its responsibility for education through colleges and secondary schools and for meeting the operational and developmental needs of those Presbyterian schools that historically have served Black Americans and those serving other racial ethnic groups. (Book of Order, Articles of Agreement, 8.4)

In fulfillment of this shared mission and in support of the continuing relationship with the Institutions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) pledges to be loyal to the mission of education in the following ways:

1. The General Assembly will call upon the GAMC and its ministry areas to report biennially to the General Assembly and other appropriate governing bodies on the mission of the Institutions.
2. The General Assembly, through the GAMC, will provide information regarding opportunities for funds development.
3. The General Assembly, through the GAMC, will support and articulate the unique challenges and blessings of educating poor people and partner in enhancing the success of the Christmas Joy Offering.
4. The General Assembly, through the GAMC, will provide transparent stewardship of funds intended for this mission and will provide official, audit-based reports of the Christmas Joy Offering to the Presidents' Roundtable on an annual basis.
5. The General Assembly, through the GAMC and its ministry areas, will develop the appropriate linkages to support and advocate the mission of the Institutions within the national church. The GAMC will also encourage middle governing bodies to establish and maintain supportive relationships with the Institutions for continued mutual support.
6. The General Assembly, through the GAMC and its ministry areas, will provide avenues of interpretation of the mission of the Institutions throughout the church. The GAMC will also seek to utilize the expertise and facilities of the Institutions to resource the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

IMPLEMENTATION

The covenant relationship between the General Assembly and the Institutions shall be facilitated by the Institutions through the Presidents' Roundtable and by biennial reports to the General Assembly. The reports to the General Assembly will be prepared by the Presidents' Roundtable and the GAMC Office of Educational and Financial Support and will be submitted first to the Discipleship Committee, then to the GAMC, and finally to the General Assembly.

The covenant will be implemented by the General Assembly through the GAMC, and in particular the Office of Educational and Financial Support, which is lodged in the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries area. It is the Office of Educational and Financial Support that has the primary responsibility for day-to-day activity in reference to the affirmations of the covenant. These responsibilities include administration of the Christmas Joy Offering fund, administration of several endowments for the Institutions, administrative support to the Presidents' Roundtable, and visits to the Institutions.

FORMAL APPROVAL

The Partnership Covenant Between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions will be made available to each member of the Boards of Trustees of the Institutions as well as other appropriate bodies for implementation. This covenant becomes operable upon its ratification by the Trustees of the Institutions named and by the General Assembly.

Recommendations for substantive changes whether initiated by the Church or the Institutions will be referred to the GAMC and its appropriate ministry area for preparation and action by the parties of the covenant.

REVIEW AND RENEWAL CYCLE

The General Assembly, through the GAMC and its appropriate ministry areas, and the Institutions, through the Presidents' Roundtable, shall review, and when necessary, suggest revisions to this covenant. Revisions will generally be made at four-year intervals beginning with the date of adoption by the Presidents' Roundtable and the Office of Educational and Financial Support on behalf of the Institutions and the GAMC. Copies of the covenant shall be given to the General Assembly through the GAMC and the Boards of Trustees of the Institutions through the Presidents' Roundtable.

HISTORICALLY PRESBYTERIAN RACIAL ETHNIC INSTITUTIONS

BARBER-SCOTIA COLLEGE
Dr. David Olah, President

PRESBYTERIAN PAN AMERICAN SCHOOL
Dr. James Matthews, President

COOK NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES
The Reverend Dr. Larry Norris, President

SHELDON JACKSON COLLEGE
The Reverend David Dobler, President

KNOXVILLE COLLEGE
Dr. Robert Harvey, Acting President

STILLMAN COLLEGE
Dr. Ernest C. McNealey, President

MENAU SCHOOL
Lindsey Gilbert, President/Head of School

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE GENERALASSEMBLY MISSION COUNCIL

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
219th Moderator (2010)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION COUNCIL
Chairperson

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
The Reverend Dr. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION COUNCIL
Elder Linda Valentine, Executive Director

Item 15-07

[The assembly approved Item 15-07. See pp. 6, 7.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

1. Approve the following list of colleges and universities as those related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Ga.; Alma College, Alma, Mich.; Arcadia University, Glenside, Pa.; Austin College, Sherman, Tex.; Barber-Scotia College, Concord, N.C.; Belhaven University, Jackson, Miss.; Blackburn College, Carlinville, Ill.; Bloomfield College, Bloomfield, N.J.; Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa; Carroll University, Waukesha, Wis.; Centre College, Danville, Ky.; Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; The College of Idaho, Caldwell, Idaho; College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, Mo.; The College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio; Cook Native American Ministries, Tempe, Ariz.; Davidson College, Davidson, N.C.; Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, W.Va.; Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Fla.; Grove City College, Grove City, Pa.; Hampden-Sydney College, Hampden-Sydney, Va.; Hanover College, Hanover, Ind.; Hastings College, Hastings, Nebr.; Illinois College, Jacksonville, Ill.; Jamestown College, Jamestown, N.Dak.; Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, N.C.;

King College, Bristol, Tenn.; Knoxville College, Knoxville, Tenn.; Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.; Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Ill.; Lees-McRae College, Banner Elk, N.C.; Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo.; Lyon College, Batesville, Ark.; Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn.; Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Va.; Maryville College, Maryville, Tenn.; Millikin University, Decatur, Ill.; Missouri Valley College, Marshall, Mo.; Monmouth College, Monmouth, Ill.; Montreat College, Montreat, N.C.; Muskingum University, New Concord, Ohio; Peace College, Raleigh, N.C.; Pikeville College, Pikeville, Ky.; Presbyterian College, Clinton, S.C.; Queens University of Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C.; Rhodes College, Memphis, Tenn.; Rocky Mountain College, Billings, Mont.; St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Laurinburg, N.C.; Schreiner University, Kerrville, Tex.; Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka, Alaska;

Sterling College, Sterling, Kans.; Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Trinity University, San Antonio, Tex.; Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tenn.; Universidad InterAmericana de Puerto Rico, San Juan P.R.; University of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa; University of the Ozarks, Clarksville, Ark.; University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Okla.; Warren Wilson College, Asheville, N.C.; Waynesburg University, Waynesburg, Pa.; Westminster College, Fulton, Mo.; Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pa.; Westminster College, Salt Lake City, Utah, Whitworth University, Spokane, Wash.; Wilson College, Chambersburg, Pa.

2. Approve the following list of secondary schools as those related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

Bachman Academy, McDonald, Tenn.; Blair Academy, Blairstown, N.J.; Chamberlain-Hunt Academy, Port Gibson, Miss.; French Camp Academy, French Camp, Miss.; Goodland Academy, Hugo, Okla.; Menaul School, Albuquerque, N.Mex.; Presbyterian Pan-American School, Kingsville, Tex.; Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, Rabun Gap, Ga.; Wasatch Academy, Mt Pleasant, Utah.

Rationale

It has been customary for the General Assembly annually to recognize and approve a list of institutions related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through history, tradition, and covenants with governing bodies, and various relationships of program and financial support.

Item 15-08

[The assembly approved Item 15-08. See pp. 6, 7.]

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the development of a task force of nine people appointed by the Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to study racial ethnic and new immigrant church growth. The task force would meet for three days each meeting, up to three times a year for two years (eighteen meeting days). This group would have the responsibility to do the following:

1. Review the strategy from 1998, in consultation with staff in the Racial Ethnic and New Immigrant Church Growth offices.
2. Analyze and determine reasons for not reaching the 1998 goal.
3. Identify middle governing bodies who are responding to demographic change in effective and faithful ways, and collect modes of new church development and transformation that can work in other contexts.
4. Discern what resources—personnel, funding, multimedia, technology, social networking, and other—are needed at the General Assembly level to assist and support efforts at the middle governing level.
5. In light of Jesus' continuing call to us to repent of our racism and to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:19), revisit the goal set in 1998 and determine what the call to the church is now that we as a church might become a reflection of Jesus in the world.
6. Bring a report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) with recommendations for action.

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$17,970 (2011); \$27,205 (2012); \$9,735 (Per Capita—GAMC).]

Rationale

The 208th General Assembly (1996) approved a resolution that set a goal of 20 percent racial ethnic and new immigrant membership by 2010 (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, pp. 53, 378). They directed the creation of an action plan and detailed strategies for implementing the goals. The church has not met this goal.

The ACREC has accepted the responsibility of monitoring the progress of this General Assembly action. In an effort to discern where we are on the goal, we have met with staff, consulted with racial ethnic caucuses, fellowships, and councils, and consulted with emerging new immigrant groups. We are excited and grateful for the significant potential for church growth in racial ethnic and new immigrant communities. In response to the call of Christ and the challenges and opportunities in demographic shifts already in place and increasing in scope, depth and pace, we recommend this action to the General Assembly.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 15-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 15-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

Recommendation 5 from this report states: “In light of Jesus’ continuing call to us to repent of our racism and to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:19), revisit the goal set in 1998 and determine what the call to the church is now that we as a church might become a reflection of Jesus in the world.”

The church has not yet met the goal of 20 percent racial ethnic and new immigrant membership by 2010.

Item 15-09

[The assembly approved Item 15-09. See pp. 6, 7.]

The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) convene a conversation within the larger church to develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing the concern for Hispanic/Latino/a leadership at all levels of the church that would include and be led by no less than two representatives appointed or elected by each of the following groups: the PC(USA) Hispanic/ Latina/o Caucus, the PC(USA) Office of Vocation, the Advisory Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns, the Committee on Theological Education, and the General Assembly Mission Council. Other groups and/or appropriate individuals may be invited into the conversations with all individually responsible for reporting to their respective groups and corporately back to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

[Financial Implication: (2010) \$0; (2011) \$13,310; (2012) \$13,310 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Rationale

The COTE received communications and representatives from the Hispanic/Latino/a Caucus on the need for trained Hispanic Presbyterian leadership in the PC(USA). The committee deeply regrets the lack of visible Hispanic/Latino/a perspective in the PC(USA)’s seminaries. The COTE will gather information on what is currently offered; urge imaginative structural changes to enable Hispanic/Latino/a participation at M.Div., certificate levels, and doctoral levels, and intentional recruitment of Hispanic/Latino/a scholars; and commits to assisting seminaries with the inclusion of Hispanic/Latino/a scholarship in the curriculum and to monitor their progress. This concern is part of a larger conversation needed within the larger church to develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing the concern for Hispanic/Latino/a leadership at all levels of the church. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns also communicated with COTE on this same subject.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 15-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 15-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns recommends that Item 15-09 be approved with the following comment:

“This recommendation arose in response to concerns raised by the Hispanic/Latino/a Caucus and ACREC in light of the loss of all faculty positions at PC(USA) seminaries outside Puerto Rico previously held by Hispanic/Latino/a scholars. Consultation on this process should be done with the Hispanic/Latino/a Caucus and ACREC on the need for diverse, trained Presbyterian leadership for the PC(USA).”

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 15-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 15-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with the Advice and Counsel of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) with the addition of this comment: The ACWC would encourage the inclusion of a focus on the intersection of race and gender in the consultation.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns is also troubled by the loss of all PC(USA) faculty positions that were held by Hispanic/Latino people in seminaries outside of Puerto Rico, but would like also to draw attention the fact that all of these positions were held by men. While we join in ACREC’s advocacy for Hispanic/Latino/a people in general, ACWC would note especially the importance of considering here and always the intersection of gender with race. Unfortunately, many situations in which race and ethnicity or racism is being considered and combated, the perspective of being a woman within this marginalized group is never considered. Women within racial ethnic groups find themselves in a unique situation

that often serves to marginalize them doubly—once as a racial ethnic person, and again as a woman. While we would also maintain that consultation should be done with the Hispanic/Latino/a Caucus and ACREC, we would hope that perhaps the Women of Color Joint Working Group would also be included in this consultation as well, as they are focused on celebrating and lifting up the voices and experiences of racial ethnic women in the church in particular.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 15-09

Comment on Item 15-09—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) shares the concerns of Item 15-09 and advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve its recommendation to convene a conversation within the larger church to develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing the concern for Hispanic/Latino/a participation at all levels of the church, and in particular, leadership.

Rationale

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) is charged to help remind the PC(USA) and hold it accountable that that all the Church's diversity should be represented in all areas of its life.

In a recent article, Daniel Aleshire, Executive Director of the Association of Theological Seminaries points out that while Hispanic/Latinos/as comprise about 13.8 percent of the U.S. and Canada population combined, the percentage of Hispanic/Latinos/as enrolled in the fall of 2007 in theological schools was only 4.2 percent. This disparity demonstrates that Hispanic/Latinos/as are significantly underrepresented. The gap is recognized throughout theological education in the US and Canada.

Item 15-09 recognizes the gap present in Presbyterian seminaries and provides a means to address the concern. In response to the challenges encountered in reaching and serving Hispanic communities, it is necessary to develop a plan to affirm and promote Hispanic/Latino/a ministries and to do so with a table of concerned parties.

In particular, the PC(USA) needs to encourage and support the inclusion of Hispanic/Latino/a students, professors, and instructors at the seminary level. This will not only ensure continuity and expansion of Hispanic/Latino/a ministries, but also to help non-Hispanic students become aware of context and work toward becoming trans-cultural, exposing them to voices different from their own, helping them understand, and to be sensitive to the cultural realities and values of this gifted part of the family of God. If the PC(USA) is to live up to its statements valuing diversity and pledging to increase Hispanic/Latino/a participation at all levels of the Church, then it needs to provide real opportunities for Hispanic/Latino/a students and teachers in its theological education settings and work to make sure schools provide a community within which they can thrive.

Item 15-09 renews these efforts. In Item 15-09, the church will be addressing a systemic problem, creating greater capacity for effective evangelization among Hispanics/Latinos/as and by Hispanics/Latinos/as (a growing cultural group, and a growing and potentially vital part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). This effort may also provide an example of inclusive/adaptive leadership and serve as a model for addressing other areas of disparity in the future.

“Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.’ So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish” (Jn. 21:6).

Item 15-10

[The assembly approved Item 15-10. See pp. 6, 7.]

The Youth Task Force recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following as the new vision statement for the church and youth in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

“In the midst of a beautiful and broken world, we have a vision for ministry with young people that unites youth in Christ with all other generations and proclaims the love of God that is without end. This vision gives us hope for a church that

- “• is authentic, comprised of communities of faith that live what they proclaim;**
- “• participates in, and pays witness to, the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God for the whole world;**
- “• helps young people to understand what it means to be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that they will, as God does, view all people with love and possibility;**

- “• expresses God’s boundless love by embracing young people as they are and where they could be, inspiring them to share their ideas, dreams, and unique gifts with the world and the church;
- “• acknowledges and celebrates youth as the keepers of God’s world, capable of serving as agents of healing, friends to the friendless, and leaders along the path of Jesus;
- “• encourages young people to live and lead with humility, but also with confidence and joy;
- “• accepts that it may be changed, even re-made, through the power of the Spirit by youth’s energy, freshness, and vitality.”

Rationale

This vision statement is a final response to the following referral:

2008 Referral: Item 17-3NB. Recommendation. Direct the Moderator of the General Assembly to Appoint a Task Force to Seek Input from Youth, Young Adults, and Adults to Continue the Dialogue Begun at This Assembly; Find and Present Model Programs; and Focus on Needs and Development of Youth Ministries and Report Back to 219th General Assembly (2010) Specific Recommendations for Designing and Conducting Various Youth Ministries Under a “New Vision” for Youth (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 16, 1405).

Our task as commissioned by the 218th General Assembly (2008) was “to continue the dialogue begun at this assembly; find and present model programs; and focus on the needs and development of youth ministries, and report back to the 219th General Assembly (2010) specific recommendations for designing and conducting various youth ministries under a ‘new vision’ for youth” (*Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 1405*). “Youth” or “young people,” as described in this report and understood by the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), Office of Ministries with Youth, includes adolescents, age 12–18 years old and preadolescents (for some tween programs) 9–11 years old.

The task force convened for the first time in person in Atlanta in the summer of 2009 during the Big Tent event from June 11–15. Through discussion and prayer, we discerned that the best way to “continue the dialogue begun at [the] assembly” and to “seek information” was to interview Presbyterians of all ages and from varied roles in the church (youth, educators, national staff, pastors, youth workers, elders, etc) about the role of youth in the church using a list of eleven questions that we prepared as a group. This wide-reaching interview process was the manner in which we gathered a large mass of information, approximately four hundred interviews in all, to offer the most comprehensive picture of the church as possible. At the Atlanta meeting, we collected the first 135 interviews. We felt that this process was very fruitful, and we decided to continue our data collection as we returned to our home congregations and as some of us traveled to presbytery meetings, camps, and summer youth conferences. We also conducted interviews using a variety of electronic and social media networks (e.g. Facebook).

Every member of the task force participated in the interview process. However, we felt increasingly that our General Assembly-appointed task was a two-pronged assignment: one was creating a “new vision for youth” and an accompanying publicity campaign to raise awareness of youth in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and of the theological significance of youth ministry and the other to “find and present model programs” for youth. Thus, the task force divided itself into two work groups: the “vision” team and the “model programs” team.

A. *Vision Team*

Once formed, the vision team decided to focus on the responses to question numbers 9 and 11 from the master interview question list, which read: “What basic ideas, issues, or concepts does the church need to pass on to young people? (As opposed to school, family, friends, etc.) What is the church’s role in youth ministry? The young person’s local Presbyterian church?” (9) and “We learn from scripture that ‘Where there is no vision—the people will perish.’ If the Presbyterian Church were to try and capture a vision for its young people—what would be important to YOU to include in this vision? Words, concepts, ideals, scriptures, statements?” (11). We felt these pertained most specifically to the Vision Team’s task of gleaning the church’s vision from the interviews, yet all responses were considered and utilized in the process of creating the Vision Statement.

After the meeting in Atlanta concluded, we had several Go-To or online meetings over the summer. This brainstorming, combined with our extensive information gathering through the interviews, prepared us for the second and final in-person meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, from September 18–21. At this meeting, we looked at the 1990 Vision Statement, and found that while it contained visionary language for 1990 and the subsequent years the task was to come back to the 219th with a “new vision” for the church and youth. While the 1990 statement has served as an excellent foundational vision for youth ministry, it did not adequately represent the youth of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) today. Thus, guided by prayer, we were able to synthesize what we found to be the most recurrent themes in the interviews. We, a task force of youth, young adults, and adult mentors, also drew from our own personal experiences, Christian practices, and faith journeys to contribute to the vision statement.

This synthesis process consisted of creative and careful sifting exercises to narrow down the list of a hundred words and phrases that spoke to the overarching sentiments of the interviews and our discussions, to thirteen words. We then took those words that inspired us, and had a discussion about our interpretation of the core meaning or principle behind each. Finally, we created one sentence for each word, and through an editing process post-Harrisburg, we honed the statement down even further for conciseness, rhythm, and clarity. The editing process was conducted by a writing team and approved by the larger vision team at a Go-To meeting on October 13th, 2009. We collectively agree that the new statement incorporates essential elements of the reformed tradition, expands on the statement from 1990, honors the information, insight, and opinions we collected from youth, educators, pastors, professors, and elders throughout the denomination, and truly points to a church that embraces the youth of today.

During this time, the whole task force was apprised of our progress and offered feedback through Facebook, e-mail, Go-To meetings, text messaging, and Twitter. Consequently, our work was done in a manner that best allowed all of us to delve into our work, while not requiring numerous face-to-face meetings.

1. *A Campaign for Visibility of Youth and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

As a result of the aforementioned sifting process that occurred during the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, meeting, we also came up with a tag-line or motto for youth in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The phrase, “Who’s Gonna Be There?” spoke to us in a plethora of ways. Taken literally, “Who’s Gonna Be There?” is the question that youth and young adults frequently ask when attending youth group or other church events. It reflects their need for community and strong relationships at church to encourage their attendance. More figuratively, this phrase embodies questions concerning the future of the PC(USA). Who is going to be there for the church in the future? A young person asking the question could be met with the answer “We will be there!” A parent asking could find comfort in the answer “We will, adults who care about your child’s faith and place in the world!” The church is asking as it ponders its future livelihood and might find, as they look to the youth room that young people are saying “We will be there!” One could answer, “I am!,” “We are!,” or “God is!” We felt that this somewhat enigmatic question was very open-ended, and thus could foster discussion among church members, and draw attention to youth issues in the church. It is our hope that this campaign be financially supported, visually accompanied, and denominationally circulated through the work of the members of this task force, through the commissioners at the 219th General Assembly (2010), and in the work of the national Ministries with Youth office and the national Presbyterian Youth Workers’ Association.

2. *A Word About Young People and Their Vision for the Church ...*

We found that it was challenging to interpret the responses given by youth during the interview process. In many ways this mirrors the normal disconnect between what a young person feels about being a Christian and how they then articulate their own personal belief. By and large, the youth interviewed had difficulty verbally articulating the specific shape of their faith or of their belief in Jesus Christ. Most of the youth that were interviewed were very clear and, for the most part, enthusiastic about the centrality of their home congregation (or a congregation with whom they are connected) in their life. They were able to describe how a particular congregation welcomed them, helped them learn, nurtured them, and taught them, but they had difficulty describing what the result of this nurture was. As we reflected on these interviews, we thought it was important to identify this pattern. We also recognize that it is very common among youth that they acknowledge they believe in Jesus Christ and desire to follow Christ but have difficulty expressing this as a job for the church or for their family or for themselves. Adults who were interviewed, however, had much to say about youth, youth in the church, and their (the adult being interviewed) vision for young people. We mention this pattern because we believe it is important to hold up to the assembly that while young people yearn to be a part of the church they are, and the adults called to accompany them are, unsure about how to fit into an institution so historically situated and confessionally rich as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) when the faith of many/most young people is more fluid, developing, and still developing in its shape.

B. *Model Programs Team*

The Model Programs team approached the task of finding and presenting model programs with open minds, enthusiasm, and most of all, excitement to see the ways in which youth across the United States are developing their faith, participating in fellowship, giving back, and praising and worshipping God together.

The interviews that were collected at the Big Tent in Atlanta, and continued to be collected in the following months, were the initial and primary source of information for the beginning of the process of seeking out model programs. The model programs team paid special attention to the responses to the following questions: “If you are involved in a congregation, youth group, or another source of Christian ministry—what is the best thing about that ministry? Why do you say this is the best?” As this question was directed purposely at youth and young adults, it allowed the model programs team to get direct input from youth about the standout programs and ministries in which they are involved and from which they are learning and growing. Also, the team was able to learn a great deal about what youth believe are key elements for effective youth ministry, and what can make or break a youth ministry. See Attachment C for a list of patterns that were identified in the interviews; programs and practices that are and are not working in youth ministry. Common threads included good, committed

leadership, a safe place for questioning and developing faith, the importance of being known and valued by the larger church, and the value of the sense of purpose gained through youth group and community outreach/mission events. As one young woman stated, “I love the connections you make with people. It allows you to get to know other teens in your congregation and denomination and spend time with them having fun and being there for each other. It also connects you with the adults of your church and the community through service projects done in the church or outside the church in your area.” Other youths cited openness, learning about Jesus, being instantly welcomed, and the family-like atmosphere. According to a high school-aged boy, the best thing about youth ministry at the level of his presbytery “is that it takes a great interest in its youth and their opinions. As a youth myself, I have learned so much from serving on a pastor nominating committee to serving as a youth advisory delegate. In all the things I have participated in, my opinion has always been valued and for this I have loved serving in all these ministries.”

Another question to which we paid special attention was: “Does your church have a strong youth ministry program? If so, what do you think they do that is effective? If not, what do you think is not working?” This question was not asked exclusively of youth, but rather of all people of all ages and roles. Oftentimes it provided a unique perspective of adults and their impressions of youth ministry in their church, as viewed from the outside. A member of a congregation in his forties, for example, said that what makes his church’s youth ministry program especially effective is the attention to developing relationships with the whole church. In spite of this, however, he pointed out that there is still room for improvement: “We have two youth on session but they are called youth elders and that ruins the call. I think that they aren’t called simply because they are youth. It’s the same way with ‘Youth Sunday’ because I think the church thinks we have one Sunday to feature youth and then we are done with them the rest of the year. I want every Sunday to be Youth Sunday.” This call for greater inclusion of youth was echoed throughout many interviews.

The last interview question that the model programs team targeted was: “What organizations could give Presbyterians a good lesson about youth ministry? Are any organizations doing things that might help us?” In regards to the last part of the question, the answer was almost unanimously “yes.” In support of this view, people cited existing Presbyterian entities, such as Montreat Conference Center and programs like Young Adult Volunteers, as well as ecumenical organizations such as Young Life. A few people mentioned the Coca-Cola Corporation due to its highly effective method of varying marketing according to audience, even across cultures, and overall, any organization that is successfully able to get people to rally behind its cause. Interviewees cited Barack Obama’s presidential campaign, the Susan B. Komen campaign for breast cancer awareness, and initiatives like Invisible Children that inspire people to make a difference in the world. The value of these statements was not that youth ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should be concerned with multimillion dollar marketing campaigns, nor that we should start recruiting youth to form a bigger voting constituency, but rather that there are facets of all of the above programs/campaigns that we would do well to adapt and/or model and implement.

The information that we garnered from the initial Big Tent interviews, as well as our personal interviews in the following months, formed a solid foundation for the beginning of our work. Next followed the assignment of finding and documenting specific programs, a task that we were admittedly somewhat unsure of how to approach. The Atlanta meeting at the Big Tent ended with a charge to each work group member to find two model programs that he or she would be able to present at our next face-to-face meeting in Harrisburg. Although this was a seemingly small step, it served as a way to get the ball rolling and begin the process of discerning what to do with our incoming information, which was one of the first questions we would tackle in Harrisburg—where to go to find model programs, who would know about excellent programs, where to store the programs, what to search for, how to organize them, etc. Also, what would we hope to do with the final body of information?

During our second face-to-face meeting in Harrisburg, we were able to bring together and review the programs we had collected independently. It seemed that we had all encountered a similar difficulty: many youth, youth workers, etc. struggled with the ambiguity of the term “model program,” and were often hesitant to label any of the ministries that they had created or were involved in as model. Our team, then, reflected on how to better define what, exactly, a model program is, how to continue to make our search for model programs known, and how to best encourage people to respond.

We began by drafting a letter that could easily be disseminated via many channels and assigned work group members with specific tasks of distributing it to certain contacts. The letter was sent to all members’ youth-related Presbyterian Facebook groups, including the Presbyterian Youth Workers Association (PYWA). The letter was posted by Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow, on his blog, and by Gina Yeager-Buckley, associate for Ministries with Youth, on the GAMC Ministries with Youth website. And as all task force members are from geographically diverse parts of the United States, we were each responsible for sending the letter out to personal contacts and our respective presbyteries so that they might forward it to interested and connected individuals.

The letter included directions for sending information about model programs to an e-mail address that was created for collecting suggestions, and that all work group members could access. The e-mail submissions were then added to a wiki website: www.modelprograms.wikia.com. The wiki proved to be a great way to store all of our information in one place, especially since we could all edit the page and make our own additions of model programs. For each program, we felt it was necessary to provide a description, contact information, and suggestions for adapting a program to a specific congregational demographic (e.g. larger or smaller groups of people). Our rationale for providing adaptations was that while a church may

not be able to implement a certain program in its entirety, it could possibly adopt a part of it or use an idea as inspiration for a new program better suited to fit their needs.

The programs were categorized under labels that were created based on careful reflection on the interviews. We looked for patterns in responses to the question “What distances young people from the church?” A few common answers included youth not having voice in their congregation, the church not being open to change, and a lack of mentoring in the church. We referred to these answers, along with sixteen other commonly occurring responses, as “needs” or “issues” in the church, and they helped us to categorize model programs according to what need or issue they addressed. Using these needs, we formed eight basic categories that all the model programs seemed to fit into: Empowerment, Worship, Leadership Development, Fellowship/Outreach, College Ministry, Mentoring, Stewardship/Fundraising, and Interfaith/Ecumenical. We placed forty-seven model programs that we collected into the eight categories. These programs can be found in Attachment B. Please note that the full description of the programs, as well as ideas for adapting them to various sized congregations, governing bodies, budget, etc..., can be found by viewing the following link: www.modelprograms.wikia.com

C. *Chairperson’s Final Remarks*

As mentioned several times in this report, the task force chose to meet both face-to-face and using electronic media. Due to a limited budget, it was not feasible to fly the task force members to a meeting more than twice. Knowing that we were charged to meet four times, we chose to meet face-to-face twice although broke our first face-to-face meeting at the Big Tent up into two parts, counting it as two meetings. Our Harrisburg meeting served as our second face-to-face but was counted as our third meeting. The limited budget and few opportunities to gather the task force meant a great deal of our work had to be completed while living and working thousands of miles apart. The task force chose to use Go-To meetings, which are meetings conducted over a computer. Participants are able to speak to one another as well as see a common screen so editing could happen on the spot. We felt this form of working together, while not as ideal as face-to-face meetings, was extremely effective and important in completing our assigned task. Using Go-To, the task force as able to hold eight separate meetings and accomplish our work in a relatively short period of time. We, as a task force, would like to encourage the use of this technology to the 219th General Assembly (2010). As resources are increasingly limited and in demand, we believe creative use of media will be essential in the way our denomination moves forward and conducts its business in the future. It is also a language young people understand and can use effectively in order to lead in the church and in the world.

As chair, I would like to thank this task force. As mentioned, it was comprised of ten youth and young adults as well as five adults. We were able to model what we hope the church will live out as the young people on the task force gave of their ideas, dreams, and unique gifts leading us in our work and finally offering what we believe to be a helpful report, inspiring model programs, and a fresh vision statement. And finally, I would like to thank Gina Yeager-Buckley for her guidance, wisdom, and faithful work with this task force. We are fortunate to have such a faithful servant in our denominational offices.

Attachment A Youth Task Force Interview/Survey Questions

(Questions might be specific to youth or adult—interviewer should communicate this)

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of person being interviewed: _____

Age/Role of person being interviewed: _____

Location of interview: _____

1. What attributes make youth unique disciples of Jesus? Unique members of the church? What is the unique “thing” about youth in our church?
2. What attributes should an adult youth worker (volunteer, youth minister, educator, pastor, teacher, mentor) or mentor have?
3. What, in your opinion distances young people from the church? Or, causes them to feel disconnected from the church? Or from God? Or from the Presbyterian Church? Or from the Christian faith?
4. If you’re a youth— if you are involved in a congregation, youth group, or another source of Christian ministry— what is the best thing about that ministry? Why do you say this is “the best?”
5. How is that ministry helping you be a more mature Christian? A better person?
6. Does your church have a strong youth ministry program? If so, what do you think they do that is effective? If not, what do you think is not working?

7. What is **ONE THING** that **you** can do to strengthen and/or support youth in the church? (Please note whom is answering: e.g. youth, adult, older, younger, etc...)
8. Why do you think youth ministry is important for the Presbyterian Church? What is it specifically about our denomination our “flavor” of Christian discipleship that needs young people connected to it?
9. What basic ideas, issues, or concepts does the church need to pass on to young people? (As opposed to school, family, friends, etc...) What is the church’s role in youth ministry? The young person’s local Presbyterian church?
10. What organizations could give Presbyterians a good lesson about youth ministry? Any organizations doing things that might help us? (e.g. Disney, Facebook, CNN, etc....)
11. We learn from scripture that “Where there is no vision—the people will perish.” If the Presbyterian Church were to try and capture a vision for its young people—what would be important to YOU to include in this vision? Words, concepts, ideals, scriptures, statements?

Attachment B
Youth Task Force
Model Programs

Empowerment

Trinity Presbyterian of Boise, Idaho—Oregon Mission Trip: Youth camped on the Lostine Presbyterian Church yard in Oregon for a week, helped to run VBS and a local mission project, did some maintenance work on the church grounds, and helped the elderly church members and friends. A sign-up sheet was posted a few weeks in advance, and folks wrote down what they needed help with ... washing windows, pruning trees, weeding a garden, or anything they could not do for themselves. The youth took it seriously and deeply. Leadership stated that in their opinion, in the field of “mission trips,” this was much more effective and useful than a trip to Mexico where the youth do not speak the language or understand the culture. It was a highly relevant and on-target expression of mission.

- Adaptation: Use this model for a mission trip in any local community of need. Explore areas near your church or in your presbytery and connect with a church within a community of need. Connect to local families and join together in a mutual mission.
- Contact: Trinity Presbyterian Church, Boise, Idaho. tpcboise@qwestoffice.net.

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice: Rebuilds the neighborhoods of Bronx River and Soundview/Bruckner in the South Bronx by preparing young people to become prophetic voices for peace and justice. This is accomplished through political education, spiritual formation, and youth and community development and organizing. It also uses art as a medium for social and political transformation.

- Adaptation: Create or participate in an urban setting mission program.
- Contact: <http://www.ympj.org>.

“Youth Urban Immersion,” Broad Street Ministry, Philadelphia: A broad-minded Christian Community that cherishes creativity, fosters and nurtures artistic expression, extends hospitality, and works for a more just world through civic engagement. Broad street hosts a number of programs including the Homeless Cafe (and a number of other services for the homeless), No Barriers Community Dinner, and offers an immersion experience for youth mission trips.

- Adaptation: Create a space of welcome in your church for those who are in need in your neighborhood. Host other youth groups at your church and plan mission days in your community together.
- Contact: <http://www.broadstreetministry.org>, The Reverend Erika Funk—Youth Initiative Minister. (215) 735-4847 or info@broadstreetministry.org.
- Also see: Cross Program in Charlotte (Myers Park Pres.), Presbyterian Social Ministry in Jacksonville, Fla., Government Street Youth Mission program.

Mission Possible, Harpeth Presbyterian Church, Davidson College Presbyterian Church and Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church: A joint venture mission experience for middle school youth. In the past, participating churches have included Swarthmore in Pennsylvania, Davidson College in North Carolina, and Pleasant Hill in Georgia, and more. These churches travel to one another’s towns and participate in mission projects in which the local congregation is involved. Youth share the love of Christ by serving in these mission organizations; learning about urban poverty issues; participating in worship, Bible study, and spirituality practices; engaging in fellowship and recreation; and reflecting on the experience with other youth. They also visit important landmarks and sites in the downtown area where they are serving. “Mission Possible” is a wonderful way to engage youth in mission, as well as educate them about the nature of the connectionalism of Presbyterians.

- Adaptation: Your youth group visiting different cities and different churches (not necessarily a preset partnership) and working through the specific ministries of that congregation.
- Contact: Alan Bancroft, associate pastor at Harpeth Presbyterian Church. alanbancroft@comcast.net.
- Also See: PDA (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance).

Invisible Children Night Commute: Youth in the United States join in solidarity with children in Uganda who walk to city centers to avoid being kidnapped by rebel soldiers. These youth promote awareness of the 23-year-long war in Uganda while experiencing walking to a city center and sleeping outdoors.

- Adaptation: Awareness walk for a cause, Crop Walk, Box-a-thon. Contact invisible children to see if your youth group and church can provide a base of support for their yearly awareness experience in your city. Host the night commute in your sanctuary one evening for the entire church or local youth groups.
- Contact: <http://www.invisiblechildren.com>.

Presbytery of St. Augustine, Box-a-thon: This is an overnight event that helps raise awareness about hunger and homelessness. Youth pledge to spend twenty-four hours in a cardboard box, thus learning how it feels to be homeless. The leadership of the event plans related activities, such as “working” (can be turned into a volunteer project) for food stamps, which the youth can then use to “buy” and ration their limited amount of food. Also, movies such as “Homeless to Harvard,” “Pursuit of Happiness,” and “With Honors” are appropriate to show, as well as games/activities that help youth learn about the realities of homelessness and hunger, and what they can do to help. The box-a-thon can also be used as a fundraiser—youth can get their fellow church members to pledge a certain amount of money for every hour spent in their box. The Presbytery of St. Augustine does the Box-a-thon annually as a presbytery-wide event.

- Adaptation: The Box-a-thon could also be done on a smaller level, such as with one youth group, as an intergenerational church activity, or by combining area youth groups, if numbers are small.
- Contact: Katie Day, Palms Presbyterian Church, katie.day@palmschurch.org.
- Also see: “Homeless for the Homeless”—A similar program in which young people are invited to spend twenty-four hours in the shoes of a homeless person. They sleep in a local park, and are allowed to use cardboard boxes and nothing else. After spending twelve hrs (7p.m.–7a.m.) in a local park, 12 more hours (7a.m.–7p.m.) are spent volunteering at homeless ministries.

No More Deaths: Since 1998, more than 2,000 Mexican men, women, and children have died trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border, a situation that has been brought on by economic inequality, ill-conceived U.S. border policy, and the harsh conditions of the Sonoran Desert. No More Deaths is a direct action program that seeks to stop these deaths by preventing and raising awareness about the violence and cruelty to migrants, as well as by providing water, food, and medical assistance to migrants walking through the Arizona desert. They also monitor U.S. operations on the border and work to change U.S. policy to resolve the “war zone” crisis, and to bring the plight of migrants to public attention. No More Deaths has a number of volunteer opportunities; volunteers under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

- Adaptation: Check to see where migrant workers are in your area. What are their needs? Contact them to see how you or your church can help—perhaps even something as simple as English-language training/tutoring.
- Contact: <http://www.nomoredeaths.org>, action@nomoredeaths.org.
- Also see: Frontera de Cristo (a specifically Presbyterian border ministry).

Eco Stewards: Seeks to train and inspire young adults 18–24 in the ways of eco-stewardship within the wider context of our Christian faith. The Eco-Stewards Program is actively recruiting passionate, dedicated young people to join our team of inspired citizens, pastors, camp directors, and environmental professionals to help plan our 2010 Eco-Stewards Program in southern West Virginia. Our intention is to co-create an eight-day program in early summer with a core group of 18–24 year olds that is attentive to where God is working—through both people and places—in southern West Virginia. We will learn from and work alongside Christians who are answering God’s call to protect and restore local communities, mountains, streams, and human relationships.

- Adaptation: Explore eco-stewardship as part of any summer retreat or as part of your Sunday school program.
- Contact: Brian Frick, Brian.Frick@pcusa.org.

The Presbyterian Church at Tenaflly Light bulb Project: The youth of The Presbyterian Church at Tenaflly gather monthly for youth group. They are a smaller group, and after dinner, they go into the homes of the elderly of their community and change all of their light bulbs to more environmentally friendly light bulbs. The mission committee of the church provides the light bulbs.

- Adaptation: Join with the deacons or other appropriate committee of your church to bring environmentally friendly light bulbs into your church buildings and then into the homes of shut-ins in your congregation.
- Contact: Presbyterian Church at Tenaflly, www.tenafllychurch.org.

Adopt-a-Family for Christmas: The senior high youth group (PYC) works with the government agency called Headstart (a preschool program for low-income families) to adopt families in need and provide Christmas gifts for them. The agency director provides the church with the family's names, ages, sizes, and any special requests for gifts. The youth invited the entire church family to help contribute to this project by donating gently used or new household items, clothing, or toys. Whatever is not donated, the youth then supply through a fundraising event or their own contributions money to shop as a group for the items yet needed for this family. They also wrap all the gifts, always including a Bible for any of the children and then deliver the gifts to the home. Over the years, food baskets and even a live Christmas tree have been delivered. It is a very meaningful mission and stewardship project.

- Adaptations: Talk with local agencies that work with those in need to discover what items are needed around the holidays or throughout the year. The youth group can serve as the clearinghouse for items donated and be responsible for delivering the items collected.
- Contact: contact pending.

Free-for-All: Last year, recognizing the economic hardship brought on by the collapse of the economy, one of our folks said we should host an upscale yard sale, but instead of charging for the stuff, simply give it away. We started collecting goods one week before the Free for All. We had contacts with a local morning show host who agreed to do a live remote the Wednesday before the event. Unbelievable amounts of stuff came in from all over the community. We literally had people driving thirty and forty miles to bring us stuff to give away.

The youth decided that their part in this event would be to take care of the kids that came with moms and dads who were in many ways selecting Christmas gifts. They planned activities and crafts. They set up coffee stations to give coffee and hot chocolate away to folks. They carried stuff out to cars and they sang Christmas carols. The youth made the place fun.

It was the first event we had done in years that included every age group of the church, but the event was transformed by the excitement and energy of the youth. Seven hundred people came through the doors that Saturday morning, and there was absolutely nothing left at the end of the day.

- Adaptation: Free-For-All can work in a small or large community because the goods donated are likely in proportion to the need of the community. Hold the event inside the church building or outside on the lawn so people driving by may be intrigued. Place large "Free" signs around the Free-for-All to encourage passers-by to stop and "shop."
- Contact: Chris Jones, chjones@grace-pcusa.org.

Worship

Columbia Theological Seminary—Anna Carter Florence: As the assistant Professor of Preaching, Anna Carter Florence offers a course in Preaching and Youth. This course offers an opportunity for seminary students to learn how to preach to young people.

- Adaptation: Have preaching professors from each seminary to gather with youth from the PC(USA) and imagine worship for a new church.
- Contact: FlorenceA@CTSNET.edu

Pioneer Memorial Presbyterian Church, Jeff and Kerri Peterson-Davis: This is a model for interactive worship. Preaching takes place as a dialogue between Jeff and Kerri; they don't stand behind a pulpit but rather in front of the congregation. One discusses the biblical story, and the other tells a story relating to the story.

- Adaptation: A pastor of a church could preach in a way that is more conversational.
- Contact: Jeff and Kerri Peterson-Davis, <http://www.pioneersolon.com/>

Youth Sunday on Wheels in Grace Presbytery: This program is designed to provide a Youth Sunday for congregations that wouldn't otherwise have one, whether due to low numbers of youth or other reasons. There are several model services that are used repeatedly, complete with music, Scripture, and a sermon.

- Adaptation: If your youth group is planning a Youth Sunday, offer to do it the week before or after for a local congregation without youth in your presbytery. Connect with a smaller church that has a few youth and offer to assist in creating a youth Sunday. After youth Sunday, have your youth use the same format and partner with another youth group to guide them on youth Sunday at their church.
- Contact: Grace Presbytery, Rick Carus, rick@gracepresbytery.org.

Presbyterian Campus Ministry at Vanderbilt—“Stories we live by”: After a sermon, one student every week tells a difficult story from their life, which helps not only build community, but also create a safe, trusting environment. This adds depth and meaning to the sermon and opens up dialogue after worship about daily life and places where the message might be helpful or relevant.

- Adaptation: Have youth (who are willing) tell stories at youth group and talk about how this has impacted their faith. A theme for your youth year might be “Our story, their story, God’s story,” and focus on the art of storytelling as a way to open up the word of God in powerful and dynamic ways.
- Contact: Jennifer Fouse, (615) 343-4213, <http://www.psfncashville.org>.

Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church, Youth Group Model: Uses the parts of worship to structure youth group. As youth arrive there is fun and recreation—this is the “Gathering” time. In the time of “Encounter and Respond,” there is study and prayer. In the “Send” portion, there is a charge or something missional.

- Adaptation: Incorporate activities into your youth ministry programs that help teach young people about the structure of Christian worship and the importance and significance of each part.
- Contact: Teri Peterson teri@rcipc.org, Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church, <http://www.rcipc.org/youth2007.html>.

Leadership Development

West End Presbyterian Church, 5th Sunday: Every fifth Sunday, the youth lead the worship service. They perform all the items listed on the bulletin, except the pastoral prayer, Scriptures, message, and invitation to Christian discipleship.

- Adaptation: This might be done once every other month or slightly less often than that, but the intention is that the youth lead worship more than once a year.
- Contact: West End Presbyterian Church, wepc@sbcglobal.net.

Pathways: A day-long conference in which youth and adult leaders learn games, activities, and fun and different ways to do Bible study. What they learn at Pathways is taken home for use in their youth groups.

- Adaptation: Go back to home churches and lead a workshop for your leaders on what you have learned. Create a one-day leadership event for your youth, with leaders from your local church or presbytery.
- Contact: http://www3.ptsem.edu/offices/coned/iym/IYM_09secondPage.aspx?pic=1782&left=1660&right=1783.

K-Life: It is not the theology or program that makes K-Life a model program, but rather its leadership development. K-Life is a small group program that operates through the development and training of college-age leadership teams. They begin with 10–12 couples who will support their ministry, and then provide space, financial resources, and prayer, but not always direct leadership with the youth. Teams of college students trained by devoted couples then lead small groups for teens. This decentralized ministry focuses on mentoring, coaching, and disciplining today’s teenagers.

- Adaptation: A church could use this decentralized ministry to invite a core of individuals to assist in creating the youth ministry of their church.
- Contact: <http://www.klife.com>.

Playology: A day event from the Annual Recreation Workshop at Montreat. Playology is designed for pastors, educators, youth workers, church volunteers, and anyone interested in developing more creative leadership skills in ministry settings.

- Adaptation: Invite local recreation leaders to provide a one-day recreation workshop at your church. Use this format for a one-day advent workshop for all ages, having the youth host and lead.
- Contact: Montreat Conference Center, Deb Guess, 843-442-1791.

Mid-Town Columbia Church Summer Internship Program: Youth and young adults assist pastors and church workers in developing sermons for young people and assist in other ways at the church.

- Adaptation: Invite youth or young adults to be a church worker for a week. Develop a summer internship program in which two or three high school youth assist the pastor for ten hours a week. During the year, invite young people to assist one day a week in the everyday ministry needs of the congregation. Have the pastor poll or seek input from youth to include in the upcoming week’s sermon.
- Contact: 803.477.7962, <http://www.midtowncolumbia.com/2009/index.cfmSummerInternProgram>.

Presbytery of Wabash Valley, L.O.G. (Love of God): A year-round program for high schoolers that centers around a three-day, student-led retreat. Teams of previous student participants meet for 6–8 weeks prior to each retreat to plan and imple-

ment the next retreat for a group of their peers. In between retreats, they meet for fellowship, worship, and prayer. This program reaches out to youth of many churches and schools in the South Bend, Indiana, area. It has been located in a church before, but is now a validated ministry of the Presbytery of Wabash Valley.

- Adaptation: Use motivated youth to plan events for other youth or as small group leaders for events.
- Contact: The Reverend Terry McBride, website: <http://www.michianayouth.org/>, e-mail: LOG@michianayouth.org.

North Park Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry Council: The North Park youth program is designed to equip youth to lead in various ways, from leading a game/activity at PYC (evening fellowship—Presbyterian Youth Connection) to leading a Sunday evening youth worship service or small group discussion at our annual fall youth retreat. The Youth Leadership Team has representatives from every grade level, which makes them part of the Youth Ministry Council (with adult sponsors). Their experiences leading short activities raises their comfort level to work outside the youth program on a session committee or to serve as a youth elder or deacon.

- Adaptation: Encourage your committees of session to have two young people serve on their committee.
- Contact: Jann Treadwell, North Park Presbyterian Church, 214-363-5457 X34, jtreadwell@northparkpresbyterian.org.

Fellowship/Outreach

Presbytery of St. Augustine, Broomball League: Four Friday nights in a row, six-to-twelve churches gather from 10-11 p.m. at the local ice rink to play broomball, a combination of hockey and lacrosse. Youth play wearing tennis shoes and using their own broom. Using the same logo, they get team shirts in different colors. This program offers fellowship with different churches in the presbytery. Smaller churches combine to create a team of eight. Larger churches form two teams.

- Adaptation: Bring local churches together for any sorts of sports events—these can serve as evangelism for young people not in a church. Create a kick-ball league for your presbytery or churches in your community. If you are in a community that has Whirleyball, create a whirleyball league (bumper car lacrosse-indoor).
- Contact: <http://www.staugpres.org>, Robert McCrary, Community Presbyterian Church in Atlantic Beach Florida, (904-249-8698).

Village Presbyterian Church, 8 in a Van: As described by Lindsay O'Connor: 8 in a Van is designed as a way to reach students where they are instead of trying to get them in the doors of a colonial-looking church. My hope in starting this program was to simply provide a fun, easy way to connect with students in a nonthreatening way. The concept is, just as it sounds, driving our church van to one of the local middle schools, picking up around eight students and heading to something fun for about an hour. Because of the location of many of our middle schools, we typically get Starbucks, ice cream, Sonic, or go to Quick Trip and then head to a local park. We let the kids decide what they are up for that day and have them pay for whatever treat they pick. Depending on the size, we can stay and chat and just share life at one of these locations, move to a park when the weather cooperated to play Frisbee, or return to church to play Wii or other games in our youth loft. I think one of the essentials of the program is to keep it small, but keep it fun. They know I'm not going to trick them into Bible study, but rather simply get to know me as their leader, in addition to other students, on a smaller scale. Also, it is a must to take the kids home at the end. Parents are asked to RSVP if their student is coming to help me know who to expect and to remind them I will be taking their middle school youth home. Our 8 in a Van lasts from 3:45 p.m., when school is out, and I have all kids home by 5–5:15 p.m. It's short, doesn't interfere with homework, and provides a relaxed, positive environment.

The time spent with students during 8 in a Van has been invaluable. Many of my middle school leaders have emerged during this time where I am intentionally being present with them, where they feel comfortable. Additionally, students have felt comfortable inviting un-churched friends. These relationships have then flowered into great relationships, with some students coming to youth group and even Sunday morning programs. It is easy to reflect Christ in these hour to hour-and-half long outings without having to do Bible study. Students always get in the van talking about the events of school and it is a perfect way to find out about their culture and trends. During its three years, it has yet to be cliquy and often gathers students from many different social circles.

One advantage we have is our own youth van, which actually has a pretty cool reputation among students oddly enough. The vehicle to be used seems to be the main obstacle I see in adapting this program to other churches. It's simple and straightforward otherwise. Different middle schools go on different days of the week. Normally, it is first come, first serve, but if one person goes all the time, a person that has never gone or hasn't gone in a while, then that person will go, depending on the van space.

- Adaptation: If a van is not available for use, parents or volunteers can drive and take kids home, etc. Parents (if a van is not available) can pick kids up from different middle schools and meet somewhere central where all the kids can hang out together.

- Contact: Website: <http://www.villageyouth.com/youth/eight.html> or e-mail Lindsay O'Connor at lindsay.oconnor@villagepres.org.

Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, Man-Camp/Girls' Retreat: On a long weekend, the presbytery camp provides a middle school retreat. It begins on Sunday afternoon and ends on Monday afternoon. Although the girls and boys might have the same content, it is on different weekends. Senior-high youth provide leadership for small groups and to mentor.

- Adaptation: Provide a girls' retreat or man-camp in your local church with young adults and older youth.
- Contact: Cal Findeiss, email: cal@montgomerycenter.org.

The ORB: A Christian church in the heart of Red Bank, N.J. In addition to Sunday worship, ORB has outreach ministries to middle schoolers, high schoolers, young adults, adults, and older adults. The ORB's ministries with youth emphasize openness and welcome for all. The programs for high schoolers on Thursdays, for example, stresses that you don't have to be a Christian to come, and that while the leadership will certainly communicate their Christian beliefs and love for and faith in God, they will never tell you that you have to believe something in order to be a part of ORB. By not driving young people away through evangelism or attempts at conversion, the hope is that through showing the true nature of Christ's love and inclusiveness, young people will be inspired by example.

- Adaptation: Open your youth room and be intentional about hospitality to young people in the community, regardless of their current religious affiliation (or lack thereof).
- Contact: Jared Murray, jared@theorb.org. Website: http://www.theorb.org/?page_id=4.

MOSAIC at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church: As described by Andrew Wong: Throughout Fort Worth there are many smaller Presbyterian congregations and unfortunately most of us could never get critical mass to maintain a youth group. To solve this, we created MOSAIC (Many Outstanding Students, Always In Christ), a youth group that rotates meeting at each of three different participating churches once a week. We go to presbytery, synod, and General Assembly-level events together. We rely on volunteer sponsors from the three congregations, but we often have more than enough leadership. The leaders meet once or twice a quarter to plan and fellowship apart from the youth. The group functions like a traditional youth group except that the kids are from three different churches (and actually many of them do not go to Sunday morning worship anywhere) and the location changes every week. We believe this model of partnership is easily adapted to any number of churches, but does require that the churches are fairly close together. The really brilliant advantage of this model is that it allows for a lot more opportunity to generate a critical mass of sponsors and youth for a youth group session than if each church were trying alone. Theologically, it also reinforces the idea of the one body of different members. The MOSAIC embodies the idea that we exist to serve God's church as a whole, not just the church that we belong to. We demonstrate that other churches are not our competitors, but our family and that God calls us to reach out and work with other churches.

- Adaptation: Combine smaller groups or churches to form a larger group. Perhaps meet only once a month (rather than once a week).
- Contact: Andrew Wong, pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church, Ft. Worth, Tex. Email: RevAndrewWong@gmail.com.

Youth Week: As described by Shannon Guse—"This summer, we tried out our first youth week ... basically an evening VBS for youth. The youth came to the church from 6–10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and participated in dinner, fun and messy games, and Bible study/activities, and worship each night. The youth band played, a mini-sermon was given, and discussion, mayhem, and fun ensued. Last year's theme was "Sticky Faith" and included a Velcro wall, duct-tape night, messy games, tie-dye t-shirts, making sticky buns for the shelter, bubble gum sculptures. All discussions/sermons were inspired from the book *Messy Spirituality*. The theme for 2010 will be "Faith in a Box." We will have a blow-up boxing ring and bounce house, meals from boxes (lunch boxes, pizza boxes, Chinese food, etc.), and a night of sleeping in a box where there will be an emphasis on homelessness.

This was a great experience and well attended. It truly was a lot of work, but totally worth it. We cut out almost all of our short day trips during the summer and used this as our focus activity. I think other groups/churches of any size could do this."

- Adaptations: Ask the youth to assist with Vacation Bible School for younger children and then have them remain for their own "Youth Week." Youth Week might include service projects, games, Bible study, a meal, and preparations for the next morning's VBS.
- Contact: Shannon Guse, director of Christian education for youth at Faith Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, Fla. Email: Shannon@faithpcusa.org.

Tween Events: Our newest model is what we call a Tween Bash. This is a three-hour fellowship event held in the church's Christian Life Center open to anyone in middle school. For a \$5 fee we offer a safe place to hang out with friends in a Chris-

tian environment. Music, dancing, basketball, ping pong, cards, video games, and lots of extras including a concession stand and plenty of adult chaperones. We average more than 150 youth and easily clear \$1,000 at each event. Parents have expressed their appreciation and it has been an outreach ministry feeding our after-school program and Sunday worship.

- Adaptations: If a church is not able to open their building up to the entire community, parents on a rotation basis might provide a safe place for youth group kids to hang out on weekends.
- Contact: Laura F. Stover, DCE at First Presbyterian Church in Fort Dodge, Iowa. 515-576-2091; www.firstpresfd.org.

Café 907: Fellowship and gathering time before Sunday school. During Café 907, youth and parents are invited to spend time in the youth suite and catch up. The goal is to bring the parents and members of the congregation to the youth suite, making the youth area a hospitable place for the whole congregation. A specific family volunteers to provide breakfast for the youth that morning; announcements of upcoming events are shared, and a simple/brief devotional is done (one or two songs and a closing prayer). Following the closing prayer, the youth move to their respective Sunday school class.

- Adaptations: An opportunity for parents to gather with the youth might also be provided at the beginning of youth group or afterwards and include a shared meal. For example, the youth might meet from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with parents arriving at 6:30 p.m. to join the youth for dinner.
- Contact: Jorge Sayago-Gonzalez, director of youth ministries, Second Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Ky.

Downtime: Weekly summer program. In the midst of busy lives and tight schedules we often forget to take time to rest and be reminded of God's presence and gift of rest (Sabbath) in our lives. During Downtime, youth gather to discuss a theme of their interest, movies, and books from a spiritual perspective. The purpose is to provide a laid back atmosphere to introduce and develop spiritual practices that are in line with our Christian tradition, the realities and issues that our youth face on a daily bases.

- Adaptations: Downtime in which young people are encouraged to participate in a variety of contemplative spiritual practices could be added to the weekly youth group gathering. This can also be an intergenerational event encouraging adults and youth to find quiet time for prayer and spiritual practices together.
- Contact: Jorge Sayago-Gonzalez, director of youth ministries, Second Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Ky.

Youth Group Rotation System: Alternative Sunday night approach to youth group. The rotation system allows the youth group program to provide games, outings, fellowship dinners, workshops, and spiritual-driven activities on a monthly base. The idea is to assign one Sunday a month for each event and follow that model every month. For example; every first Sunday of the month the youth gather for games. The second Sunday of the month, youth have their regular spiritual-driven activity. The third Sunday the youth will have an alternative activity, and every fourth Sunday of the month the youth will meet at somebody's house for fellowship dinner. The idea is to follow a pattern that allows for more creativity.

- Adaptations: Easily adaptable to meet the needs of a local youth group. Service projects might be added one Sunday a month. This can also work even if a youth group meets only twice a month.
- Contact: Jorge Sayago-Gonzalez, director of youth ministries, Second Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Ky.

Club 45: A program for 4th and 5th graders. They meet on Wednesday nights for thirty minutes of Children's Choir and an hour of program. Their Sunday school class is also called Club 45, but much of what makes this group who it is happens on Wednesday nights. This group is specifically designed for preteens, children that are older than the "little kids" and younger than "youth." It is designed to help preteens transition between programs. It is NOT meant to be youth group or to expose the preteens to youth curriculum, rather it embraces their age and experiences as upper elementary students. In order to prepare preteens for youth programs, Club 45 meets at the same time as middle school youth group, so in 6th grade only a little bit changes. They have a club 45 t-shirt that is youth-like, but like many kids, they wear them every week. They get to vote on which real-life, faith-based topics they want to study each semester (peer pressure, faith and family, pressure to succeed in school, etc). They have their own room that only they meet in, filled with age-appropriate Bibles, their art, and their photos. They have game nights and three outings a year in order to get to know each other (two play outings and one mission work-day). Their teachers are not their parents so that their teachers can function as mentors.

Youth group in 6th grade can be really hard, but not for our Club 45 kids. They know the kids that are in 7th grade (from the previous year of Club 45), they are used to meeting on Wednesday nights, they know the expectations of challenging Bible study, they are willing to participate mission work, and they feel known by name and by personality by our church and by God. Club 45 is a group of friends, so they are more willing to go on youth group trips because they have good friends there. Transitions need to be smooth, easy, and a positive experiences and Club 45 is definitely that transition for our church.

- Adaptations: Within a small church, preteens might be encouraged to meet with a couple of adult mentors to engage in Bible study, service projects, and fellowship activities. The interaction with other young people their age is as important as the interaction with caring adults willing to walk beside them.
- Contact: Brittany Harrold, HarroldB@faithpcusa.org.

College Ministry

Montreat College Conference: Offers college students the chance to come to a place set apart once a year to continue their faith journey and enjoy fellowship with one another. Each year the conference is structured around a different theme and has dynamic leadership and speakers. The college conference serves young adults of all denominations, in campus-based or parish-based groups, or as individuals.

- Contact: www.montreat.org, or specifically at <http://www.montreat.org/current/2010-college-conference>. For questions, contact the registrar at 800-572-2257, ext. 335 or email susieb@montreat.org.
- Also see: similar college conferences- Mo Ranch, College Connection: <http://www.moranch.com/index.php?c=12&sn=123&conf=8> and Forest Home College Briefing. <http://www.foresthome.org>, (909) 389-2300.

Faith Presbyterian Church, Church Mouse: This program is intended to keep college students connected with their home church (Faith) when they go away for college, or as a way to offer students not local to Tallahassee (who come to FSU) an invitation/encouragement to become involved/feel welcomed at Faith. The church obtains the college students' contact information, as well as e-mail address, year and major, hobbies, favorite snack, favorite kind of cookie, caffeine consumption, what they look forward to in life, and a photo. An individual refrigerator magnet is then created for each student, which contains all of the above information. Members of the church volunteer to "adopt" a college student and be their "Church Mouse." They are given the refrigerator magnet for the student that they adopt. The Church Mouse is encouraged to invite their adopted student to attend church with them, send them care packages, have them over for dinner, etc, in order to help the student feel connected and welcomed. But more than anything, we want the college students to be prayed for. Church mice also take part in the college/young adult Christmas reunion.

- Adaptations: Create a secret pal program connecting a church member to a college student. Create a devotional blog for your college students and invite church members who have played a significant role in the life of your young people to write the devotional.
- Contact: Shannon Guse, director of Christian education (youth) at Faith Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, Fla. E-mail: guses@faithpcusa.org.

Mentoring

Central to Our Faith Youth Mentoring Program, First Presbyterian Church of Salt Lake City, Utah: This ministry works with young people who leave foster care at age 18 and helps them survive and thrive as they begin to live independent lives. Eight mentors began the project and worked with the Salt Lake Transitional Program for Foster Youth to recruit eight youth and match them with mentors. After working together for two years, three youth were attending college, one joined the Marines, one finished a GED and training at Job Corp, one was still in high school, and two were living on their own. Based on this success, The Utah Youth Mentor Project, a nonprofit organization, was formed to recruit and train other mentor groups to use the mentor model. After five years there are four-church based groups, one sponsored by a group from Juvenile Court and two groups sponsored by The Christmas Box organization. There are currently more than forty youth with mentors in the project, a number that is expected to double over the next year. The mentor groups become a community of support for youth, helping them access resources for safe housing, job placement, or postsecondary education. Mentors often assist youth who face barriers to success such as drug use, legal issues, debts, or family issues. The real success of the project, however, rests on nonjudgmental friendship and love given by volunteer mentors.

- Adaptation: Contact your local foster care agency and invite youth in foster care to join your youth group.
- Contact: Dorothy or Bert Dart at (801) 329-0846 or e-mail: bandddart@netscape.net.

Reaching Up Ministry, The University Presbyterian Church of Toronto Mission Group: Impoverishment, school dropouts, gun violence, and teenage pregnancies rob many of the children and youth of the Jane-Finch community of their potential to achieve, to be heard, and to excel. Reaching Up provides free academic and art programs for school-aged children in the Jane-Finch community in the name of the Lord. The program is threefold: Homework Club, Music School, and Youth Mentoring.

- Adaptation: Facilitate a homework club on Saturdays to help students get ready for their state testing.

- Contact: <http://www.reachingup.ca>.

Parent Confirmation Sundays: While the confirmation class meets with their mentors each month, parents gather with the confirmation teachers. During this time, they take a short course, learning from the teachers key points from their child's confirmation class. It is important to have it be a class and not just a time to pass on information from the previous month. This program is a great opportunity for parents to not only be more involved in their child's confirmation journey, but also to grow in their own faith.

- Adaptation: Provide a parallel class for parents in confirmation with different teachers, same topics. Invite parents once a month to join the confirmation class for their study and fellowship.
- Contact: Nancy Myer, Knoxville, Tenn., nancymyer@gmail.com.

Prayer Partner Program: A small group of women involved in the prayer chain ministry of the church also organize a prayer partner program. Each youth in grade 5 through 12 are partnered with an anonymous adult in the congregation and prayed for every day. Using a mailbox in the church library, notes of encouragement and prayer requests are exchanged between the youth and adult. Once the youth becomes a member of the church in ninth grade, the adult prayer partner has the option to share who they are with the youth so a deeper relationship is possible. The adult can choose to wait and share their identity with the youth when they graduate from high school. This has been a very powerful ministry for both the youth and adults.

- Adaptations: Congregational prayer partners might also be assigned when youth leave on mission trips or other church-related trips. Let the youth know on the way to their destination that someone is praying for them, for their faith development, and for enjoyment of the conference or work trip. Midway through the week, the youth can be asked to write a postcard to their prayer partner thanking them and telling them what they had learned.
- Contact: First Presbyterian Church, Fort Dodge, Iowa, lauras@firstpresfd.org.

Confirmation Covenant Partner Program: During the eighth grade year confirmation class is taught and many enrichment activities are offered. Each confirmand is paired with a current elder or adult church member with the goal to meet several times over a simple meal for faith discussion and encouragement. Get acquainted activities and questionnaires are completed. Great friendships have developed. The adult partner offers a personal prayer for the confirmand on Confirmation Sunday. Other enrichment activities offered during the Confirmation years is visiting other faith denominations. The class goes to the church to meet the pastor/priest and learn about that faith including a tour of the church. The group then attends a worship service. A trip to a nearby Jewish Synagogue is included.

- Adaptations: The Confirmation Covenant Partner might be encouraged to attend a youth group activity, assist with a service project, or provide food for youth group or Sunday school. The intent is to offer adults who might not normally interact with the young people an opportunity to get to know and work and learn beside the youth of the congregation.
- Contact: First Presbyterian Church, Fort Dodge, Iowa, lauras@firstpresfd.org.

*A number of people responded to the request for model programs with a Covenant Partner program example.

Stewardship/Fundraising

The Pentecost Offering: A denomination-wide special offering that enables a congregation to keep 40 percent of the offering to be used for whatever they want or need! Great resources, simple to do, and a good way to raise funds and awareness. The Pentecost Offering is working really well for many congregations

- Contact: <http://www.pcusa.org/pentecost/lgmateral.htm>.

Special Youth Offering, Goodwill Presbyterian Church, Mayesville, S.C.: As a supplement to the normal offering, one Sunday a month, two youth accompany the regular ushers with different tray's baskets and collect money from members specifically for the youth ministry of the church. This encourages people (and youth especially) to contribute to the ministry of youth.

- Adaptation: On Stewardship Sunday, encourage the youth to give their commitments as well as a monetary offering.
- Contact: Ellaree Hampton, Goodwill Presbyterian Church, Mayesville, S.C.

Cookie & Ornament Exchange Fundraiser: An insert is placed in the bulletin a few weeks before inviting people to bake at least three dozen cookies of a variety of their choosing. They are asked to deliver their cookies and the recipe as well as any gently used ornaments they'd like to "exchange" the morning of the Fundraiser. The youth then arrange the cookies on trays and make fun signs to accompany the cookies (for example, "Jane Do's super fabulous chocolate chip oatmeal cookies"). All

the cookie trays are then placed on tables and the ornaments hung on Christmas trees in the fellowship hall. After worship, members are invited downstairs to fill a tin that they bring or a plate (to be covered with plastic wrap afterwards) with a variety of cookies. They are also able to select ornaments they'd like to take home. Donations are accepted for both. The fundraiser works well because there is almost no expense incurred by the youth program so all donations can be put towards fundraising needs.

- Adaptations: This works in a small or large church because the number of cookies made is based upon the size of the congregation and those willing to bake. In recent years, we have added cookie baking as a youth group activity. Youth divide into teams and bake cookies at different members' homes. It gives the youth an opportunity to interact with members of the congregation who do not usually participate in youth group activities. These cookies are then frozen and brought to church the morning of the Cookie Exchange Fundraiser.
- Contact: Kelly Wiant-Thralls. 717-257-1270 ext. 12, wiant-thralls@marketsquarechurch.org.

Interfaith/Ecumenical

Interfaith Sailing Trip: This program occurs through a partnership of the South Coast Interfaith Council and the Los Angeles Maritime Institute. It is an educational adventure of connectionalism with youth of different faith backgrounds, including a combination of the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Bahai, Hindu, and Quaker faiths. Youth work alongside one another onboard a tall ship, setting sails, steering the vessel, searching ahead for any perils, and discuss their experience over a meal. There are opportunities for day trips, and also weeklong trips during summer months. Team building, problem solving, decision making, planning, self-reliance, and leadership are just some of the skills gained on this daylong sail on the Pacific Ocean.

- Adaptation: Cooperative activities such as long-term service projects would also provide an opportunity to gather young people of different faiths. Find a project that is meaningful to all gathered so that the shared experience will build bonds of friendship and understanding.
- Contact: scic@charterinternet.com or <http://lamitopsail.org/LAMI/index.html>.

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, My Faith/Your Faith: Brings together twenty high school age teens from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities in the New York City area for fifteen sessions over the course of a year. Participants teach each other about their traditions, observe religious services at houses of worship, observe home rituals at each other's homes, and engage in service together. The goals of the program are to encourage religious understanding through dialogue, learning and experiential programming; to build friendship and understanding among the involved communities across lines of religious difference; to experience each other's faiths as they are lived in community; and to participate in service learning as a shared experience, exploring ways to put faith into action.

- Adaptation: This type of program might also be developed across denominational lines building deeper understanding among the various Christian communities in your town.
- Contact: Jacob Bolton, director of family ministries at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, N.Y., e-mail: JBolton@fapc.org.

Auburn Seminary's Face to Face/Faith to Faith: A yearlong international, multifaitth youth leadership program sponsored by Auburn Seminary. During one phase of the program, teens from four different continents are brought together to work on interfaith issues at the NY Presbytery camp for two weeks.

- Adaptation: Use a local camp as a site for a weeklong gathering of young people from different faith traditions or denominations. Participate in regular camping activities as well as provide opportunities for each group represented to "teach" the other young people about their faith.
- Contact: Website: <http://www.auburnsem.org/multifaith/faithtofaith.asp?nsectionid=4&pageid=4>. Program Director-Manar Fawakhry. Phone: (212) 662-4315, e-mail: maf@auburnsem.org.

ATTACHMENT C

Youth Task Force

What Works and What Doesn't Work in Youth Ministry? General Patterns Gathered from Interviewee Responses

What Works (Is of value)?

- Inclusion of youth in all aspects of church.
- Good communication to youth, parents of youth, and to congregation about youth.

- A good, dedicated youth leader paid, educated, trained in most responses.
- Real conversations without an authoritarian atmosphere.
- Honest care for young people for acute youth experiences and feelings.
- Good adult to youth ratio.
- Youth share power and are nurtured into leadership positions.
- Involved in worship through reading Scripture, liturgical dance, and sharing with the congregation about special trips.
- Food ministry (gatherings that include a meal, snacks, or goodies).
- Youth plan activities themselves or assist in the planning and implementation.
- Retreats (programming away from church and home).
- Well-organized; structured, prepared programs or ministries.
- Nonjudgmental, non-hypocritical atmosphere (as modeled by adults).
- Bridge from youth to young adult ministry—keep college students/young adults connected with “real” programs, opportunities, and communication.
- Opportunities for fellowship offered on a regular basis where the church encourages simple conversation and gathering (this appears to be separate and in addition to planned programs).
- Not limited to walls of the church.

What Does Not Work (Or is limited in value)?

- Too many commitments for youth; parents/families have not prioritized church for the family rhythm and schedule.
- A changing landscape of how church should “occur” (e.g. It is not always the case that youth group should happen on Sundays or church school on Sunday mornings).
- Youth not involved in all church activities—only youth activities (hinders exposure to the full spectrum of ministry and discipleship).
- Parents not involved in the church or not kept abreast of what’s happening in the church.
- No training, support, nurture, care for volunteer youth leaders.
- No real structure of support, compensation, or accountability for professional youth workers (their call is seen as “second tier”).
- Adults not committed to transferring/sharing their faith and faith formation.
- Adults who don’t value their own faith or who feel intimidated by the possibility of sharing their faith, Christian experience, or spiritual process.
- Too much play, not enough spiritual substance.
- Too many different “visions” (opinions) about what the youth ministry should be.

Item 15-11

[The assembly approved Item 15-11. See pp. 6, 7.]

On Establishing the Christ Community Church in Cortland, New York, as a Union Church—From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) to approve the action taken by the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley to approve the union of Christ Presbyterian Church of

Cortland, New York, with the United Community Church of Cortland, New York, (a previous union in 1981 between the Congregational and Baptist Churches in Cortland, New York, and affiliated with the Susquehanna Association of the United Church of Christ [UCC] in New York State and the Iroquois Association of the American Baptist Churches USA [ABC]) to establish a new union church, “Christ Community Church of Cortland.” The Christ Community Church will be responsible and accountable to all three denominations (PC(USA), UCC, and ABC).

Rationale

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley, the Susquehanna Association of the United Church of Christ in New York State, and the Iroquois Association of the American Baptist Churches USA seek “to manifest more visibly the unity of the church of Jesus Christ” and strengthen the witness of our Lord and Savior in the Cortland, New York, area by this action (*Book of Order*, G-15.0101).

All of the needed legal and ecclesiastical steps have been taken to assure a full and joyful union according to the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) and the United Church of Christ and American Baptist Churches USA denominations.

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley approved the plan for union constitution between Christ Presbyterian Church and the United Community Church of Cortland at its December 5, 2009, meeting.

The regional offices of the Susquehanna Association of the United Church of Christ in New York State (represented by the Reverend Richard Cowles) and the Iroquois Association of the American Baptist Churches USA (represented by the Reverend Tom Hast), as well as the interim executive presbyter (the Reverend Cheryl Ann Elfond) and representatives from the presbytery’s committee on ministry had met with and advised the two congregations for a two-year period, 2008–2009, in praying about and planning for this union.

As a “union” with an already “union” church, the proportion of church members for statistical purposes will be counted as one-half Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), one-quarter United Church of Christ, and one-quarter American Baptist Churches USA.

Item 15-12

[The assembly approved Item 15-12. See pp. 6, 7.]

On Establishing the United Church of the Plains as an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Union Church—From the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks.

The Presbytery of Plains and Peaks respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) to consent to the action taken by the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks and the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to establish the United Church of the Plains in Dalton, Nebraska, as a union church. The United Church of the Plains will be responsible and accountable to both denominations (*Book of Order*, G-16.0301).

Rationale

The Presbytery of Plains and Peaks and the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seek to manifest the ties that bind us in our Reformed traditions and to bear witness to a more visible unity of the church of Jesus Christ and to thereby strengthen the witness to our Lord and Savior in the communities of Dalton and Gurley, Nebraska by this action (*Book of Order*, G-15.0204).

The Presbytery of Plains and Peaks approved this action at its stated meeting on May 15, 2010. The action of the assembly will become effective upon the action of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to approve this union church.

Item 15-13

[The assembly referred Item 15-13 to the General Assembly Mission Council (and its office of World Mission). See pp. 6, 7.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Assisting the Emmanuel Church of Tirana in Planting Churches and Forming a New Reformed Denomination in Albania.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), in collaboration with the Presbytery of Santa Barbara, to assist the Emmanuel Church of Tirana in planting churches and forming a new reformed de-

nomination in Albania. This authority includes the authorization of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara to ordain pastors, to train and install elders, and to take the lead in planting new churches and chartering churches. The Presbytery of Santa Barbara will hold the ordinations and memberships; the GAMC shall hold all charters pending the formal formation and transfer of those chartered churches to a new reformed denomination in Albania. The GAMC is directed to assist in developing a relationship with WCRC. This authority will be granted for up to twenty years or until the formal establishment of the Albanian denomination.

Rationale

The churches of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara have been working with the Emmanuel Church of Tirana, Albania, and the Albanian Christians for more than a decade.

The pastors and elders have been trained in reformed theology and have embraced the Constitution of the PC(USA) as a critically important means of being the Church of Jesus Christ.

The pastors, elders, and members of the Emmanuel Church of Tirana have requested help from the PC(USA) in consultation with the Reverend Art Beals and received ongoing guidance from our national church staff, and through that discernment process have asked the Presbytery of Santa Barbara to ordain their pastors and charter their churches.

As the two pastors, Zef and Altin have been examined and ordained by the Presbytery of Santa Barbara to be organizing pastors of a validated ministry to start a reformed denomination in Albania.

Larry Lindsay, Presbytery of Santa Barbara
Alan Stones, Presbytery of Santa Barbara

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 15-13

Comment on Item 15-13—From the General Assembly Mission Council.

World Mission welcomes this initiative of the Emmanuel Church of Tirana, Albania and Santa Barbara Presbytery as they seek to faithfully participate in God's mission in Albania.

Since the Lake Mohonk Consultation of 1956, the PC(USA) has understood our mission work to be shaped by a commitment to working in partnership, which means that we have not generally established new Presbyterian denominations in countries where there is not one, but have worked strengthening local initiatives, as they establish their own indigenous church. It would be important that the Albanian believers themselves be allowed to develop theologically and ecclesiological-ly to the point that they choose for themselves the form of government they believe is most effective in their context.

We affirm Santa Barbara Presbytery's sense of calling to walk alongside the Emmanuel Church of Tirana, and have shared with them the following questions:

Questions regarding the Proposed Commissioner's Resolution
PC(USA) World Mission, June 2010

A. *Missiological Questions*

1. Is the PC(USA) essentially expanding the bounds of the denomination by Santa Barbara Presbytery opening congregations in Albania? Since the Lake Mohonk Consultation of 1956, the PC(USA) has not established PC(USA) congregations overseas, but has worked in partnership with national Christian partners where these exist or ecumenically, where national Christian partners do not. What are the implications of reversing this policy in Albania and other countries?

2. What are the criteria that will be used to decide when these congregations are strong enough to become their own denomination? Who will decide?

3. How does the rest of the denomination relate to ministry opportunities in Albania in the presence of congregations of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara?

4. What other communions work in Albania? The WCC names two—The Albanian Orthodox Church (537,000 members in 600 congregations) and the Catholic Church (62,000 in 100 congregations). Have they had any input? If so, what was it?

B. *Polity, Property and Legal Questions*

1. Would the Emmanuel Church and the congregations it plants be a part of Santa Barbara Presbytery? Who owns the property and buildings? Are the members of these churches members of the PC(USA)?

2. Do these new churches have the same obligations as any other church in the Presbytery of Santa Barbara, including the payment of per capita?

3. If there is a problem with misconduct or other legal issues, either on the part of a pastor in one of these congregations or with an elder, who would address the issue? What oversight, if any, does the presbytery have on the activities of these congregations?

4. Is the Presbytery of Santa Barbara, or any other part of the PC(USA), subsidizing these new church developments? If so, what are the legal issues surrounding the (1) transfer of funds to Albania and (2) tax ramifications?

5. Are the Revs. Zef and Altin minister members of Santa Barbara Presbytery? If so, what are the legal, ecclesiastical, financial (taxes, pensions, salaries), and mission funding implications.

C. *Strategic and Financial Questions*

1. *GAMC Mission Priorities:* The overture opens up a new area of ministry for the presbytery of Santa Barbara, but then obligates the GAMC to prioritize the presbytery's ministry. What will be the impact on GAMC's mission priorities, particularly in World Mission?

2. There would be potentially significant, if undetermined, financial implications in this overture. Given the trend of decreasing mission funding revenue in the GAMC, what are the implications of the financial implications of this resolution?

In light of range of discussions that need to take place regarding numerous aspects of this resolution, we recommend that the resolution be referred to World Mission so that the Presbytery of Santa Barbara and World Mission can shape an appropriate, faithful, and effective response to this call.

Item 15-A

[The Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education, and PILP approved Item 15-A. See pp. 6, 8.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) recognize the following Women of Faith award recipients at the 219th General Assembly (2010):

The Reverend Margaret E. Howland

The Reverend Elizabeth Knott

Elona Street-Stewart

Joyce Uyeda

Rationale

Women of Faith Awards

The Women of Faith Awards were established in 1986 to honor women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) whose lives exemplify their Christian commitment through witness, service, and leadership.

Each year a theme is chosen. Nominations are received from throughout the church and honorees are selected by a committee of representatives from various groups.

Awards are presented at the Women of Faith Breakfast during the General Assembly. This breakfast is an annual celebration of God's activity in the lives of women and their response to God's presence.

The theme for this year's awards is "Women with a Peaceful Heart: Guiding Paths of Peace" and therefore honors women who have helped the church grow in its witness and commitment to peacemaking.

The 2010 selection committee included Ruth Lane, moderator; Jan Martin, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns; Jane Lyman, General Assembly Mission Council; Ruth-Aimée Belonni-Rosario, Racial Ethnic Young Women Together; and Janice Takeda, Presbyterian Women.

The selection committee members were instructed to consider the following criteria in reviewing the twenty-four nomination forms and in making their selection of the four women who receive this award:

- How have these women helped the church grow in its witness to peacemaking?
- How have these women implemented a commitment to peacemaking?

- Strive for racial ethnic diversity.
- Strive for geographic diversity.
- The women must be living.
- GAMC staff members are ineligible.
- This is a one-time award; a woman cannot be selected more than once.

The election of the four honorees was approved by the Vocation Mission Committee and the General Assembly Mission Council.

Biographical sketches of these four women are as follows:

1. *The Reverend Margaret E. Howland, Yonkers, New York*

The Reverend Margaret E. Howland is a member of the Presbytery of Hudson River, Synod of the Northeast. Howland was one of the first women ordained in the denomination as a minister of the Word and Sacrament and is the retired pastor of South Presbyterian Church in Yonkers.

Her career and life are characterized by her commitment to fighting sexism, racism, poverty, and violence. At the 218th General Assembly (2008), concurrently with the 50th anniversary celebration of her ordination, she was awarded a special Peaceseeker Award by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.

2. *The Reverend Elizabeth Knott, Indianola, Iowa*

The Reverend Elizabeth Knott is a member of the Presbytery of Des Moines, Synod of Lakes and Prairies. In her retirement, Knott, a former executive of the Synod of Alaska-Northwest, founded Pal CraftAid in 1993, a ministry that works directly with Palestinian craftspeople to sell their goods in United States.

More than \$500,000 in profit has been returned to Palestinians. Now in her mid 80s, Knott serves as director emeriti of the program that has been a pathway for establishing positive relationships between Christians and Muslims.

3. *Elona Street-Stewart, Eagan, Minnesota*

Elona Street-Stewart is a member of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Street-Stewart is actively engaged in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and community missions, development, and support programs.

For the past thirty years, she has been involved at the grassroots and national levels in social justice issues, including racism, affirmative action, women and family issues, and public policy.

Street-Stewart is an elder and synod associate for racial ethnic ministries and community empowerment in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. She is chair of the St. Paul School Board, where she has served as a member since 2001.

Street-Stewart is the first Native American to serve on an urban school board in Minnesota.

4. *Joyce Uyeda, Sacramento, California*

Joyce Uyeda is a member of the Presbytery of Sacramento, Synod of the Pacific. Uyeda is an elder at Parkview Presbyterian Church, where she has been a member for sixty years.

She has previously served as moderator of Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of Sacramento and on the Ethnic Concerns Committee of the Sierra Mission Partnership.

Uyeda's career and ministry have been dedicated to youth and creating opportunities for a more peaceful world for young people. A retired educator, she is a volunteer librarian of a library she helped organize and establish and a classroom aide at an under-resourced elementary school in her area. Uyeda has led the Ethnic Concerns Committee Youth Camp of the Sierra Mission Partnership for twenty-five years.

A native of Oregon and a Japanese American, Uyeda and her family lived in three internment camps in the Western United States during World War II.

"These remarkable women have dedicated their lives to guiding paths of peace," said Ruth Lane, chair of the awards selection committee. "Their faithful lives and accomplishments have made a difference, not only in their local church but in the global community. They are true peacemakers witnessing God's call."

Item 15-B

[The Assembly Committee on Church Growth, Christian Education, and PILP approved Item 15-B. See pp. 6, 8.]

A. *Sam and Helen Walton Awards for 2009*

The General Assembly Mission Council reports the recipients of the Sam and Helen Walton Awards for 2009 for outstanding new church developments:

1. Neema Community Fellowship, Synod of Mid-America, Presbytery of Heartland;
2. Top Stone Church, Synod of the Northeast, Eastern Korean Presbytery;
3. Inglesia Presbiteriana Monte Sinai, Synod of South Atlantic, Presbytery of Central Florida;
4. Peace Presbyterian NCD, Synod of South Atlantic, Presbytery of Peace River;
5. New Kirk Presbyterian Church, Synod of South Atlantic, Presbytery of Trinity;
6. Highland Presbyterian Church, Synod of Southern California & Hawaii, Presbytery of Santa Barbara;
7. Santa Maria Presbyterian Church, Synod of Southern California & Hawaii, Presbytery of Santa Barbara;
and
8. Biyaya Community Church, Synod of the Sun, Presbytery of New Covenant.

Rationale

In late December 1991, Sam and Helen Walton made a generous gift through the Presbyterian Foundation of \$6 million that included \$3 million to be used for new church developments that have placed an emphasis on site acquisitions. All nominees must meet the qualifications as set forth in the application. The General Assembly Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly between meetings, approved the above recipients during its September 2009 meeting.

B. *Sam and Helen Walton Awards for 2010*

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) recognize the recipients of the Sam and Helen Walton Awards for 2010:

1. Ramseyer Presbyterian Church, Columbus, Ohio, Synod of the Covenant, Presbytery of Scioto Valley;
2. Palmetto Presbyterian Church, Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, Synod of South Atlantic, Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic;
3. Thien An Presbyterian Church of Houston, Houston, Texas, Synod of the Sun, Presbytery of New Covenant;
4. Christian Arabic Church, Richmond, Virginia, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, Presbytery of the James.

Rationale

In late December 1991, Sam and Helen Walton made a generous gift through the Presbyterian Foundation of \$6 million dollars that included \$3 million to be used for new church developments that have placed an emphasis on site acquisitions. All nominees meet the qualifications as set forth in the application.

The above awards were approved by the General Assembly Mission Council Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the General Assembly Mission Council, during their conference call of April 20, 2010.

Item 15-Info

Report of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., for the Years 2008 and 2009, to the 219th General Assembly (2010)

In gratitude for God's bounty, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Investment and Loan Program, Inc ("PILP") promotes the growth of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by bringing together the dreams of church developers and the resources of Presbyterian investors and financial partners. The PILP offers investments providing a competitive financial return plus the

opportunity to participate in the expansion of the church through Presbyterian congregations, governing bodies, and mission agencies. The PILP offers loans to Presbyterian congregations and middle governing bodies to purchase, renovate, and expand worship and mission space and to promote the growth of the church. Guided by the best practices of the financial industry, PILP is committed to faithful stewardship of the resources entrusted to us for the support of the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The PILP began 2008 with a disbursed loan portfolio of \$56.3 million and an additional \$8.4 million in commitments pending close and construction loans not yet disbursed. At the end of 2009, PILP had a disbursed loan portfolio of \$74.0 million and an additional \$10.1 million in commitments pending close and construction loans not yet disbursed. That represents growth of 30.0 percent over the two-year period. In 2008 PILP disbursed \$9.1 million in new loans from investor funds; in 2009 PILP disbursed \$15.7 million. We began 2008 with \$61.8 million in investments from individual Presbyterians, Presbyterian congregations, middle governing bodies, and General Assembly agencies. We ended 2009 with \$79.6 million in investments. That is a 28.8 percent increase in two years.

In 2009 PILP experienced our ninth consecutive year with an annual surplus. It is essential that PILP generate surpluses to assure investors of the strength of our program, to meet regulatory requirement to be profitable four out of the most recent past five years, and to provide capital for future expansion of the program. The combined surpluses from 2008 and 2009 have helped us toward our goal of rebuilding our capital base back to the \$5 million we were given as start-up capital. At the end of 2009, PILP had \$4.7 million in unrestricted net assets.

The Uniform Securities Act determines who regulates PILP's investment products. The North American Securities Administrators Association establishes program guidelines for denominational investment and loan programs. At the end of 2009 PILP met or exceeded all of the guidelines. The PILP is expected to maintain a capital adequacy ratio of net worth to total assets of 5 percent. At the end of 2009 our capital adequacy ratio was 5.5 percent. The PILP is expected to maintain a liquidity ratio of liquid assets to Term Notes and Denominational Account Receipts ("DARs") of at least 8 percent. At the end of 2009 our liquidity ratio was 15.9 percent. The PILP is required to limit senior secured debt to no more than 10 percent of total assets. At the end of 2009 PILP had no senior secured debt.

Some commercial lenders may offer low rates or waive certain fees, but PILP is the only lender we know, who gives money back to borrowing congregations. Through the "Get the Point" program, borrowing congregations earn rebates based on supporting investments. For 2009 PILP returned \$243,000 to borrowing congregations, bringing the total returned to congregations since the inception of the rebate program to \$1.6 million.

The PILP provides consulting services to congregations and presbyteries to help them develop the appropriate size and timing for construction plans. We explore fundraising, financing opportunities, and requirements for capital projects. Each congregation benefits from the PILP staff's experience in working with hundreds of congregations.

Demand for new loans has remained high throughout 2008 and 2009. The PILP has been able to respond to this demand through increasing investments from individuals, congregations, and middle governing bodies. The PILP has maintained careful underwriting standards, believing that relaxed standards do not benefit the lender or the borrower. We maintain a review process for all lending relationships and work intentionally with middle governing bodies, who guarantee our loans. This process has resulted in a loan portfolio that is the envy of most lending institutions. At the end of 2009, PILP had no thirty-day or longer delinquencies.

The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program administers the Church Loan Program, ("CLP") for the General Assembly Mission Council. The CLP is the result of many gifts, campaigns, and bequests to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) since 1843. By December 31, 2009, the total endowment for church loans had grown to more than \$200 million. The PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program has worked with the General Assembly Mission Council and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to develop a capital grant program to supplement the existing loan program. We are engaged in conversations with the Foundation and General Assembly Mission Council staff that could secure funding for Mission Program Grants from the Church Loan Program for the foreseeable future.

The CLP began 2008 with a disbursed loan portfolio of \$98.5 million and an additional \$12.4 million in commitments pending close and construction loans not yet disbursed. At the end of 2009 CLP had a disbursed loan portfolio of \$105.7 million and an additional \$8.2 million in commitments pending closing and construction loans not yet disbursed. This represents growth of 2.7 percent over the two-year period. In 2008 PILP disbursed \$16.3 million in new loans from endowment funds and in 2009 PILP disbursed \$16.5 million. The maximum loan from CLP is currently \$450,000. The maximum project in which CLP participates is \$2.5 million. Larger loans are funded by investor funds or participations with synod loan programs or banking partners. Many loan applications received by PILP qualify for funds from both PILP and CLP. These loans are offered to churches as one loan with a blended rate.

Together PILP and CLP represent the Coordinated Loan Program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) The Coordinated Loan Program is dedicated to providing low-cost loans to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations and mission agencies. At the beginning of 2008 the base interest rate for loans from investor funds for existing congregations was 6.9 percent and

5.9 percent from endowment funds. By the end of 2009 the base interest rate for loans from investor funds rate for existing congregations was 6.0 percent and 5.0 percent from endowment funds. In spite of efforts on the part of the Federal Reserve to bolster commercial lending, funds available from commercial lending institutions dried up and where funds have been available, the interest charged generally has been at least double the prime lending-rate. The PILP has remained competitive in an interest rate environment that has experienced large decreases in the cost of funds to banking institutions.

The following are just few examples of how endowment and investor funds are helping the church grow:

- Morningside Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia, has restored its building, improved accessibility, and added new welcoming space.
- Moorpark Presbyterian Church in Moorpark, California, has completed the third phase of their church campus. They began with a multipurpose facility in 1992, an educational building in 2000, and in 2007 they built the church's long-awaited sanctuary.
- Southlake Boulevard Presbyterian Church, Southlake, Texas, built their first multipurpose building in 2001. It doubled as a sanctuary and community gymnasium. The church is nearing completion of a new Mission Building that will increase their classroom space and provide new space for fellowship and informal gatherings.
- Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Orlando, Florida, brings together the mission strengths of two congregations to make a greater impact in their community. One result of this merger has been the necessary adjustment of our plans to accommodate Small Blessings Child Care Center, an excellent preschool ministry of the smaller Conway Presbyterian Church for more than twenty years.

The PILP is completing a multiyear process of transferring the ministry of the Synod of Lincoln Trails Capital Improvement Program into the Coordinated Loan Program of the General Assembly. The PILP collaborates with the three synods that maintain investment and loan programs.

The Board of Directors of PILP is elected by the General Assembly Mission Council and is confirmed by the General Assembly. The 2009 board of directors included: Nancy Muth, chair; James B. Rea Jr., vice chair; Frank Fisher Jr.; LaVert Jones; Douglas Kenney; Carolyn Knight; Alice Okazaki; Jim Dave Wilson; William Nelson; John H. Shannahan; Alicia Williams; Catesby Woodford; Agnes Young; Stephen Bacon.

The officers of the corporation in 2009 were: James L. Hudson, president and CEO; James G. Rissler Sr. vice president finance and administration and treasurer; Ben W. Blake, vice president, sales and marketing; Martha E. Clark, secretary.

Item 16-01

[The assembly answered Item 16-01 by the action taken on Item 16-12. See pp. 8, 10.]

On Commending Confessions That Uphold the Oneness of All Believers, and Discontinuing Efforts to Include the Belhar Confession in The Book of Confessions—From the Presbytery of Sacramento.

The Presbytery of Sacramento overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. Commend all current and past efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to establish church-governance standards that embrace equality among believers without regard to race or ethnic background, as expressed in the *Book of Order*.

2. Commend to the church those confessions of the PC(USA) that uphold the oneness of all believers, including A Brief Statement of Faith and The Confession of 1967, and counsel all members of the PC(USA) to fully and purposefully live out their words, which must be fulfilled in reality in every arena of church life, particularly those sections that read:

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father. In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. (*The Book of Confessions*, A Brief Statement of Faith, 10.3, Lines 27–32)

God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family. In his reconciling love, he overcomes the barriers between brothers and breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary. The church is called to bring all men to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. Therefore, the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it. Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize their fellowmen, however subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess. (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.44)

3. Discontinue efforts to include the Belhar Confession in *The Book of Confessions*, adding the following comment: Since the Belhar Confession has at times been linked by some theologians with the Theological Declaration of Barmen, it should be noted that the focus of the Theological Declaration of Barmen rests squarely on the Lordship of Christ, as he is identified in the Old and New Testaments. Examination of the message of the Belhar Confession needs to be done in light of this profession from the Barmen Declaration:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6), "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ... I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved." (John 10:1, 9.) Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and death. We reject the false doctrine, as though the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation. (*The Book of Confessions*, The Theological Declaration of Barmen, 8.10–8.12)

Rationale

The Belhar Confession is a complex and somewhat confusing document, which some parties—theologians as well as the ordained and laity—have attempted to use to press issues other than racial equality. This overly broad application of the Belhar Confession to champion liberation theology in general or same-sex causes in particular produces a conflicted response to its antiracism message. The confessions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) already contain clear and explicit directives against racism. They are far more applicable to the present context and less likely to introduce a confusion of issues. The Belhar Confession, written in an entirely different setting for a political purpose, would add controversy and confusion to our most foundational treasure of confessional documents. The confession of the church is always the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. University of Dubuque Theological Seminary dean and noted Karl Barth scholar, Arthur C. Cochrane, wrote:

A Confession is therefore not the publication of the opinions, convictions, ideals, and value judgments of men. It does not set forth a program or system of theology or ethics. It is not a set of principles or constitution for a fraternal order, social service club, or a religious society. It is not a political or ethical, religious platform. It does not bear witness to certain events, powers, figures, and truths in nature and history that may be championed by certain groups in society. It confesses Jesus Christ as the one Lord, the one justification and sanctification of men, the one revelation, and the one Word of God which we have to hear, trust and obey in life and in death. Thus, the Belhar Confession, for all its strengths for its time and setting, does not qualify as a confession of the church for all times in all places, since it centers on local circumstances rather than on Jesus Christ.

Concurrence to Item 16-01 from the Presbytery of San Joaquin.

Concurrence to Item 16-01 from the Presbytery of Central Washington (with Additional Rationale)

Simply put, while the Belhar Confession was an important statement about racial reconciliation in the context of the South African apartheid system and offers sound advice for issues of unity today, it does not meet the standards of a confession as defined in Chapter II in the Form of Government, "The Church and Its Confession" (*Book of Order*, G-2.0100–.0500).

Background

“... Boesak was also instrumental in drafting the 1986 Belhar Confession, which I welcomed at the time as an important confessional statement about race relationships. He now appeals to that document in support of his advocacy for gay-lesbian ordination. In a recent insightful blog posting, ‘The Belhar Confession & God’s Final Revelation,’ Violet Larson argues that this is a good reason to question the theological adequacy of the Belhar Confession, precisely because of the use to which it is being put these days by proponents of full inclusion on same-sex topics. I agree with her. While that document spoke forthrightly against the injustices of apartheid, *it did not explicitly appeal to biblical authority*. That it can now be seen by some of its drafters as capable of being extended to the full inclusion of active gays and lesbians in ministry says something about the weaknesses of Belhar—not as an important prophetic declaration in its original context, but as a statement that can stand on its own as a normative confession...” (Dr. Richard Mouw, President, Fuller Seminary, The President’s Blog, <<http://www.netbloghost.com/mouw/?p=108>>.)

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 16-01

Advice on Item 16-01—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution offers the following advice to the 219th General Assembly (2010) regarding Item 16-01.

Rationale

The first and second points of this overture call for the General Assembly to commend certain practices and Confessional positions that are consistent with existing constitutional wording and practice and thus do not invoke constitutional questions or issues. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) therefore simply notes that action or failure to act upon the first two points would not change the Constitution in any manner.

The third point regarding the recommendation to discontinue efforts to include the Belhar Confession in *The Book of Confessions*—with comment—raises questions regarding the integrity of the existing process for amending *The Book of Confessions*—as well as what would be the status of the “comment” to be added.

With regards to the existing process:

Sections G-18.0201a and b make clear the process of amending *The Book of Confessions*. Because of the position *The Book of Confessions* holds in the hierarchy of authority in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the process for adding a confession or amending one or more confessions, is more exhaustive than amending the *Book of Order* and requires a supermajority of presbyteries voting affirmatively for there to be a change. One of those “additional constraints” is the formation of a “special committee” to consider the proposal and consult with the committee or governing body, and to report its recommendation.

If the action proposed by this overture (“...to discontinue efforts...”) were to precede the report of the Special Committee assigned to consider the Belhar Confession, it would be in conflict with G-18.0201b and thus would be questionable on parliamentary as well as Constitutional grounds.

If, after receiving the report and recommendation of the Special Committee on the Belhar Confession, the 219th General Assembly (2010) agrees with the intent of this overture, the appropriate action at that time would be to disapprove the recommendation of the special committee.

With regards to the “following comment”:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises against approval of this portion of section three because it is unclear exactly what the General Assembly is being asked to do by voting on this comment—and because it is impossible to ascertain what the consequences would be in doing so.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 16-01 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 16-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 16-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 16-01 be disapproved.

Rationale

The Belhar Confession adds a voice from the Reformed church in the global south to our Confessions. In the context of theologically justified division of Christians by racial category, Belhar identified the grace of Christ as the gift to the church that would enable it to manifest reconciliation with God and one another. But Belhar stresses that if the church is to be the church it is called to be, it must make visible that reconciliation. It asks us to look at our church and see what others see. Do others see a people reconciled in Christ, bearing one another's burdens, needing and fulfilling one another's hopes? Belhar asks how we can be the church of Jesus Christ and not exhibit this gift of unity across racial divides. Where divisions separate us, causing suffering, poverty, violence, and injustice, Belhar reminds us that God is a God of justice, the one who hears the cries of the oppressed.

In our divided cities, in our divided world, Belhar speaks a new word of hope learned in the crucible of apartheid and still relevant and fresh for us today.

We draw the assembly's attention to the January 2010 Colloquium of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches on the Accra Statement and the Belhar Confession, co-sponsored by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), and attended by participants from most of the Reformed churches of North America and the Caribbean. That Colloquium demonstrated the current role of the Belhar Confession within a number of Reformed churches as they deal with challenges of globalization.

This Colloquium, or structured conversation, was designed to explore complementary elements in the Accra document and the Belhar Confession of the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa, and to relate both of these to the North American and Caribbean context, where matters of race and economic justice are closely intertwined.... This message from the participants is meant to be part of the larger conversation about the Accra Confession endorsed by the 24th General Council [of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches]. It recognizes that our Reformed tradition itself is a continuing conversation that reflects the democratic ethos and ethical commitments linked so firmly to John Calvin's example in last year's 500th anniversary celebration of his birth. Because of the linkage of race and economic justice, it was appropriate to hold the colloquium on the Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. The words of the Belhar Confession came alive as we prayed at the news of the grievous earthquake in Haiti: "the church must stand by people in any form of suffering and need." This tragedy underlined part of the Caribbean context illuminated by Belhar, one of historic enslavement, colonialism, neo-colonialism, white racism, environmental degradation, and the extreme poverty that is in substantial measure traceable to the former identified realities. (See the complete text of this four-page message online at: <http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/pdf/accrabelharcolloq.pdf>.)

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 16-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 16-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

Item 16-01 on commending confessions that uphold the oneness of all believers and discontinue efforts to include the Belhar Confession in *The Book of Confessions*.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 16-01 be disapproved.

Rationale

In recommending both (a) confessions upholding the oneness of all believers, and (b) that the Belhar Confession not be included in *The Book of Confessions*, Item 16-01 ignores the confession's emphasis on the unity of the whole church. The Belhar Confession arose in a context of racial hatred and oppression, when the church was separated by sinful practice and belief. The confession states that belief in Jesus is the only condition for membership, arguing for a radical unity in Christ.

Item 16-01 is concerned about the use of the confession for other purposes. Part of the human condition of sinfulness is the use of published texts, including but not limited to the Bible, throughout Christian history, to support a variety of practices, including slavery, oppression of women, and corporal punishment of children. The social history of South Africa and the U.S. are similar in that the economic systems of both countries were built on racially divisive policies that were subsequently rejected after years of struggle and resistance. While the U.S. "revolution" occurred earlier than South Africa's, we still do not treat our neighbor as we want to be treated, and deep-seated anger and unforgiveness runs strong in our society. The U.S. is still in need of healing, a need that grows even greater today because American society is more than just descendants of European and African peoples. We are more diverse in culture, race, and ideas, and as a result, there is a need to gather together all groups with love, based upon the common principles of reconciliation, justice, and unity. The assembly is called to judge the Confession of Belhar on the theological argument and thought contained as it seeks the will of God for the PC(USA) at this moment.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 16-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 16-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) disapprove this overture. The ACWC advises including the Belhar Confession in *The Book of Confessions*. The ACWC further counsels the 219th General Assembly (2010) to replace the exclusive language for God with expansive language throughout the confession.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) advocates for standing in solidarity with people who are marginalized due to race, gender, or sexual orientation. The ACWC strongly advises that the exclusive language for God that is part of the current translation of the Belhar Confession either be noted as exclusive language or changed to represent the expansive language for God that is a part of the biblical tradition. The ACWC recognizes the South African church context in which Belhar was written is different from the context of discussions in the United States; however, the oppression of women persists in South Africa and all around the world.

While exclusive language for God may not be a primary cause of women's oppression, exclusive language is certainly a reflection of patriarchal society and encourages us to see women as subordinate to men and to view men as more closely resembling God's image. If we are to truly confess solidarity with all people who are oppressed and to witness against apartheid of all forms, then we must also address the language that divides women and men and encourages us to see separate and often very unequal roles as divinely ordained. Other churches who have adopted this statement have used the translation that the PC(USA) is considering. The original language was altered to represent inclusive language for human beings. However, our church, the PC(USA), unlike many other churches, has already adopted a confessional statement that refers to God as both father and mother (see The Brief Statement of Faith, adopted in 1983). This progress concerning the affirmation of women and inclusive language for God should be reflected in Belhar as well. The ACWC urges the 219th General Assembly (2010) to affirm Belhar and to consider the need to replace the language for God in the confession itself.

Item 16-02

[The assembly approved Item 16-02. See p. 8.]

On Amending W-4.4000 by Adding Prayer—From the Presbytery of Western New York.

The Presbytery of Western New York overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall W-4.4003(h) be amended as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“h. Will you *pray for and* seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?”

2. Shall W-4.4004(a)(2) be amended as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“(2) Do we agree *to pray for them*, to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church?”

3. Shall W-4.4006(b)(2) be amended as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“(2) Do we agree *to pray for him (her)*, to encourage him (her), to respect his (her) decisions, and to follow as he (she) guides us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church?”

Rationale

God invites us to seek His favor and help for ourselves and others through prayer.

The Bible is replete with examples of godly people praying for themselves and others.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray.

Jesus prayed for His disciples, including those who would believe through their witness.

The early Church was devoted to prayer, and prayed for each other.

The members and officers of the Church of Jesus Christ are repeatedly urged by the Holy Spirit in Scripture to pray for one another (Ex. 8:9; 1 Sam. 12:23; 2 Kings 19:4; Ezra 6:9f; Ps. 72; Mt. 5:44; Jn. 17; Acts 4:23–31; Rom. 15:31f; Eph. 1:15–21, 3:14–19, 6:18–20; Col. 1:3, 4:3; 1Thess. 5:25; Heb. 13:18; Jas. 5:16).

Yet nowhere in our services of ordination and/or installation do either members or officers commit to do so.

By including these few words in our services of ordination and/or installation, the members and officers of the church remind themselves of the importance of the ministry of prayer and commit themselves faithfully to discharge this precious stewardship.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 16-02

Advice on Item 16-02—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to answer Item 16-02 with the following advice.

Rationale

The language of this proposal is clear and consistent with its intent, although it is unclear why this provision and not others would be amended with the admonition of prayer.

The language is consistent with the teaching of the Bible and with other provisions of the Constitution. Thus, the importance of the ministry of prayer might be emphasized as the questions are asked at services of ordination and installation.

As all members of the church are to be involved in prayer as part of corporate and personal worship as well as in fulfilling their membership as ministry (G-5.0102c), it is not necessary to amend the constitutional questions for new officers and for congregations so as to include the promise that they will pray for one another.

Given the importance of the constitutional questions for ordination and installation, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the General Assembly only amend them when there is a clear, broadly supported, and necessary rationale.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 16-02 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 16-03

[The assembly disapproved Item 16-03. See pp. 8, 9.]

On Amending W-2.3008b Regarding Baptism of Children—From the Presbytery of Missouri Union.

The Presbytery of Missouri Union overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall W-2.3008b be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“The Baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God’s love claims people before they are able to respond in faith *and God pronounces that he adopts our infants as his children, before they are born.*¹

¹. (John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV:15:20)”

Rationale

Scripture tells us that the promise of God’s grace was given before we were born. “For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him” (Acts 2:39 NRSV). “All who are far away” includes those far away in time (the future) as well as in place. John Calvin understood unborn children to be part of the covenant community and an example of God’s grace. The unborn child illustrates that we do nothing to become a chosen child of God; God does everything: “Just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1:4,5a NRSV). The particularly reformed idea of grace is more fully expressed by the addition of the proposed line from the *Institutes*. The line strengthens the understanding of grace.

Our confessions teach that when infants are baptized, “... the congregation, as well as the parents, has a special obligation to nurture them in the Christian life, leading them to make, by a public profession, a personal response to the love of God shown forth in their baptism” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.51). And, “Q. 74. Are infants also to be baptized? A. Yes, because they, as well as their parents, are included in the covenant and belong to the people of God. ...” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Heidelberg Catechism, 4.074). The line to be added is an aid to parents as they anticipate the arrival of their children, knowing that they already, before their births and before their baptisms, are part of the covenant community.

This sentence to be added is consistent with Scripture’s recognition of God’s relationship with us before we are born:

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of

the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed. (Ps. 139:13–16 (NRSV))

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations. (Jer. 1:5 (NRSV))

But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being. (Gal. 1:15–16 (NRSV))

This sentence by Calvin “God pronounces that he adopts our infants as his children, before they are born” to be added also reinforces the reformed teaching that “elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth ...” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.066). The sentence offers comfort and reassurance to parents whose children die before or shortly after birth.

Concurrence to Item 16-03 from the Presbytery of Western Colorado (with Additional Rationale)

Scripture tells us that the promise of God’s grace was given before we were born. “For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him” (*Acts 2:39*). “All who are far away” includes those far away in time (the future) as well as in place. John Calvin understood unborn children to be part of the covenant community and an example of God’s grace. The unborn child illustrates that we do nothing to become a chosen child of God; God does everything. “[J]ust as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4–5). The particularly Reformed idea of grace is more fully expressed by the addition of the proposed line from the *Institutes*. The line strengthens the understanding of grace.

Our confessions teach that when infants are baptized, “... the congregation, as well as the parents, has a special obligation to nurture them in the Christian life, leading them to make, by a public profession, a personal response to the love of God shown forth in their baptism.” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.51). And, “Q. 74. Are infants also to be baptized? A. Yes, because they, as well as their parents, are included in the covenant and belong to the people of God ...” (*Ibid.*, The Heidelberg Catechism, 4.074). The line to be added is an aid to parents as they anticipate the arrival of their children, knowing that they already, before their births and before their baptisms, are part of the covenant community.

The sentence to be added is also consistent with Scripture’s recognition of God’s relationship with us before we are born:

For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed. (Ps. 139:13–16)

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations. (Jer. 1:4–5)

But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being. (Gal. 1:15–16)

This sentence by Calvin to be added also reinforces the Reformed teaching that “[e]lect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth ...” (*The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.066). The sentence offers comfort and reassurance to parents whose children are still born or who die shortly after birth.

It has been the presumption throughout the church’s history that the unborn are human beings created by God in God’s image, and are, therefore, to be protected. Early Christians were known for resisting abortion and caring for babies left to die by those in the societies in which they resided. This sentence encourages members of the church to seek the protection and care of all children, both born and unborn. Current General Assembly policy says, “The strong Christian presumption is that since all life is precious to God, we are to preserve and protect it...” (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 268).

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 16-03

Advice on Item 16-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 16-03.

Rationale

In the Directory for Worship section on Baptism, W-2.3008b states the appropriateness of the baptism of children as witness “to the truth that God’s love claims people before they are able to respond in faith.” Immediately following, W-2.3008c states that “[t]he Baptism of those who enter the covenant upon their own profession of faith witnesses to the truth that God’s gift of grace calls for fulfillment in a response of faithfulness.” These two provisions concern the meaning of Baptism as a sign and seal of God’s faithfulness toward those who are and those who are not able to respond in faith. Their paragraph headings refer to children (W-2.3008b) and to adults (W-2.3008c) but the Directory for Worship text does not otherwise specify what constitutes the “ability” to respond in faith, nor does it deal with how to draw the line between “ability” and “inability” in specific cases. Except for a very general distinction on the basis of age, the Directory for Worship is silent on the question of when a person is capable of responding in faith and may be baptized upon profession of faith.

Item 16-03 would add “God pronounces that he adopts our infants as his children, before they are born” (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV:15:20), so that W-2.3008b would read “The Baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God’s love claims people before they are able to respond in faith *and God pronounces that he adopts our infants as his children, before they are born.*” The stated intent is to reinforce the Reformed teaching on Baptism. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the language cited from Calvin is from a section titled “Against ‘emergency’ baptism” and reads:

Yet (you say) there is danger lest he who is ill, if he die without baptism be deprived of the grace of regeneration. Not at all. God declares that he adopts our babies as his own before they are born when he promises that he will be our God and the God of our descendants after us [Gen. 17:7]. Their salvation is embraced in this word. No one will dare be so insolent toward God as to deny that his promise of itself suffices for its effect. (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, Library of Christian Classics, IV:15:20)

Following Ephesians 1:4 (God chose us in him before the foundation of the world) and Calvin, The Westminster Confession of Faith states that “all dying in infancy are included in the election of grace and are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how he pleases” (*The Book of Confessions*, 6.193). Item 16-03 proposes what is in fact a confessional stance. *The Book of Confessions* contains a richness of statements on Baptism that is already part of our Constitution.

In cases of children the Constitution takes pains to emphasize that it is a responsibility of the session, with the minister and the parents or others rightly exercising parental responsibility, to determine if a child is to be baptized (e.g., G-5.0101c; G-6.0202b; G-10.0102b; W-2.3011; W-2.3012; W-2.3014). Item 16-03 would introduce the possibility that in response to requests, administration of the sacrament of Baptism could be permitted prior to birth, and that the sacrament could rightly be administered without a visible presence of one to be identified by the church, named and baptized with water into the community of faith in the name of the Triune God.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that a second issue concerning Item 16-03 is that it would put into the Constitution at W-2.3008b as a provision for church administration of Baptism a definition of personhood that continues to be an unsettled subject of vigorous and profound theological debate in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that heavily controversial issues in the church are not resolved by amendment of the Constitution.

A third issue for the assembly’s consideration is whether Item 16-03 proposes an exclusive understanding of how Presbyterians are to interpret the Bible. Item 16-03 would bring into the Directory for Worship one Presbyterian interpretation of Scripture, reading Psalm 139:13–16, Jeremiah 1:5, or Galatians 1:15–16 as inspired and literal descriptions of God’s all-knowing presence in the world; by another Presbyterian interpretation, these passages are read as the poetic rendering of inspired biblical writers expressing faith in God’s unbounded presence. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not advise on this question of how to interpret Scripture but notes that the Constitution recognizes the validity of differing views, affirming that “[s]o far as may be possible without serious departure from [constitutional] standards, without infringing on the rights and view of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained” (*Book of Order*, G-6.0108a). This committee further notes that previous assemblies have provided resources such as *Presbyterian Understanding of the Holy Scripture, Biblical Authority, and Interpretation* for the church’s ongoing study of how Presbyterians understand the authority of Scripture from differing faithful perspectives.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 16-03 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 16-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 16-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly that Item 16-03 be disapproved.

Rationale

Section W-2.3008b states the Reformed tradition's justification for the practice of infant baptism: "The Baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith" (*Book of Order*, W-2.3008b). The proposed amendment would place the unborn in the same position as the born infant. This raises issues with regard to problem pregnancies and abortion about which there is a good deal of diversity within the church.

In response to a number of overtures coming to General Assemblies in the 1980s concerning problem pregnancies and abortion, the 200th General Assembly (1988) directed the Moderator to select a task force "designed to give forum to each different theological position in debate of the issues related to problem pregnancies and abortion, and that the members of the commission represent the broadest spectrum of theological positions within the church ..." (*Minutes*, 1988, Part I, p. 1016). The result of that study, *Do Justice, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly (Micah 6:8)*, was adopted by the 204th General Assembly (1992) and is the current policy of the PC(USA) concerning problem pregnancies and abortion—most recently reaffirmed in 2006.

Do Justice, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly (Micah 6:8) faithfully and skillfully describes the areas in which this diverse group found agreement and those they did not: specifically, the interpretation of Scripture and the question of when human life begins.

Clearly there is both agreement and disagreement in our use and interpretation of Scripture. There is also agreement and disagreement on the basic issue of abortion. The committee agreed that there are no biblical texts that speak expressly to the topic of abortion, but that taken in their totality the Holy Scriptures are filled with messages that advocate respect for the woman and child before and after birth. Therefore, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encourages an atmosphere of open debate and mutual respect for a variety of opinions concerning the issues related to problem pregnancies and abortion (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 367)

The passages of Scripture quoted in the Rationales supporting Item 16-03 are precisely those passages of Scripture in which the task force could reach no common agreement. The Minority Report (not adopted by the General Assembly) interpreted such passages as meaning that each conception is planned and intended by God. Thus, at every stage, "... God alone has the right over the life that he has created and the right over death" (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 379, 27.172). With this interpretation, any abortion is an immoral taking of human life. The majority report, now PC(USA) policy, interprets such passages as theological assertions of God's dominion over all creation. We can surely say that we move, breathe, and have our being in God. However, that dominion does not remove the realities of finite life, the workings of biological existence, naturally occurring harms, and the unintended consequences of well-intended acts. In this reality, God gives us the gift of human responsibility for making choices that have significant consequences in a complex and finite world. "... Were every conception willed by God, it would be difficult to understand why methods of birth control are legitimately matters of human decision making. Would that not be preventing conceptions God has intended?" (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 366, 27.081). The majority report rejected the interpretation that every pregnancy was God's will. The distinction made is similar to that made by The Westminster Confession of Faith between God as primary creator of all things and those secondary causes that, by God's providence, are the result of physical laws, free will, or the complex weaving of finite forces on creation (*The Book of Confessions*, 6.024, 6.025).

Why is the issue of problem pregnancies and abortion relevant to this overture? The amendment proposed by the Presbytery of Missouri Union could seem to require a uniformity of belief regarding Scripture and the personhood of the unborn, from the moment of conception, that would negate the emphasis of the church's current policy that the "... church ought to be able to maintain within its fellowship those who, on the basis of a study of Scripture and prayerful decision, come to diverse conclusions and actions" (*Ibid.*, 27.089). In fact, this may be the purpose of the overture. This conclusion seems justified based on the reference to abortion in the concurrence submitted by the Presbytery of Western Colorado; that is, the quote is being interpreted in a literal fashion much the way the minority report in 1992 interpreted these scriptural passages, more literally.

The quotation from John Calvin that is being proposed for our use is not a statement on abortion or the personhood of the unborn. It is part of Calvin's argument against emergency baptisms, especially those performed by women. What if a child is ill and in danger of death, yet no clergy is available? Calvin responds that to believe in the necessity of baptism for salvation is to presume that the grace of God is restricted by the need for a sign in order to become effective! He is arguing, then, that baptism itself is not essential for salvation, as baptism is the sign of the promise God has already made. We agree that this proper understanding of baptism does much to give comfort to parents whose children are stillborn or die shortly after birth and before being baptized. However, this comfort can be conveyed without the proposed amendment. On the other hand, asserting that every conception is a human life intended by God lays enormous guilt on women facing serious reproductive decisions related to problem pregnancies.

Section W-2.3008b, as currently written, correctly defines the agreed upon purpose of infant baptism in the Reformed tradition. The proposed amendment adds language about which the Presbyterian church has agreed to disagree. It has significant consequences for the church's policies on problem pregnancy and abortion that are neither recognized nor addressed.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 16-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 16-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with the Advice and Counsel of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, and advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove this overture, and offers the additional comments below.

Rationale

The passage, an excerpt from Calvin’s Institute, is taken out of context and is being used to protect the rights of the unborn when Calvin’s concern was about proper administration of the sacraments. The excerpt here is entitled, “Against Emergency Baptism,” and is included in a larger section on “Objections to Ceremonial Accretions and to Baptism by Women.” Calvin was writing about the popular belief in his time that infants who were unbaptized were damned. The emphasis in this passage was about right administration of the sacraments, not the rights of the unborn. In addition, while Calvin is a key theologian for our Reformed tradition, he is not the only theologian, and his work is not an infallible source of knowledge for contemporary ethical debates. There are many different theological perspectives that should be represented in arguments related to the debate concerning the beginning of life and the way in which we understand God affirming the rights of all living things.

Item 16-04

[The assembly disapproved Item 16-04. See p. 8.]

On Amending W-4.4006 to Include Questions to the Presbytery—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

The Presbytery of Great Rivers respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

That section W-4.4006 be amended by adding a new section “c.” as follows and re-lettering the current sections “c.–g.” as “d.–h.”:

“c. Following the affirmative answers of the questions asked to the person being installed and to the members of the congregation, the moderator of the commission shall face the members of the presbytery and its constituent congregations who are present and shall ask them the following questions:

“(1) While (Name) _____ was a candidate for ministry, his (her) presbytery of care pledged to exercise responsibility for his (her) spiritual growth, to support him (her) with an understanding and sympathetic interest, and to help him (her) to seek guidance for study. Do we, members and commissioners of the Presbytery of (Name) _____ and its constituent congregations, pledge to continue to care for (Name) _____ with sympathy, understanding, and support?”

“(2) Will we be friends with this colleague in ministry, working together, subject to the ordering of God’s Word and Spirit?”

“(3) Do we agree to encourage him (her), to solicit his (her) opinions in matters before the presbytery, to work side-by-side as colleagues in ministry, serving Jesus Christ who alone is Head of the Church?”

“(4) Do we who are members and commissioners of the presbytery promise to oversee his (her) call, ensuring that it meets standards for equitable pay and benefits; to assist this congregation in providing for his (her) welfare as he (she) works among us; to stand by him (her) and this congregation in times of trouble and to share in their joy?”

Rationale

There are three parties to each call of a minister of Word and Sacrament to serve as pastor, co-pastor, designated pastor, or associate pastor of a congregation. Currently, the Directory for Worship only directs questions to two of those parties—the one being installed and the members of the congregation. These questions would include the presbytery, as the third party to the call, to make its own affirmations during the installation service.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 16-04

Advice on Item 16-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 16-04.

Rationale

Given the importance of the constitutional questions for ordination and installation, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the assembly only amend them when there is a clear, broadly supported, and necessary rationale.

Although it may be appropriate for the presbytery to answer questions such as those proposed—making mutual commitments and promising to care for minister members—it would be more appropriate for such questions to be asked in front of the presbytery when the minister is received by the presbytery rather than at the time of his/her installation service at a congregation.

Question (1) of the proposed amendment W-4.4006c “*While N. was a candidate for ministry, his/her presbytery of care pledged to exercise responsibility for his/her spiritual growth, to support him/her with an understanding and sympathetic interest, and to help him/her to seek guidance for study. Do we, members and commissioners of the Presbytery of N and its constituent congregations, pledge to continue to care for N. with sympathy, understanding, and support?*” may be appropriate for a minister at the time of ordination, with its reference to the nurture of the candidacy process. But these references are not as relevant or timely for the minister who has been ordained for a long time or a minister who is received by the presbytery from other denominations.

Question (2) of the proposed amendment W-4.4006c “*Will we be friends with this colleague in ministry, working together, subject to the ordering of God’s Word and Spirit?*” is a question that could more appropriately be asked of all the members of the receiving presbytery, and not be limited to the commission members. Although a commission represents the corporate body of the presbytery, the question is more about personal relationships with the members of the presbytery, more than about the individual’s relationship with the governing body.

Question (3) of the proposed amendment W-4.4006c “*Do we agree to encourage him/her, to solicit his/her opinions in matters before the presbytery, to work side by side as colleagues in ministry, serving Jesus Christ who alone is Head of the Church?*” is an unnecessary question because a minister member of the presbytery already made such a commitment at the time of his/her ordination/installation (W-4.4003).

Question (4) of the proposed amendment W-4.4006c “*Do we who are members and commissioners of the presbytery promise to oversee his/her call, ensuring that it meets standards for equitable pay and benefits; to assist this congregation in providing for his/her welfare as he/she works among us; to stand by him/her and this congregation in times of trouble and to share in their joy?*” is a responsibility assigned to the committee on ministry by the presbytery (G-11.0502g, h, i). It is unnecessary to ask this question as it could confuse the lines of accountability.

However, it should be noted that nothing would preclude any presbytery to add these questions to the ordination and/or installation service without amending the Constitution if the presbytery desires to do so.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 16-04 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 16-05

[The assembly approved Item 16-05. See p. 8.]

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following nominee to the Mountain Retreat Association, Inc.’s Board of Directors:

Class of 2012: Arthur Canada—General Assembly Mission Council.

Item 16-06

[The assembly approved Item 16-06 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 8, 9.]

~~[Baptism Requirement for Participation in Lord’s Supper]~~ [On Baptism and the Lord’s Supper].

The General Assembly Mission Council recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following:

[2-] [1.] That the approach to the Lord’s Table always be gracious and invitational, not scrutinizing membership credentials, but extending Christ’s welcome to the people of God.

[1-] [2.] That ~~the practice of extending~~ the invitation to the Lord's Supper be gracious and hospitable ~~to "all the baptized faithful" (W-2.4006; see W-2.4011) be maintained~~, remembering that "access to the Table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love" (W-2.4011).

3. That congregations renew the practice of the invitation to discipleship—a call to baptism and to the reaffirmation of baptismal commitment—particularly after the proclamation of the Word.

4. That ~~unbaptized~~ not yet baptized persons who present themselves at the Lord's Table be warmly received and promptly ~~instructed~~ invited into conversation on the significance of the sacraments, in order that their hunger for spiritual nourishment might be met by a gracious invitation to Christ and to Christian life through baptismal discipleship.

Comment: This statement is offered as pastoral advice.

Rationale

This report is in response to the following referral: *2006 Referral: Item 13-04. Recommendation 4. That the 217th General Assembly (2006) Authorize the Office of Theology and Worship to Gather Learning's, Insights, and Experiences, from Churches That Engage in This Discipline (Practices That Deepen Baptismal Life and Discipleship), and to Submit a Final Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the General Assembly Council (Minutes 2006, Part I, pp. 11–12, 1102).*

On the Relationship Between Baptism and the Lord's Supper

The 210th General Assembly (1998) asked the General Assembly Mission Council, through its Office of Theology and Worship, to examine the baptismal requirement for participation in the Lord's Supper, as expressed in the Directory for Worship (W-2.4006 and W-2.4011). Observing that "the underlying issue which needs to be addressed is the relationship between baptism and the Lord's Supper," the Office of Theology and Worship recommended that the 214th General Assembly (2002) authorize "a full and substantive study of the sacraments both within the Reformed tradition and in the ecumenical context, in order to help the church discern the history and theology and baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as their appropriate relationship." The Sacraments Study Group established by that initiative met six times over the next three years, and produced *Invitation to Christ: Font and Table: A Guide to Sacramental Practices*. At the recommendation of the Sacraments Study Group, the 217th General Assembly (2006) voted to call all Presbyterian congregations "to renewal, through Word and Sacrament, of our life together in Jesus Christ, by engaging in practices that deepen baptismal life and discipleship" (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 1102). Specifically, churches were invited to engage in liturgical action and theological reflection around five sacramental practices:

1. Set the font in full view of the congregation.
2. Open the font and fill it with water on every Lord's Day.
3. Set cup and plate on the Lord's Table on every Lord's Day.
4. Lead appropriate parts of weekly worship from the font and from the table.
5. Increase the number of Sundays on which the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

The Office of Theology and Worship was asked to facilitate this period of study and discernment, and to report back to the 219th General Assembly (2010) with any findings and possible recommendations.

In the three years that have passed since the publication of *Invitation to Christ*, it seems clear that a season of sacramental renewal has begun to flourish in this denomination. Presbyterians are seeking to rediscover the meaning and mystery of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and are eager to understand how they relate to Christ's mission and the Christian life. Among the fruits of this season of renewal:

- More than 500 Presbyterian congregations responded in writing to the call to engage the five sacramental practices in worship and study, with most pledging to take up some or all of the recommendations.
- Approximately 7,000 copies of the sacrament study guide, *Invitation to Christ*, have been distributed to pastors, sessions, congregations, seminarians, and others.
- A website, www.pcusa.org/sacraments, was developed to provide further resources and collect responses to the sacrament study. Many pastors and members have joined the discussion, sharing their own stories of sacramental renewal at the congregational level; in 2009, the site averaged 1,000 visits per month. *Invitation to Christ* is also available to download free of charge at this site.

- “Font and Table,” an electronic newsletter devoted to sacramental renewal in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has more than 2,000 subscribers.
- *Invitation to Christ* was translated into Korean, and was used as a primary resource at the 2008 Korean Worship and Music Conference, “Invitation to Christ: Baptism and the Christian Life.”
- Published in 2009, *El Libro de Adoración*, a Spanish-language companion to the *Book of Common Worship*, contains full orders of worship for the celebration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
- Numerous conferences of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians over the past several years have been directly and indirectly related to *Invitation to Christ* and sacramental themes in liturgy and music.
- A February 2009 Presbyterian Panel survey investigated current theological understanding and liturgical practice of baptism and the Lord’s Supper in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- A February 2009 Presbyterian Panel survey investigated current theological understanding and liturgical practice of baptism and the Lord’s Supper in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), finding that monthly celebration of the Lord’s Supper has increased from 60 percent to 75 percent in the past decade.

It is encouraging to see this groundswell of support for the renewal of sacramental life in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Particularly at the 500th anniversary of John Calvin’s birth, it is exciting to see the denomination take up one of Calvin’s marks of the church—“the sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution”—with such enthusiasm.

With gratitude to God for this season of sacramental renewal in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and on the basis of the findings of this fertile time of dialogue and discernment, the Office of Theology and Worship recommends that practice of extending the invitation to the Lord’s Supper to “all the baptized faithful” (W-2.4006; see W-2.4011) be maintained. The relationship between baptism and the Lord’s Supper is theologically significant, historically attested, and ecumenically acknowledged. It plays a vital role in the preservation of the identity and integrity of the church as covenant community. At the same time, people (within and beyond the church) are hungry for spiritual nourishment, thirsty for divine presence, and yearning for deeper relationship with God. We are called to offer the promise of the gospel and the presence of Christ in Word and Sacrament, and to “[put] no obstacle in anyone’s way” (2 Cor. 1 6:3) that would hinder them from receiving Christ. As the authors of *Invitation to Christ* wrote:

Baptism is connected with death and new life; the Supper is connected with ongoing nourishment of that life. Baptism is connected with incorporation into the body of Christ; the Supper is connected with the repeated gathering of that body over time. Baptism is connected with initiation into the covenant community; the Supper is the meal of that covenant community. In addition, the long, historical tradition of the church has practiced this rhythm of washing before eating, out of which has emerged a rich tradition of theological interpretation and liturgical practice. ... [I]n general, the broad range of sacramental meanings seems best preserved when baptism leads to the table. Being washed comes before eating. Those who have come through the waters of birth then come to the table and learn to eat with that family. Nevertheless, when this order serves to exclude rather than welcome people to God’s grace, then perhaps it needs to be temporarily disrupted. The larger theological concern is the power of both sacraments to convey God’s transforming grace and God’s call to a transformed life. If someone receive’s God grace first at the table, we need rebuke neither that person nor the local church that has welcomed her. Instead, we should joyfully invite that person into the life-giving waters of baptism (*Invitation to Christ*, 46).

Weighing all these considerations, the profound theological, historical, and ecumenical relationship between baptism and the Lord’s Supper—along with the relationship between the celebration of the sacraments and the proclamation of the Word—should be strengthened, nurtured, and deepened in the practice of Presbyterian worship. The tension between covenant identity and hospitality cannot be easily resolved through church polity or liturgical rubrics, but must be carefully, thoughtfully, prayerfully worked out in common life, relying always on the guidance of the Word and Spirit of God.

This effort will require coordination and collaboration on the part of pastors and sessions. Pastors, for their part, should lead worship and celebrate sacraments in a way that stirs up longing for the water of the baptismal font and whets an appetite for the spiritual nourishment of the Lord’s Table (in other words, in a way that makes a compelling invitation to Christ). Elders, as spiritual leaders in the church charged with the administration of the sacraments, are responsible for knowing the people of the congregation, being aware of who is baptized (and who is not), being cognizant of who participates in the Lord’s Supper (and who does not), and in consultation with the pastor, providing for the ongoing formation and nurture of the community in sacramental participation and Christian life. Should persons who are not yet baptized present themselves to receive the Lord’s Supper during the service of worship, they are to be warmly received at the table and promptly instructed thereafter on the significance of baptismal discipleship. This call to discipleship should not be presented as an obstacle or barrier to full participation in worship, but as a gracious invitation to Christ: to grow in knowledge and faith, and to engage more fully and deeply in the Christian life and the covenant community.

Finally, the General Assembly Mission Council hopes that congregations will continue to explore the sacramental practices commended in *Invitation to Christ*, as these practices seem to be making a significant contribution to the renewal of sacramental life in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Furthermore, congregations should provide regular and ongoing opportunities for substantive theological reflection on the sacraments—with a variety of points of entry and levels of accessibili-

ty—through sermons, Christian education, programs welcoming new believers (the catechumenate), and special workshops or events.

Item 16-07

[The assembly approved Item 16-07. See p. 8.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) grant permission to the following theological institutions to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in 2011–2012: Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary; Columbia Theological Seminary, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary; McCormick Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, San Francisco Theological Seminary, Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary in cooperation with the Interdenominational Theological Center, and Union Theological Seminary & Presbyterian School of Christian Education.

Rationale

Beginning in 1989, the General Assembly became the governing body that grants permission to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Presbyterian theological institutions. The 218th General Assembly (2008) granted permission for celebrations in 2009–2010.

Item 16-08

[The assembly approved Item 16-08. See pp. 8, 9.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the revised Covenant Between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and El Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico below and to be review this covenant before the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

A COVENANT BETWEEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) AND EL SEMINARIO EVANGÉLICO DE PUERTO RICO 2010–2016

I. Purpose

The purpose of this covenant is to define the nature and scope of the relationship mutually agreed to by El Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico (Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico) and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

II. History of the Relationship

In 1919, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America closed Seminario Teológico Portoricense in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and joined with four other Protestant mission boards to found the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. This action was taken under the guidance of the Board of National Missions.

In 1918, the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church of the United States proposed this action as follows:

The Board is in receipt of a communication from Rev. J. A. McAllister, an accredited missionary in Porto [sic] Rico under our Board of Home Missions, in which it is stated that the evangelical denominations at work in Porto [sic] Rico have joined together in an effort to organize a union Theological Seminary for the purposes of training a native ministry.

The Board of National Missions and its successor (The Program Agency) continued to appoint trustees and provide funding for the school. File documents indicate that the Board/Agency annual grant was from \$20,000 to \$25,000 until the early seventies. Restructuring in the UPCUSA in the early seventies resulted in inadvertent dropping of the budget line for the school, although funds were subsequently found, and annual funding continued at approximately \$30,000 per year.

By 1977, discussion about the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico joining the Council of Theological Seminaries arose. The council adopted as policy the task “to keep under review the issues and options related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico” (quoted by John H. Galbreath in correspondence to the Reverend Jaime O. Quinones, November 12, 1984).

In 1982, the seminary received accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools. This was renewed for ten years in 1987, in 1997, and again in 2008. In the same manner, the seminary retains its State license by the Council of Higher Education of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as well as its accreditation by the Middle States Council of Higher Education. The 1997 visiting team of the ATS wrote:

Few theological seminaries have better reasons for their existence than does the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. The only accredited theological school on the island, ESPR stands within the Reformed tradition and serves the growing ecumenical constituency of six sponsoring Protestant denominations while training leaders for several other Protestant and Catholic groups as well. Moreover, ESPR increasingly provides training for Hispanic churches in the Middle Atlantic states and other locations where large numbers of Puerto Ricans live.¹

As reunion was implemented at the national level in the Presbyterian church, responsibility for the seminary was lodged with the office of Global Education and Leadership Development of the Committee on Higher Education. Funding continued at the level of \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year. The “Articles of Agreement” governing reunion made no mention of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. The General Assembly appointed a special Committee on Theological Institutions (CTI) to recommend new reporting and funding systems for the ten Presbyterian seminaries and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. Their report to the 1986 General Assembly dealt directly with the funding and reporting issues, but went on to note that the relationship of the church to the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico remained unfinished business, and that the matter should be explored, along with other issues, by a special study committee.

The Committee on Theological Education agreed that this question needed examination. In 1988, the General Assembly accepted the recommendation of the Committee on Theological Education and appointed the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions. The Committee on Theological Education’s assignment to the special committee included the following question: What should be the status of institutions such as the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and Auburn Seminary that have Presbyterian Church ties?²

After considerable study the special committee has recommended that the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico relate to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor). The special committee judged that existing categories of membership on the Committee on Theological Education do not adequately serve to respect the historic and continuous relationship between the Presbyterian church and the singular ecumenical venture that is the seminary. The Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico has strong historical ties with the Presbyterian church and serves both Presbyterian students and Presbyterian congregations as it relates to the larger denominational body in representational character and collaborative projects. The seminary acknowledges its roots in the Reformed tradition and the place of the Presbyterian church in its institutional identity. For almost a century, the Seminario Evangélico has been a constitutive part of the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in its theological, missionary, and ecumenical ventures.

The special committee recommended the adoption of a special agreement between the General Assembly and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (ESPR). The Committee on Theological Education concurred with that judgment. This covenant constitutes that most recent agreement as developed by the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and the Committee on Theological Education for consideration by the General Assembly, and by the Board of Directors of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.

Following up on the recommendation of the special committee to review the scope of the relationship and considering the time for a covenant renewal, the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) appointed a visit team to discuss the covenant and explore new levels of partnership with the seminary. The visiting team was convened by the Reverend Dr. Kenneth Kovacs and included other COTE members; the Reverend Dr. Iain Torrance, and Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri. The COTE staff, the Reverend Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty and Robert Fohr, also participated. The narrative that follows summarizes the visiting team recommendations for the renewal of the PC(USA)-ESPR covenant agreement.

III. Members of the Covenant

The members of this covenant, El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico), operating under its governing board, the board of directors, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) operating as a governing body, are independent, self-governing bodies neither being controlled by the other. Together, they share a common vision to serve the church of Jesus Christ and, in an act of solidarity, will partner together to fulfill their mission.

IV. Expectations Under the Covenant

A. El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (hereinafter referred to as “the Seminary”) affirms its commitment in the following areas:

1. *Academic Matters*

The Seminary shall maintain its accreditation from an internationally recognized accrediting agency such as the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the Middle States Association, the Latin American Association of Theological Education (ALIET), or the Commission of Theological Education in Latin America (CETELA), for the duration of this covenant.

The Seminary will meet the needs of its Presbyterian students and the Presbyterian leadership seeking continuing formation and development. To this end, courses in Hebrew and Greek will continue to be provided minimally on alternate years, and courses will be offered in Reformed history, Reformed theology, and Presbyterian polity, as mandated by the action of the Seminary's Board of Directors. The seminary will also continue to respond to the request for leadership formation from Presbyterian middle governing bodies both in the island and those presbyteries in the U.S. with sizable Hispanic/Latino populations.

The Seminary will continue to be responsive to the academic needs of its Presbyterian students as these needs are expressed by the Synod of Puerto Rico and the presbyteries comprising that synod.

The Seminary will administer the Presbyterian Ordination examinations (including the designation of a proctor), and will provide reviews and learning experiences to help students achieve maximum results.

The Seminary will work closely with the Synod of Puerto Rico and the three presbyteries on the island to provide the necessary resources and educational experiences for their candidates for ministry and their pastoral and lay leadership. The Seminary will secure a suitable adjunct faculty member to teach the course entitled, "EMI-9, Denominational Principles," or its successor. The Seminary will continue to grant the synod the authority to nominate the adjunct faculty member, and shall require that the person nominated meets the Seminary's qualifications as an adjunct faculty member. If the Seminary declines to hire the synod's nominee, the synod will submit another nominee. The Seminary shall hire only a person nominated by the synod.

As stipulated by the Board of Directors of the Seminary in their action of September 26, 1992, the professor named to the Presbyterian-Reformed chair will be a minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Searches for other faculty appointments will consider Presbyterians as well as other qualified persons. Although Presbyterians will be considered, the Seminary is not obligated to appoint Presbyterians to a faculty post except to the Presbyterian-Reformed chair.

2. *Cooperation*

The Seminary will participate in cooperative ventures undertaken by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) theological institutions. As is the case with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) schools, cooperation with the other institutions is voluntary, depending on how a proposal or program is related to the institution's mission and the availability of resources.

The Seminary shall submit annually the same or equivalent reports to the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor), as are required of all Presbyterian theological institutions. Such reports may include, but are not be limited to:

- a. finances;
- b. enrollment and graduates;
- c. changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws;
- d. appointments to the faculty;
- e. appointments to the board of directors;
- f. a brief narrative report of activities of the school to be shared with the General Assembly;
- g. appointment of a new president.

3. *Collaboration*

The Seminary will serve as a resource for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) whenever such service can be appropriately and feasibly provided from the Seminary's resources, programs, and personnel. The Seminary will participate in collaborative ventures undertaken by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Seminary welcomes the

partnership of other Presbyterian seminaries in projects where the institutional resources and expertise of its faculty can be supportive of current or new theological education ventures. The growing importance of Hispanic ministries in the United States and in other countries makes ESPR a very significant institution for the denomination in carrying out its mission.

4. *Board of Directors of the Seminary*

The seminary will invite and expect the representation of Presbyterian leadership in its board of directors as stated in its bylaws. The Seminary shall have two directors nominated by the Synod of Puerto Rico and one director nominated by the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as provided in the Seminary's bylaws upon the request of the seminary.³ The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) nominees from the Synod of Puerto Rico and from COTE may be submitted to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for review and approval. The Seminary will maintain the same number of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) directors (3) on the board of the Seminary as presently is mandated by the Seminary's bylaws.

Nomination by the Synod of Puerto Rico or by COTE does not constitute election to the Board of Directors of the Seminary. The power to elect directors rests exclusively with the board of the Seminary. If the board of directors chooses to not elect one of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) nominees, it will ask for another nominee from the appropriate governing body.

5. *Development Activity*

The Seminary agrees that, as a beneficiary of the Theological Education Fund, it will adopt the fund-raising policies agreed to by the COTE as outlined in the Manual of Operations of the COTE.

As of February 1997, the policy provides that, normally, the Seminary may solicit PC(USA) congregations for current operating funds for support of the annual budget if those congregations have an alumnus/a on the staff, a student in the institution, a trustee or former trustee as pastor, a geographic relationship, or are congregations which have given to the Seminary before. In soliciting Presbyterian congregations for operating budgets all communications will make first and foremost an appeal for support of the Theological Education Fund, i.e. the 1 % Plan.

It is expected that all fund-raising activity among Presbyterians and Presbyterian churches in Puerto Rico will take place in close, cordial, and cooperative relationship with the Synod of Puerto Rico. The Seminary will continue to raise funds toward the full endowment of the Presbyterian-Reformed chair.

B. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirms its commitment in the following areas:

1. *The Committee on Theological Education (or Its Successor)*

This covenant relationship with the Seminary shall give to that institution voice and vote, with full participation on the Committee on Theological Education or its successor. Every effort must be made by the Seminary to ensure that the institutional representative to COTE is Presbyterian. Travel and lodging expenses associated with attendance of the Seminary's representative to meetings of the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor) shall be reimbursed by the PC(USA) in accordance with its reimbursement policies.

The Committee on Theological Education will provide assistance as appropriate to the Seminary and the Synod of Puerto Rico for interpreting the Theological Education Fund to congregations in the synod, as well as the Seminary's faculty and staff.

The Committee on Theological Education will provide the Seminary ongoing guidance with respect to any fund-raising efforts the Seminary undertakes in the United States or elsewhere where there is expertise.

2. *Financial Support*

The Committee on Theological Education (or its successor) shall include the Seminary in the annual allocation of the funds it administers, such funds including the Theological Education Fund. The Seminary shall be allocated funds according to the same formula as the other Presbyterian theological institutions, with the exception that the Seminary shall receive one-fifth of one share of that portion of the Theological Education Fund and other moneys that are divided in shares among the institutions without reference to numbers of graduates.

As of 1997, 46.5 percent of the administered funds are distributed on the basis of the number of graduates in all degree programs with 2.5 percent left to the discretion of the Committee on Theological Education. The Seminary will receive funds distributed on the number of graduates on the same basis and in the same manner as the other theological institutions.

The Seminary may seek moneys from the discretionary fund portion of the Theological Education Fund and other administered funds on the same basis and in the same manner as the other theological institutions.

Income from funds that are held in trust by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and that are restricted by their original donor specifically to a particular Seminary shall not be included in the computed allocation of the Theological Education Fund and other funds allocated by the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor).

3. Disclosure

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agrees to disclose and describe this new arrangement to the other supporting denominations of the Seminary.

V. Indemnity

The Seminary agrees to hold the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) harmless for any acts, omissions, or failures to fulfill the terms of this covenant. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agrees to hold the Seminary harmless for any acts, omissions, or failures to fulfill the terms of this covenant.

VI. Amendments

Changes in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or in the circumstance of the Seminary may affect portions of this covenant. Either party to this covenant—the Seminary and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as represented by the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor)—may request revision of parts or this entire covenant during the term of this agreement. Amendments to this covenant may be executed by mutual agreement of the Board of Directors of the Seminary and the General Assembly.

VII. Term

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

The covenant may be renewed by mutual consent.

VIII. Formal Approval

This covenant shall be effective upon formal approval by the Board of Directors of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and when signed by the Moderator and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and by the Seminary’s president and the chair of the Board of Directors of the Seminary.

Financial support under this covenant shall continue for the duration of the covenant.

This covenant recognizes that the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico may develop other covenant relationship with other denominations who support the Seminary.

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

<p>REPRESENTING EL SEMINARIO EVANGÉLICO DE PUERTO RICO</p>	<p>REPRESENTING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)</p>
<p>Sergio Ojeda-Carcamo President 2009</p>	<p>Cynthia Bolbach Moderator July 2010</p>
<p>Carlos Gomez-Menendez Chair, Board of Directors 2009</p>	<p>Gradye Parsons Stated Clerk July 2010</p>

Endnotes

1. As quoted by Luis Fidel Mercado in correspondence to Robert T. Douglass, October 9, 1987.
2. *Minutes*, 1988, Part I, page 415, paragraph 33.026.
3. The by-laws of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico stipulate in Article I.A.1. on the composition of the board of directors the following: “One person representing each of the founding and cooperating mission boards in the United States of America.” This agreement proposes that the Presbyterian representative be nominated by the Committee on Theological Education or its successor.

Rationale

Most of the proposed covenant remains the same as the covenant approved in 2003 by the General Assembly and reaffirmed by the General Assembly Mission Council in 2009 and the second time the General Assembly is considering a renewal of a covenant agreement with ESPR. There are several changes to the covenant worth highlighting. While the covenant is between ESPR and the PC(USA) (not with COTE), some of the changes in the proposed covenant have a direct bearing upon ESPR's relationship to COTE. Those changes have been approved by COTE as it forwards this revised covenant to the 219th General Assembly (2010) that:

1. Broadens accreditation possibilities for ESPR, beyond the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). This could include accreditation through the Latin American Association of Theological Education (ALIET) or the Commission of Theological Education in Latin America (CETELA). This recognizes the fact that ESPR operates in a Hispanic world and permits access to broader accreditation authorities. The task force believes this would be an anti-colonial move and asset to the PC(USA) as a whole. [Proposed Covenant IV.A.1.]

2. Invited reconsideration of ESPR's membership status in COTE. The ESPR is really something other than a "Corresponding Member" of COTE. The nature of its mission and its relationship to the PC(USA) requires a kind of hybrid membership, a different form of membership that will allow it to participate more fully in COTE. The ESPR has been given both voice and vote on COTE. Giving vote will enable an ESPR institutional representative to participate in the leadership of COTE (executive committee membership, chair, vice-chair, etc). [Proposed Covenant IV.B.1.]

3. Highlights COTE's responsibility for nominating a PC(USA) representative to the ESPR Board of Directors. We have not fulfilled our promise in this effort. As a result, COTE will establish a process of nomination and that this be done in collaboration with ESPR. In conjunction with ESPR, COTE ascertain the terms of service for the board member, the characteristics and skills set needed that reflects the "season" in the life of the school. The nominee need not be a COTE member. [Proposed Covenant IV.A.4.]

Also worth noting, COTE will discuss the theological rationale for the allocation formula as it relates to ESPR and consider reevaluating the 1/5 portion of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) that ESPR receives. [Proposed Covenant IV.B.2.] To facilitate this process, ESPR will be asked to share the funding commitments of the other four denominations that relate to the ESPR.

The COTE elected a task force to review the former covenants with the Evangelical Seminary in Puerto Rico (ESPR): Kenneth Kovacs (convener), Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Iain Torrance. The task force worked closely with leaders at ESPR: Sergio Ojeda Cárcamo, president; José Irizarry, decano académico & acting president; Myrna Pérez, seminary administrator; and was staffed by the Office of Theological Education: Lee Hinson-Hasty and Robert Fohr.

The Committee on Theological Education's ESPR-PC(USA) Covenant Renewal Task Force met with leaders of ESPR in San Juan, Puerto Rico, 10th–12th September 2009. Our time together was the culmination of several months planning for the renewal of the covenant relationship between ESPR and the PC(USA), which expired in December 2008 and was renewed by the General Assembly Mission Council through December 2009.

Early in the process we determined that our first priority was to make this a collaborative experience, as well as "An Act of Solidarity." We reviewed and discussed the covenant as it currently stands. From our conversations, guiding questions emerged that we then shared with ESPR. We invited representatives from ESPR to share their expectations for our visit, to state their priorities; we asked them to reflect upon our guiding questions, and to then raise questions regarding the covenant from their perspective. Our time together was guided by these four goals. We would worship together, listen to each other, affirm each other, and look for ways to enable each other.

We are grateful for the warm welcome and generous hospitality we received from ESPR. They were particularly happy to greet us, the first delegation from COTE to visit ESPR, and grateful for the conversation. We prayed together; worshipped with the seminary community; shared meals; learned a lot about Spanish colonial history, as well as the political, cultural, and ecclesial history of Puerto Rico; engaged in lively conversation (both formally and informally); went on a campus tour; met with synod representatives; met with Presbyterian pastors and graduates of ESPR; and we reviewed a long-rang vision presentation that included plans for future development and expansion.

From the start, there was a high level of trust and transparency that allowed for honest and open discussions. We reviewed the current covenant and together identified changes that should be made. We agreed that the language needed to be updated (removing terms such as "native ministry"), language that better reflects contemporary realities; the covenant needed a new history of the covenant relationship written by ESPR.

We revised the section now entitled "Expectations" (formerly termed, "Responsibilities") and added a new section called, "Collaboration." Our aim was to craft a document that removed any language that implied "compliance" or "obedience," in order to mutually affirm a covenant that reflected a spirit of partnership, collaboration, and solidarity. Our hope

was to present a covenant that breathes new life into the relationship, that envisions a way forward, something that speaks to a covenant agreement in a post-colonial situation.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 16-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 16-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that Item 16-08 be approved.

Rationale

The ACREC appreciates the efforts of the Evangelical Seminary and the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) in revising this important covenant, particularly in efforts to form the relationship using vocabulary appropriate for Christian partners in a postcolonial context.

Additionally, in light of COTE's request in Item 15-09 for a conversation to develop strategies to increase Hispanic/Latino/a participation throughout the church (and particularly in theological education), ACREC sees a possible role for the resource of the Evangelical Seminary and the cultural understandings and perspectives of its staff, faculty, and administration. The ACREC encourages dialogue with the Evangelical Seminary as COTE commits itself to assisting PC(USA) seminaries in including Hispanic/Latino scholarship in their curricula.

Item 16-09

[The assembly approved Item 16-09. See p. 8.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the new trustees elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) theological institutions in 2008–2009:

1. **Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary:** James B. Crawley, Lyndon L. Olson Jr., Jeffrey Kyle Richard, Teresa Chávez Saucedo, Anne Vickery Stevenson, Karl Brian Travis.
2. **Columbia Theological Seminary:** Florida S. Ellis, Deborah J. Gambrell, Elizabeth Cole Goodrich, Pendleton B. Perry, Kristin Stroble, Bonnie P. Wurzbacher.
3. **University of Dubuque Theological Seminary:** John D. Stolz, George J. Kubat.
4. **Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary:** Bari S. Johnson, Melinda E. Johnson, Kyle E. Lanham, Dorothy S. Ridings, Conrad C. Sharps, Brent L. Slay.
5. **McCormick Theological Seminary:** Karen Lake Buttrey, Patrick L. Daymond, Honna M. Eichler, Stacey Lynn Edwards, Jeffrey Foels, Elizabeth R. Foster, S. Kim Leech, José F. Morales Jr., Otis Moss III, Ken Sawyer, James E. Sparks, David A. Van Dyke.
6. **Pittsburgh Theological Seminary:** Kim Tilloston Fleming, W. Allen Hogge, Robert L. Kelley Jr., James D. Miller, Stephanie K. Simmons, William Curtis, Robert Dawson, Scott Harrison, Alexandra L. Joachim, Candace Veon-Nyiri, Victor Vogel.
7. **Princeton Theological Seminary:** Dorothy A. Johnson, F. Carter Karins, Jinsoo Kim, Neal D. Presa, Ruth Faith Santana-Grace, Susan F. Wonderland.
8. **San Francisco Theological Seminary:** James A. Cochran, Paul S. Nazarian, Candice L. Unruh.
9. **Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary:** Barbara Renton, Cynthia Burse, Cecelia Armstrong.
10. **Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education:** Lisa Thompson Cross, Alexander W. Evans, Edward S. Finley Jr., Bruce Gottwald Jr., Jimmie Hawkins, Catherine W. Howard, Anne Logan, Edward L. Roberson III, Elizabeth McGregor Simmons.

Rationale

“A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986), requires the COTE to present presidents and trustees of PC(USA) related seminaries to the General Assembly for approval. A list of the entire board of trustees of each of the ten seminaries, as well as biographical information about trustees to be approved will be made available by COTE for review by the appropriate committee dur-

ing the 219th General Assembly (2010). Similar information will also be made available about those currently serving on the boards of Auburn Theological Seminary and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico that are related to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through covenant agreements.

In addition, and as required by vote of the 209th General Assembly (1997), the following information is offered in regard to racial ethnic, gender, and clergy/lay representation on the various seminary boards.

Ten PC(USA) Seminaries	Total on Board	Cauc.	Hisp.	Black	Asian	Native American	Other Ethnic	Male	Fem.	Clergy	Lay
Austin	31	29	0	2	0	0	0	20	11	10	21
Columbia	39	38	0	0	1	0	0	28	11	11	28
Dubuque	30	29	0	1	0	0	0	22	8	1	29
Louisville	30	27	0	3	0	0	0	20	10	12	18
McCormick	51	40	2	8	1	0	0	32	19	18	33
Pittsburgh	35	32	0	3	0	0	0	26	9	13	22
Princeton	36	31	2	1	2	0	0	23	13	17	19
SFTS	31	24	2	1	2	0	2	19	12	10	21
J.C. Smith	13	3	0	10	0	0	0	8	5	7	6
Union-PSCE	32	28	0	3	1	0	0	20	12	13	19
TOTALS	328	281	6	32	7	0	2	218	110	112	216
Covenant Partner Schools											
Auburn	22	21	0	1	0	0	0	12	10	8	14
ESPR	22	0	22	0	0	0	0	18	4	14	8
Overall TOTALS	372	302	28	33	7	0	2	248	124	134	238

Item 16-10

[The assembly approved Item 16-10. See pp. 8, 9.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve Stephen A. Hayner as president of Columbia Theological Seminary.

Rationale

General Assembly approval of Dr. Hayner's appointment as president of Columbia Theological Seminary is required by "A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986) and by the seminary's current bylaws.

Steve Hayner was appointed president of Columbia Theological Seminary in 2009. Since 2003 he has served Columbia as Peachtree Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth. Steve holds degrees from Whitman College, Harvard Divinity School, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and University of St. Andrews where he completed his Ph.D. in 1984.

Previously Steve has served as university pastor at University Presbyterian Church in Seattle, as vice president of Seattle Pacific University, as president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and as associate pastor of two churches in Madison, Wisconsin.

Item 16-11

[The assembly approved Item 16-11. See pp. 8, 9.]

Report of the General Assembly Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

The General Assembly Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the following two actions:

1. Appoint the presently constituted Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism to recommend to the 220th General Assembly (2012) a new translation of the present Heidelberg Catechism in *The Book of Confessions* in cooperation with the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) and the Reformed Church of America (RCA).

2. Instruct the Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism to consider inclusion of appropriate Scriptural citations and/or textual references that correspond to each article of the Catechism.

[Financial Implications: [(2010) \$12,075; (2011) \$23,900; (2012) \$3,110—OGA Per Capita]

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: 2008 Referral: *Item 13-06, "On Correcting Translation Problems of the Heidelberg Catechism"*—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 18–19, 1260–62).

A. *History of Charge*

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved Item 13-06, an overture from the Presbytery of Newark. The overture sought to “correct translation problems in five responses of the Heidelberg Catechism as found in *The Book of Confessions* and to add the original Scripture texts of the German Heidelberg Catechism” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1260). The overture identified the following five sections of the Catechism for consideration: Q/A 19, 33, 55, 74, 87.

Because the overture sought to amend *The Book of Confessions*, Chapter XVIII of *The Book of Order* specified the necessary steps for proper consideration of the overture’s proposed amendments.

B. *Composition of Special Committee*

The 218th General Assembly (2008) authorized the Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) to appoint the fifteen members of the special committee.

The Moderator appointed the following:

The Reverend Heidi Husted Armstrong of Tacoma, Wash.; the Reverend Warner M. Bailey of Fort Worth, Tex.; Elder Dawn DeVries of Richmond, Va.; Elder Sylvia Dooling of Loveland, Colo.; the Reverend James Edwards of Spokane, Wash.; the Reverend Christopher Elwood of Louisville, Ky.; the Reverend Gary Hansen of Dubuque, Iowa; Elder Susan Haskell of Birmingham, Ala.; Elder Patrick Hunt of San Francisco, Calif.; Elder David Todd Mulford of Baton Rouge, La.; the Reverend Shelly Barrick Parsons of Morgantown, W.Va.; the Reverend Neal D. Presa of Middlesex, N.J.; the Reverend Lorna Shoemaker of Indianapolis, Ind.; the Reverend David Stubbs of Holland, Mich.; the Reverend Floretta Watkins of Charlotte, N.C. The Moderator appointed Neal D. Presa as chair.

The special committee was staffed by the Reverend Thomas Hay of the Office of the General Assembly and the Reverend Charles Wiley of the Office of Theology Worship and Education (General Assembly Mission Council).

C. *Meetings*

1. *Initial Meeting Louisville, Kentucky: March 27–28, 2009:*

This was the one face-to-face meeting of the General Assembly Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism. At this meeting we shared our background with appropriate introductions. Over the two days we were able to investigate our options as they related to the task given to us from the 218th General Assembly (2008). During the meeting we studied translation issues, including those noted in the overture, heard presentations on the historical and contemporary contexts, and agreed to:

- Engage in conversation with overture advocates.

- Request the Stated Clerk to initiate conversations with his counterparts in the Christian Reformed Church of North America and the Reformed Church in America, apprising them of the conversations the Special Committee has had with the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) and the Reformed Church of America (RCA) joint translation committee.

- Analyze carefully the German, Latin, and English versions of the Catechism for accuracy of translation, readability, and theological integrity.

a. *Historical Context*

Of prime importance in understanding and appreciating the Heidelberg Catechism is first to recall the diversity of reform movements that marked sixteenth century Europe, resulting in intense theological turmoil. The Reformation was not a single, unified, orderly movement, but was marked by theological tensions and divisions.

Disagreement and discord were especially evident between Lutheran Christians, influenced by the theology of Martin Luther and his successors, and Reformed Christians, influenced by the Swiss reformers Huldrych Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger, as well as by John Calvin. These two Reformation traditions converged in Heidelberg. But rather than erupting into greater controversy, Heidelberg became a place marked by cooperation and conciliation, when, in 1562, Frederick the Elector, ruler of the Palatinate, proposed the preparation of a catechism that would be acceptable to both Lutheran and Reformed believers. The resulting catechism, traditionally attributed to Zacharias Ursinus (a professor of theology) and Kaspar Olevianus (a preacher), represented a collaborative connection between academy and church. The Elector Frederick took final responsibility for the catechism, and defended it publicly.

Written in question-and-answer format particularly suitable to theological instruction and conveying the rudiments of the faith, the Catechism has contributed to the Christian education of laity, both children and adults, and theological students. Divided into a fifty-two “Lord’s Day” format, the Heidelberg has the added bonus of providing a comprehensive preaching guide for pastors.

Written originally in German (of which the third German edition is definitive), and soon translated into Latin, the Heidelberg Catechism is personal and irenic in tone. Its intent was to establish religious peace and confessional uniformity in the Reformation churches. Above all, it sought to heal divisive rifts in Eucharistic theology among the Reformers by denying that “the bread and wine became the very body and blood of Christ” but affirming that “by this visible sign and pledge ... we come to share in his true body and blood through the working of the Holy Spirit”¹

The Heidelberg Catechism has become the most translated of the sixteenth century confessions, and has profoundly influenced doctrinal and ecumenical understanding and cooperation among Reformation churches.

b. *Contemporary Context*

Though historically Presbyterians were largely a “Westminster people,” the Heidelberg Catechism was approved in the nineteenth century for use in the former Northern Presbyterian Church. When *The Book of Confessions* was formed in 1967, it was decided that The Confession of 1967 and The Westminster Confession of Faith should not stand alone. This opened the door to the inclusion of The Heidelberg Catechism, along with others, into *The Book of Confessions*. The Heidelberg Catechism has established itself above other confessions in *The Book of Confessions* because of its personal, inclusive, and evocative nature, beginning with the first question: “What is your only comfort, in life and in death?” (*The Book of Confessions*, 4.001) The Heidelberg Catechism promotes God’s majesty and providential care, which is especially evident in the work of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and which is further elucidated through the now well-known “guilt, grace and gratitude” theological schema.

c. *June 2, 2009*

A letter was sent to the Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Reverend Dennis Hughes, moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The letter included the special committee’s findings on the process in which the overture was transmitted by the Presbytery of Newark and received by the Office of the General Assembly and recommendations to clarify and improve the transmission process.

(1) *Findings Related to Reception of Newark Overture and Editorial Process*

When the committee began its work in 2009, early in its deliberations a question was raised regarding a discrepancy in the language and translation of section 2 of the overture, particularly section 4.033.

The Book of Confessions, 4.033, currently reads as follows: “A. Because Christ alone is God’s own eternal Son, whereas we are accepted for his sake as children of God by grace.”

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved and communicated to the special committee the following (strike-through means delete; italics means insert):

“A. Because Christ alone is God’s ~~own eternal Son~~ *natural son*, whereas we are ~~accepted~~ *adopted* for his sake as children of God by grace.”

The committee was concerned about the theological implications of omitting “eternal,” which threatens the loss of a key theological point related to the nature of Christ.

Persons in the following capacities were asked to provide their understanding of the above omission:

- A member of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions.
- General Assembly staff present at the 218th General Assembly (2008).
- One of the original authors of the overture

The committee’s investigations found the following: First, no significant amendments or changes to the overture were made either in the work of the committee or on the floor of the assembly. Therefore, the overture referred to the special committee contained the same language that was approved by the assembly committee, reported to the assembly plenary, and finally approved by the assembly. Second, the motion adopted by the Presbytery of Newark and communicated to the OGA had left out the word “eternal” from the text. The overture as communicated from the stated clerk of the Presbytery of Newark to the OGA read as follows (words in parenthesis were suggested deletions; words in all caps were proposed insertions):

“Because Christ alone is God’s (own) NATURAL Son, whereas we are (accepted) ADOPTED for his sake as children of God by Grace.”

Therefore, when the proposed motion reached the OGA an editorial decision was made that the presbytery intended to omit “eternal” since it was completely absent from the proposed overture. This resulted in the omission of the word.

In addition, the committee ascertained that the original intent of the overture authors was to include the following: “the eternal natural Son of God,” rather than the approved language of “God’s own natural Son.” Neither the authors of the overture, the general presbyter (who was the overture advocate), nor the presbytery stated clerk was aware of the omission.

(2) *Recommendations Related to Findings of Transmittal of Item 13-06*

In response to this error, the chair of the special committee corresponded with the Stated Clerk and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly on behalf of the special committee regarding the process of reception and communication of overtures and recommended that when there is uncertainty with proposed overture language, OGA staff should consult with presbytery staff leaders and/or overture advocates to ensure accuracy of language.

The OGA agreed to implement this recommendation

2. *Tuesday July 28, Conference Call*

The special committee formed two sub-teams: a Translation Sub-Team and a Final Report Sub-Team. The Translation Sub-Team would examine the preliminary translation of the CRCNA/RCA Joint Translation Committee and submit its review. The Final Report Sub-Team began preparations to draft the special committee’s report to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

3. *Friday, October 30, 2009 Conference Call*

A conference call was convened with prayer to discuss the outline of the final report. The General Assembly Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism decided to recommend that the 219th General Assembly (2010):

- Explore the possibility of replacing the present Heidelberg Catechism in *The Book of Confessions* with the new joint translation of the Heidelberg Catechism of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) and the Reformed Church of America (RCA); and
- Retain the Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism, as presently constituted, so that it may recommend to the 220th General Assembly (2012) proposals related to the CRCNA/RCA joint translation.

D. *Findings Related to Issues Raised by Item 13-06*

Item 13-06 asked the General Assembly to rectify five specific translation errors in the English version of the Heidelberg Catechism in the current version of *The Book of Confessions*. The overture further asked the General Assembly to add the Scripture texts to the English version that were present in the original German document.

The issue with section 4.033 has been considered above.

Further, the special committee agreed with Item 13-06 that the current translation 4.087 contains language not present in the original German or Latin texts of the Heidelberg Catechism that appears to have been added later.

There was a general consensus among the special committee that there are significant translation problems in the current English version of The Heidelberg Catechism in addition to those cited in the Newark overture. The special committee therefore concluded that, in order to provide for a more faithful translation, a more comprehensive approach to these problems needed to be explored.

E. *Five Examples of Problems in PC(USA) Translation*

The General Assembly's Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism is comprised of fifteen members. Seven of these, proficient in German and Latin, were asked to advise the committee on translation deficiencies in the current translation of The Heidelberg Catechism. It was apparent to the seven members of the translation team that the current translation of The Heidelberg Catechism contained a number of translation inaccuracies or infelicities, including addition of English words and phrases not present in the original, and translations of given words or phrases that could be more faithful to the German and Latin originals.

Five specific examples of these kinds of errors follow. These instances do not include those cited in Item 13-06, and are illustrative, rather than comprehensive, of the translation in *The Book of Confessions*.

1. Q. 3: The current version renders the German, "*Elend*" as "sin and its wretched consequences." A more accurate translation of "*Elend*" would be something akin to "misery." This is an example of the insertion into the English of additional, unnecessary, and, perhaps, even inaccurate language.

2. Q. 10: The current version translates the German, "*Will Gott diesen Ungehorsam und Abfall ungestraft hingehen lassen?*" as "Will God let man get by with such disobedience and defection?" The colloquial "get by with" does not capture the Heidelberg's language of punishment, and changes the syntax of the question by inserting "man" into the phrase. The special committee concurs with the proposed translation of the CRC/RCA version, "Will God permit such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?" Further, in the first line of Answer 10, "*er zürnt schrecklich*" is softened to the point of inaccuracy: "for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven." This translation fails to reflect the seriousness of God's wrath against sin in the original German, "God is terribly angry."

3. Q. 12: The current version reads: "Since, then, by the righteous judgment of God we have deserved temporal and eternal punishment, how may we escape this punishment, come again to grace, and be reconciled to God?" A: "God wills that his righteousness be satisfied; therefore, payment in full must be made to his righteousness, either by ourselves or by another." There are two problems here. The PC(USA) version translates "*und wiederum zu Gnaden kommen*" in the question as "come again to grace, and be reconciled to God?" *And be reconciled to God* does not exist in the original German, and is apparently inserted here as a clarification. Further the PC(USA) translates "*deswegen müssen wir . . . vollkommene Bezahlung tun*" in the answer as "payment in full must be made to his righteousness." This inserts "to his righteousness" which is not found in the original. Such insertions tend to obscure rather than clarify the meaning of the catechism.

4. Q. 90. The current rendering is: "What is the birth of the new self?" The answer, "Complete joy in God through Christ and a strong desire to live according to the will of God in all good works." This rendering of "*die Auferstehung des neuen Menschen*" as "the birth of the new self" entirely omits the reference to resurrection in the original German. The special committee worked with the CRC/RCA translation committee in proposing the following rendering for Question 90: "What is the rising-to-life of the new self? Answer. It is wholehearted joy in God through Christ and a love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works."

5. Q. 127. The current translation asks, "What is the sixth petition?" Its answer reads, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. That is: since we are so weak that we cannot stand by ourselves for one moment, and besides, since our sworn enemies, the devil, the world, and our own sin, ceaselessly assail us, be pleased to preserve and strengthen us through the power of thy Holy Spirit so that we may stand firm against them, and not be defeated in this spiritual warfare, until at last we obtain complete victory." The current rendering of "*der Teufel, die Welt, und unser eigen Fleisch*" as "the devil, the world and our own sin" obscures the original's reference to "our own flesh." This is more accurately rendered in the proposed CRC/RCA translation as, "The devil, the world, and our own flesh."

The special committee conferred with the authors of the overture and ascertained that where the overture text uses the term “*Scripture texts*” the intention was to indicate “*Scripture citations*,” for the original German text included Scripture citations by book and chapter in the margins for each question and answer. We concluded that any new translation of the catechism should consider including appropriate scriptural citations and/or textual references that correspond to each article of the catechism.

F. *Final Comments Regarding CRCNA/RCA Translation*

The special committee consulted with members of the CRCNA/RCA Joint Translation Committee, asking the CRCNA/RCA Joint Translation Committee to revisit those translation issues about which the translation team of the special committee voiced concern. The CRCNA/RCA was cordial and receptive to the suggestions of the translation team, and will consult with them in order to pursue a more accurate, faithful, and ecumenical translation of the Heidelberg Catechism.

G. *Concluding Summary*

The above recommendations to the 219th General Assembly (2010) are based upon a comprehensive review of the German and Latin texts of the Heidelberg Catechism conducted by the special committee in 2008–2009. This review identified multiple ways in which the current translation of the Heidelberg Catechism could be improved and corrected, in addition to the five examples identified by the original overture.

Review of the joint CRCNA/RCA translation and consultation with the CRCNA/RCA during 2010–2012 would provide joint ecumenical cooperation and witness in relation to this Reformed catechism, and in hopes that a new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism would be shared by three Reformed denominations in North America.

[Financial Implications: Total for 2010–2012: \$31,859.]

This cost accounts for two, face-to-face meetings of the fifteen-member special committee, three teleconferences, two committee representatives’ attendance at the 220th General Assembly (2012), and administrative costs.

Endnote

1. *The Book of Confessions*, 28, quoting paragraph 4.078–079.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 16-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 16-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The ACREC advises that this report be approved with comment.

Rationale

The ACREC appreciates the work being done by the special committee on moving toward a more accurate translation into English of this confession from the original German.

The ACREC asks that the special committee also look at translation issues into the Spanish and Korean versions, and how proposed translation changes will affect and call for new translations of the Heidelberg Confession into Spanish and Korean.

Item 16-12

[The assembly approved Item 16-12 with amendment. See pp. 8, 9–10.]

Report of the Special Committee on the Belhar Confession

The Special Committee on the Belhar Confession unanimously recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the inclusion of the Confession of Belhar in *The Book of Confessions*, and that the amendment be sent to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes by June 2011. [Text for the Confession of Belhar can be found as Attachment 2.]

[Scripture references should be added by footnotes, using those references found in earlier versions of the Belhar Confession published by the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. The “Accompanying Letter” customarily included with the Belhar Confession should be printed in *The Book of Confessions* as a background document without confessional status.]

[To direct the General Assembly Mission Council and its Office of Theology and Worship to create a fully inclusive language version of the Belhar Confession for the Web similar to the inclusive language version of The Confession of 1967.]

Rationale

1. *Why Should the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Adopt the Confession of Belhar?*

The Confession of Belhar confesses the Christian faith powerfully, touching hearts especially at those places where we are struggling today to be faithful.

2. *Reconciliation and Unity*

First, the PC(USA) is preoccupied with questions about the unity of the church. The Confession of Belhar both reassures and challenges us when it speaks of Christ's work of reconciliation being made visible in the church:

We believe ... that unity is, therefore, both a gift and a obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain; ... that the variety of spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, convictions, as well as the various languages and cultures, are by virtue of the reconciliation in Christ, opportunities for mutual service and enrichment within the one visible people of God; that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church. (As printed in the *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 1265-66)

The Confession of Belhar describes the active and practical ways in which unity must be expressed in loving service to one another. It thus reminds us that the confession emerged in 1980s from a South African Reformed community whose leaders and members had been oppressed because of their race and imprisoned for their resistance to their nation's legally mandated system of apartheid, a strict segregation of people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Their "mother-church" of European immigrants had divided the Reformed Christians of South Africa into four distinct churches according to the system of apartheid: one for the descendants of white colonials like themselves, one for descendants of immigrants from Asia, one for those of mixed race (the church that produced the Confession of Belhar), and one for black Africans. Their mother-church taught that apartheid was justified on the basis of Scripture and that it properly allowed people of different races and cultures to have their own separate development. In 1982 the World Alliance of Reformed Churches declared this reading of Scripture heretical. Subsequently, the Confession of Belhar was written to provide a strikingly different biblical view of the church and insists on its unity across all racial and cultural divides. The confessing community was bold and courageous in directly defying the unjust laws of church and state, echoing at times The Theological Declaration of Barmen confession, and remarkably gracious in its focus on God's love and justice. We remember that the church of mixed-race people acted on their convictions by merging with that of the black Africans. Then, in an astonishing gesture of forgiveness, they invited the white and Asian churches to join them in one Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. That unification process has not yet reached completion, but unity is still being pursued.

The gift of unity and the obligation to pursue the unity of the church were both accepted by those who wrote the Confession of Belhar with the full knowledge that they would pay a heavy price in suffering. The authors, who themselves represented different racial backgrounds, lived out this reconciliation in the crafting of this confession. The confession challenges us as we realize that it is not armchair theology but costly grace experienced in faithful obedience to Jesus Christ. If we are to be faithful to the Gospel, we also must accept this gift and obligation with the full knowledge that they will be costly in many ways. This confession expresses clearly our own church's longing for unity across barriers we see in our own situation of different spiritual gifts, backgrounds, convictions, languages, and cultures, both within our church and across denominational lines. We long for concrete testimony of the reconciliation and mutual service in the one church of Jesus Christ. The Confession of Belhar reassures us with its confidence that the good news of Jesus Christ offers hope, liberation, salvation, and true peace.

3. *Justice*

Our church is preoccupied with questions of justice, certainly including racial justice. As we read the Confession of Belhar, we remember that not long ago our own church struggled with overt and even legal racial segregation in church and state. Within the living memory of many of our church members, African American Christians were turned away from white congregational worship and communion; protesters against segregation in civil society were beaten and killed by police and supporters of the existing social structure. We identify profoundly with the struggle in South Africa to defeat apartheid at least partly because we see in that struggle our own story. Our church members, along with many other citizens, protested and boycotted in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in South Africa. We felt the unity of the church across the globe in a special way. Today, like those in South Africa, we celebrate the remarkable transformation of our societies with the lowering of legal barriers; yet we mourn the painful legacies of long years of segregation. Inequalities of resources of education, of health care, of employment opportunities, of respect by society, have left both our societies with vast gaps between the life possibilities of the dominant white society and those of people of color. Recent political discourse has alerted us to the degree to which racism remains alive in our national life and lays a responsibility upon the church to address it.

Again, the Confession of Belhar both reassures and challenges our church. It reassures us that God is active in bringing justice and true peace in the world, and that when we stand with the oppressed, the poor, the orphans and widows, the stranger, and the prisoner, we stand with God. The confession challenges us to take that stand with God.

We believe...that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others. (as printed in the *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1267)

At present, *The Book of Confessions* represents well our historical connection with European theology and our own confessing on the American scene. But it lacks any witness to our profoundly significant theological bonds with churches on other continents. It would be appropriate to select the Confession of Belhar for inclusion as such a witness both because of our church's sense of identification with the struggle for church unity and for racial justice that it represents, and also because it declares the Gospel powerfully to us in our own present situation.

The Confession of Belhar is increasingly recognized and respected by the church outside South Africa. It reflects major themes of the Reformed tradition: its deep biblical roots, its high Christology and Trinitarian theology, its emphasis on the sovereignty of God over all creation, its commitment to seek the visible unity of the church as the body of Christ in whom the walls of hostility are broken down, its call for justice for all of humanity, its conviction that in our common baptism in the one Lord and one faith all have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to the ministry of reconciliation.

This confession has been granted confessional status by some Reformed churches in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. Two of our sister Reformed churches in North America are in the process of adopting it: the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Many of our own church members know and identify strongly with this confession. It is being taught in our seminaries and being used in worship in some of our congregations. In this sense it already plays a role in our church's life. With its formal adoption, we expect the themes of this confession to permeate the life of our denomination in its liturgy, its theological and mission reflections, and its training of church officers, just as has happened with more recent confessions such as The Theological Declaration of Barmen, The Confession of 1967, and A Brief Statement of Faith. We are indebted to this confession for its reassurances and its challenges to shake us out of our comfort and strengthen us to make a bolder and more faithful witness to the Gospel.

The process of preparing our church for the possibility of adopting the Confession of Belhar began with a task force reporting to the General Assembly in 2004. In the Task Force to Study Reparations report, the General Assembly approved a recommendation for a church-wide study by all presbyteries and congregations in preparation for the General Assembly of 2008. In 2008, the General Assembly called for the creation of a special committee to study whether Confession of Belhar should be adopted into *The Book of Confessions*.

The members of this committee now unanimously and enthusiastically endorse its adoption.

[Notes: It has been approved by Reformed Church in America (RCA), Evangelical Reformed Church (Germany), Protestant United Church (Belgium), Reformed Church (Iglesia Reformada Dominicana (Dominican Republic).]

Attachment 1

Belhar Pastoral Letter

Dear brothers and sisters in the PC(USA),

We write to you as the fifteen members of the Belhar Confession Special Committee commissioned by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and subsequently appointed by the moderator together with the two previous assembly moderators. The Belhar Confession was originally produced in the 1980's by the South African Dutch Reformed Mission Church to protest the longstanding evil of apartheid in that country. We were asked by the Assembly to study this Confession and to decide whether or not it should be commended to the PC(USA) for inclusion in *The Book of Confessions (BOC): The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, (USA)*, Part One. *The Book of Order*, **G-18.0201**, spells out an exacting process that must be followed for any amendment to the *BOC* to be accepted. In short, after the initial approval by a G.A. for a special committee to study the viability of such an amendment, a proposed amendment to the *BOC* requires approval by the General Assembly, followed by a vote of approval of at least two-thirds of all our presbyteries before the final approval of its inclusion in the *BOC* by the ensuing General Assembly can take place.

We believe that the PC(USA) is in urgent need of being claimed and transformed by the gospel it professes to believe, to serve, and to proclaim to the world. Our American Presbyterian story is inextricably intertwined with our nation's story. The American Declaration of Independence nurtured an inspiring vision of freedom, equality, and justice for all of our citizens. However, when the American Constitution was drafted in 1789, the founding authors in large measure betrayed the Declaration's vision by reckoning a slave as three-fifths of a person for apportioning representation in the newly created House of Representatives.

Throughout the nineteenth century, efforts to maintain the political unity of north and south in the midst of the scourge of slavery ultimately failed, and our nation suffered the division and violence of the Civil War. In his Second Inaugural Address, President Abraham Lincoln lamented that both sides read the same Bible and prayed to the same God and believed that God was on their side. Presbyterians fought on both sides, deeply divided over the issues of race, biblical interpretation, and God's will. Not only was our nation split down the middle, but our Presbyterian denomination became divided between "northern" and "southern" churches. This legacy of America's racism and struggle to overcome it continues to inhabit the soul of both nation and church.

During the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, our nation has become progressively multi-racial and multi-cultural. In God's providence, the world has been brought to our doorstep. Yet the mission of our church has not, by and large, been successful in embracing the new immigrants that have come to us from every nation. The vast majority of our congregations are still predominantly Euro-American, aging, and enjoying an economic level above most of the rest of the nation. Our membership numbers and adult baptisms continue to decline. Our cities continue to be segregated by ethnicity and social class. Cultural differences based upon language, gender, and wealth as well as ancient forms of 'tribalism' fueled by racism and ethnic chauvinisms continue to confront us with major challenges to the well-being of the church as we strive to witness to a fallen culture and a secular way of living.

In the face of these conflicts, the cry for schism is heard in several mainline Protestant churches. Together with other faith communions, we as Presbyterians are being compelled to rethink our biblical and confessional tradition and to ask what it means for us to be **"one holy catholic and apostolic Church"** (*Nicene Creed, BOC, 1.3*). If ever there were a time in which we need to know, to believe, to embrace, and to live our confession, it is now. According to *The Book of Order*,

"The PC (USA) states its faith and bears witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in the *Book of Confessions*. In these confessional statements the church declares to its members and to the world

Who and what it is,

What it believes,

What it resolves to do." (BO, G-2.0100)

The Belhar Confession has been helping many Reformed churches around the world to understand their call to the unity of Christ's Church and their call to mission. We note that some partner churches in the Caribbean Africa and Europe (including the Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany, the Protestant United Church in Belgium, and the Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic) have already adopted Belhar as a confessional standard. As a part of the world Reformed family, we believe that American Presbyterians also need to be in conversation with the Belhar Confession. The church's witness would be strengthened by a *Book of Confessions* that includes this document from the earth's Global South, where the mission of the church is expanding so rapidly. We have much to learn from those churches' struggles for unity, reconciliation, and justice. Their modeling of God's grace in their rejection of injustice and embracing of forgiveness is a humbling reminder of our own need for renewal, even as it provides a beacon of light for the entire Reformed family. We understand that the Reformed Church in America and The Christian Reformed Church in North America are already engaged in a time of prayerful and theological discernment about whether to add Belhar to their own confessional standards. We enthusiastically urge the Presbyterian Church (USA) to move forward in its own process of discernment.

Our committee also believes that the Belhar Confession joins the chorus of witnesses to God's story of salvation embodied in our *Book of Confessions*. This gospel story reveals the eternal purpose, plan, and will of God who "created the heavens and the earth." From before the foundation of the world God willed "to gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:9-10). For the sake of the new creation, the one Triune God, the Holy One of Israel, became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. In his life, death, and resurrection God acted in human history to make peace, to break down dividing walls of hostility, and to reconcile the cosmos and humanity to God's Self and us as human beings to each other. Through the blood of Jesus' cross, God's mercy and grace rescued creation and human history from a hopeless bondage to the powers of sin and death. Through the amazing grace of God and by the faith which comes through God's love revealed in Christ, Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised, sophisticated and barbarian, slave and free, male and female, all were joined together for the purpose of becoming one family of God, fellow citizens of the reign of God, and a holy temple of the Lord, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. This salvation is of God and from God, God's gift from beginning to end (2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Galatians 3:23-4:7; Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 1:13-23; 3:1-17).

As a new humanity we are called to live this gift of grace, to actualize who we are in Christ: the one, reconciled, just people of God. The citizens of the Kingdom of God, united in Christ, baptized into Christ, welcomed at the one Table of the Lord, are to be a light to the nations of God's peace and justice. The visible unity of the people of God and the transformed character of this people are to witness to God's salvation in a still broken, violent, and divided world. Through the fruit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the body of Christ is to be built up in the love of God for the sake of God's mission in the world (Ephesians 4:1-32). As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to be ambassadors of Christ's reconciling peace, justice, and love. To the degree that the church has failed to be God's people and to live into the reality of God's will, we are called to repent and to work for the transformation of our life together.

As we think again of our church and our relation to the more recent history of racial division in the United States, we think especially of what Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote at the conclusion of his *Letter From A Birmingham Jail* in 1963 that continues to beam the hope of the American dream:

One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

The Belhar Confession is a courageous proclamation of the gospel from our brothers and sisters in the South African Uniting Reformed Church. It emerged out of the context of the sinful, unjust realities of South Africa and in part reflects its conversation with the *Theological Declaration of Barmen* that was hammered out in a similar context of evil. Belhar is a cry for the true biblical gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to be proclaimed and lived in the church and world. It reflects a Christian community that is truly prepared “to undertake this mission even at the risk of losing its life, trusting in God alone as the author and giver of life, sharing the gospel, and doing those deeds in the world that point beyond themselves to the new reality in Christ” (G-3.0400, *Book of Order*).

The Special Committee to study the Belhar Confession believes that this Confession from South Africa has a profoundly important message for our church and will continue to speak to every new generation. Its biblical roots and Reformed theological perspective will strengthen our confessional tradition by guiding us in our study of the Bible, in our theological reflection, liturgical practice, evangelistic outreach, making of disciples, works of social justice, and our mission of peacemaking to the world.

Therefore, we the Special Committee to study the Belhar Confession, are convinced that the Belhar Confession should be included as one of our confessional standards. We prayerfully commend the Belhar Confession to the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) for inclusion in our *Book of Confessions*. To that end, we recommend further the excellent study guide for the church by Eunice T. McGarahan, *Study of The Belhar Confession and Its Accompanying Letter*, published by the Office of Theology and Worship and available online at (domain address here). The Belhar Special Committee would urge that the PC(USA) use this publication in every presbytery and congregation for study and reflection for the period 2010 through 2012. [Note: If the GA votes for inclusion, presbyteries will have completed voting by Spring 2011]. It is our hope that the larger church will see, hear, and embrace the good news to which the Belhar Confession bears such strong witness.

Grace and Peace

Attachment 2
Confession of Belhar
September 1986¹

1. **We believe** in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.
2. **We believe** in one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family.

We believe

- that Christ’s work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;
- that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God’s Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;
- that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted;
- that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways: in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope; together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ; together are built up to the stature of Christ, to the new humanity; together know and bear one another’s burdens, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another; that we suffer with one another for the sake of righteousness; pray together; together serve God in this world; and together fight against all which may threaten or hinder this unity;
- that this unity can be established only in freedom and not under constraint; that the variety of spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, convictions, as well as the various languages and cultures, are by virtue of the reconciliation in Christ, opportunities for mutual service and enrichment within the one visible people of God;
- that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church;

Therefore, we reject any doctrine

- which absolutizes either natural diversity or the sinful separation of people in such a way that this absolutization hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church, or even leads to the establishment of a separate church formation;
- which professes that this spiritual unity is truly being maintained in the bond of peace while believers of the same confession are in effect alienated from one another for the sake of diversity and in despair of reconciliation;
- which denies that a refusal earnestly to pursue this visible unity as a priceless gift is sin;
- which explicitly or implicitly maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the church.

3. We believe

- that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ; that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world; that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker; that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.
- that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity; that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world;
- that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity;
- that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by appeal to the gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine.

Therefore, we reject any doctrine

- which, in such a situation sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and color and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ.

4. We believe

- that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;
- that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged;
- that God calls the church to follow him in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;
- that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;
- that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;
- that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering;
- that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right;
- that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;
- that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

Therefore, we reject any ideology

- which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel.

5. We believe that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only head, the church is called to confess and to do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence.

Jesus is Lord.

To the one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever.

Endnote

1. This is a translation of the original Afrikaans text of the confession as it was adopted by the synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa in 1986. In 1994 the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa united to form the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa_(URCSA). This inclusive language text was prepared by the Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 16-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 16-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

Item 16-12 is the Report of the Special Committee on the Belhar Confession, and recommends inclusion of the Belhar Confession in *The Book of Confessions*.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) advises that Item 16-12 be approved.

Rationale

The ACREC sees the theological importance of the Belhar's three emphases and the need of the church for such a statement at this time to give us perspective on issues that divide us from one another and separate us from God through sin. The ACREC is pleased, then, to advise approval of the report of the special committee, Item 16-12. The members of this committee studied the confession and its accompanying letter closely, and is unanimously recommending the confession's inclusion in *The Book of Confessions*.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 16-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 16-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns concurs with the report and advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to approve Item 16-12.

Rationale

See ACWC's rationale for Item 16-01.

Item 16-13

[The assembly approved Item 16-13. See p. 8.]

Term "Offices" in W-4.4001b of the Directory for Worship—From Pastor from Presbytery of Peace River.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer Item 16-13 with the following response:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) answer the request with the following authoritative interpretation of W-4.4001b:

Throughout our Constitution the term "office" refers to the office of elder, deacon, or minister of the Word and Sacrament, or to persons elected to the positions of moderator, clerk, trustee, or treasurer of a congregation or governing body. Services of ordination and/or installation, such as those envisioned in W-4.4001b, appropriately require a brief statement of the nature of the office or offices to which candidates are to be ordained or installed. In those cases where W-4.4001b applies to commissioning services for persons not otherwise being ordained or installed to one of the church's offices, it is appropriate for the minister presiding at such a service to offer a brief statement of the nature of the commissioned service.

Rationale

This recommendation comes as the result of a request received by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution from a pastor in the Presbytery of Peace River. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not initiate business before the Assembly. However, pursuant to G-13.0112, the Stated Clerk must submit to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution all questions requiring an interpretation of the *Book of Order* by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, in turn, must report its findings and any recommendations it has to the General Assembly. The Assembly is free to adopt, amend or decline to approve the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. *Question Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution:*

Item 16-13 from the pastor from Presbytery of Peace River presents the following question upon which it seeks constitutional interpretation:

a. Would the last sentence of W-4.4001b more properly say "The minister presiding shall state briefly the nature of the ministry to which the person is being ordained, installed or commissioned?"

The questioner notes that the section includes instructions regarding the contents of services of ordination and /or installation for elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament, as well as commissioning services for certified Christian educators, commissioned lay pastors, and others.

2. *Findings*

Pursuant to G-13.0112d, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the questions presented:

With respect to the question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the question presents a question in which authoritative interpretation of W-4.4001b is advisable.

The questioner rightly notes that the use of the term “office” in the final sentence of W-4.4001b would seem to imply that all persons listed earlier in the paragraph are being ordained, installed, or commissioned to an “office.” However, the *Book of Order* otherwise limits the use of the term “office” to elders, deacons, ministers, moderators, and governing body clerks. Persons in certified service in the church do not, by virtue of that service alone, occupy an “office.” Hence the inclusion of the term “office” in a context applying to persons in certified service not otherwise elected to office seems overly broad.

Implications for the proposed Form of Government: Approval of Item 16-13 would have similar implications for the proposed Form of Government that it would have on the current Form of Government.

Item 16-14

[The assembly approved Item 16-14. See pp. 8, 9.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve Paul T. Roberts as president and dean of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary.

Rationale

General Assembly approval of the Reverend Paul T. Roberts’ appointment as president and dean of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary is required by “A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” which was approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986), and by the seminary’s current bylaws.

Paul Roberts was appointed president and dean of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary in May of 2010 in Atlanta, Georgia. Previously Dr. Roberts has served as interim president and dean of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary. Roberts also served for more than ten years as pastor of the Church of the Master in Atlanta, Georgia. He has been a leader among alumni.

Roberts is a member of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta and holds degrees from Princeton University (BS, 1985) and Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (M.Div., 1996).

Item 16-15

[The assembly approved Item 16-15. See pp. 8, 9.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve Michael Jinkins as president of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Rationale

General Assembly approval of the Rev. Dr. Jinkins’ appointment as president of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary is required by “A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” which was approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986), and by the seminary’s current bylaws.

Michael Jinkins was called as president of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in June of 2010. Dr. Jinkins has served Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary as an administrator and professor since 1993, and as dean since 2004. He has been ordained in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for twenty-nine years and joined the Austin Seminary faculty following fourteen years in pastoral leadership and mission service within several congregations in the State of Texas.

As an author of 12 books and more than 100 articles, essays, chapters, reviews, and papers in academic, professional, and ecclesial publications, Dr. Jinkins is well respected for his contributions to the life of the church and the academy and in many ecumenical circles.

Dr. Jinkins is a member of Mission Presbytery and holds degrees from Howard Payne University (BA, 1975), Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div., 1979), Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (D.Min., 1983), and University of Aberdeen, (Ph.D., 1990 in Systematic and Historical Theology).

Item 17-Self-Study ACSWP

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Self-Study Report for the 219th General Assembly (2010)

The Presbyterian Church is under obligation to show how... Christian principles apply to all social, moral, economic, national and international relationships... that responsibility for ... this vital and far-reaching task be lodged with a group of socially-minded and consecrated men and women, authorized by the General Assembly...and that the group so appointed be clothed with authority commensurate with their responsibility.” (*Minutes*, PCUSA, 1936, Part I, p. 199)

I. Introduction

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) presents the following report as a measurement of performance for the six-year review period of January 1, 2004, through December 31, 2009. Previous examinations of the church’s social witness structures have occurred in the 1936 study quoted above, and subsequently in 1949, 1977, and 1993.

The ACSWP welcomes the task of self-assessment. A critical first step in this task is the identification of the organizational goals to be measured. Social witness is part of both the preaching and the leadership of the church. Preliminary Principles in the *Book of Order* contain a great social witness vision of the purpose of the church in relation to its members and its neighbors. Ultimate goals of social witness are its contributions toward the achievement of two of the great ends of the church—specifically, “the promotion of social righteousness” and “the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0200).

The ACSWP serves the church and the leadership of both the General Assembly (GA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) by providing carefully reasoned arguments and forceful theological justifications for the church’s response to critical social issues. These are guided by a sense of the church’s independence and integrity as found in The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and The Theological Declaration of Barmen. Further rationale for ACSWP’s role in the church is stated in our twentieth century confessions. In the words of The Confession of 1967,

In each time and place, there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations” (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.43).

Congruent with the review standards, this self-study seeks to demonstrate that over the 2004–2009 review period, ACSWP has demonstrated “fidelity to mission and partnership” and “effectiveness of services.” [The General Assembly’s review standards are listed in Appendix A.]

In submitting this report, ACSWP invites readers to think about how important it is that the church *not* be silent in the face of tragedy, injustice, and the denial of responsibility. The church is asked to address these situations with wisdom, hope, and courage, even when its membership is not entirely of one mind.

A. *Report Resources and Content*

The chief resources for this study are the texts of the church’s confessions, ACSWP minutes, and *Minutes* of the General Assembly that provide an ethical orientation for the work of church agencies. Church leaders also have been surveyed by the Research Services office of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), in a manner similar to other review processes, noting general levels of awareness of and agreement with ACSWP’s work. Survey respondent comments were made available to the self-study writing team and selected information from the comments has been incorporated into this assessment.

In order to assess ACSWP’s contributions over the review period, it is necessary to include in this introduction to the self-study both an explicit understanding of the overall function of ACSWP as advisor on social witness policy of PC(USA) and an understanding how this advisory function is expected to be performed in specifically mandated activities.

After introducing ACSWP’s mandated functions, this self-study report is organized into five sections regarding ACSWP’s:

1. Primary PC(USA) Relationships;
2. Accomplishments and Contributions;
3. Leadership in Social Witness;
4. Challenges and Limitations; and
5. Future Objectives.

B. *Social Witness and Social Policy Witness*

It has been the practice of Reformed Christians to care for the reform of both self and church within the broader community, and to be concerned with “[the establishment of] social righteousness.” The function of ACSWP is to help the church’s representative bodies speak with wisdom and forethought on challenges to Christian conscience.

This function of social witness has been integral to the Reformed tradition and part of the Presbyterian church’s life since the first General Assembly’s letter to President Washington on public morality in 1789. This function has been structured in a variety of ways subsequent to the 18th century. Appendix B presents a brief chronology of how the task of developing social witness policy has been structured in the life of the Presbyterian church in the United States.

The fundamental denominational structure as defined in the *Design for Mission* was organized around the concept of mission embodied in The Confession of 1967. That confession’s most explicit ethical section lifts up four concerns: peace, economic justice, racial justice, and “chaos in family life.” The adoption of *The Book of Confessions* in 1967 also brought forward much explicit moral teaching in The Second Helvetic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism, and The Scots Confession. Overall, these confessions strengthened the connection between theology and ethics in the church and affirmed a place for the church’s moral voice in society.

The charter for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is the document *Vision for Social Policy and Social Witness: Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness*, adopted by the General Assembly in 1993. That report updates previous approaches to social policy-making in the church in light of A Brief Statement of Faith (1991). The approach described in this document has been designed to provide the best possible discernment, reflection, and analysis to the General Assembly and its agencies and hence to the church as a whole, and to do this on a reasonably timely, cost-effective, and participatory basis. Presbyterian social witness requires taking a long view, as each separate policy statement or advice and counsel memo draws on the rich legacy of Reformed social thought.

C. *Assigned Specific Functions (See Appendix D also)*

To assist the church in its role of making social witness, the GAMC Manual of Operations assigns the following specific functions to ACSWP:

- a. Prepare policy statements, resolutions study papers, social involvement reports, or Advice and Counsel Memoranda on the church’s social witness for study and recommendation to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Mission Council, or on its own initiative; seek concurrence of the council relative to financial implications on plans for studies.
- b. Advise General Assembly Mission Council on matters of social witness policy or strategy, including interim statements concerning pressing social issues, the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly. Facilitate two-way communication with all parties throughout policy development and advisory processes.
- c. Prepare special studies at the request of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Mission Council, or its Ministries on matters of social witness.
- d. Work cooperatively with the Ministries and all governing bodies in coordinating the interdependent process of social policy formation, implementation, and monitoring.
- e. Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its representative committees on overtures, commissioner resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that recommend policy direction or action on social witness.
- f. Maintain an up-to-date and accurate Social Policy Compilation of General Assembly social witness policy and provide information to the church as requested.
- g. Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret the social witness policies of the GA.
- h. Identify facets of the church’s social witness that enable or obstruct effective action. Analyze, in cooperation with the General Assembly Ministries, the effectiveness of social witness in governing bodies, institutions, and the General Assembly Mission Council. After consulting entities that have primary ministry responsibility and the General Assembly Council, report to the General Assembly on the advisory committee’s findings, together with recommendations for improving social witness.
- i. Report directly to the General Assembly because of the need to maintain and advance a prophetic witness of the church.

In these ways ACSWP counsels the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council on the use of the church’s corporate voice as an advocate for justice, peace, and environmental sustainability. The Structural Design for Mission complements *Vision for Social Policy and Social Witness: Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness*. In its description of the church’s organization, this document reaffirms ACSWP’s location in the policymaking rather than program implementation areas of the General Assembly Mission Council. (The organizational chart included as Appendix C illustrates ACSWP’s location external to the programmatic entities within the GAMC.)

While ACSWP is not a program entity, PC(USA) may develop its programs in response to an action approved by the General Assembly on studies or recommendations developed by ACSWP. For example, a number of the church’s programs in the Compassion, Peace, and Justice program area, including those of peacemaking and child advocacy, were initiated in response to the General Assembly’s approval of ACSWP studies and recommendations. Other programs have been shaped by recommendations from studies of their topic areas, e.g., the Presbyterian Hunger Program and Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). Recommendations for new program emphases and areas can also be directed toward other

agencies under the authority of the General Assembly, such as the recently accepted recommendation to include an immigration lawyer within the Office of the Stated Clerk.

D. *Process of Policy Development*

Study teams of church member experts volunteer their time to develop position statements that provide the basis for recommendations that the assembly may approve with or without amendment, receive (more or less for study), or disapprove. Subject specialist consultants are also employed to draft documents, in consultation with the study groups. The ACSWP as a whole reviews the study teams' reports and determines their readiness for submission to the General Assembly (GA) or the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

II. Primary PC(USA) Relationships

Because ACSWP's function is carried out in collaboration with other PC(USA) agencies and committees, an accurate assessment of ACSWP's fidelity to its mission during this review period requires detailed description of ACSWP's primary PC(USA) organizational relationships.

A. *Relationships with General Assembly and General Assembly Mission Council*

As described in the assigned functions, ACSWP responds to requests by the General Assembly for studies and recommendations. The ACSWP is also mandated to alert the church to significant concerns (such as wars, for example), and to consider the prophetic dimension that is present in *all* of the church's life and mission. The ACSWP is specifically mandated to support the prophetic voice of the church, but not to serve as that voice in itself. Rather, guided by the Holy Spirit, ACSWP offers its recommendations to the shared conscience of the church as it seeks the mind of Christ. The General Assembly, like every other council of the church, has a prophetic voice as it seeks to witness to the Jesus Christ who is Prophet, Priest, and King. Social witness policies and other statements approved are documented in the minutes of those councils.

The Hebrew prophets and much of Jesus' teaching are the basis for Christian concern for justice. Fundamental, too, to the Jewish and Christian faiths is the pattern of having prophets play a role separate from that of kings. To apply this fundamental pattern today, both within the church and within the larger society, the prophetic function requires autonomy in relation to the central power of the organization. Within the church, the separate elected committee structure of ACSWP allows it self-direction, while the administrative structure places its staff under the purview of the hierarchy of authority. Within society, the church's independence is crucial lest it be co-opted by powers of any persuasion. The church's ability to undertake an informed analysis and critique, based on the Gospel understanding of God's reign, is where social witness is manifested as a key component of the Good News: "God alone is Lord of the conscience and [has] left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men [women] which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship" (*Book of Order*, G-1.0301; see also *The Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.109).

It is important to recognize that most "mainline" Protestant denominations have devised some regular administrative process for handling inherently challenging justice issues. An "applied-ethics" department of some kind is attached to the central leadership, together with a process for providing moral guidance on issues affecting members' lives. Again, due to Reformed commitments to conscience and to covenant, the PC(USA) maintains a corporate witness that does not claim infallibility but nonetheless speaks for the General Assembly as a whole.

Framed by this PC(USA) role, ACSWP functions as a standing committee with direct access to the General Assembly and to the General Assembly Mission Council. The ACSWP has twelve members who are elected by the General Assembly for terms of four years, renewable once. Its members are chosen for their own experience in and commitment to social witness, professional expertise in social ethics and fields frequently involved in social questions, and for their diversity of background and viewpoint, including theological diversity. Currently all committee members hold masters, doctoral, or legal degrees, consistent with the skill sets found among many members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The ACSWP's work is reported regularly to the General Assembly Mission Council (with whom it shares three full members) and it presents a narrative report and minutes of its meetings to every General Assembly for its review. Stated in the GAMC Manual of Operations is a requirement that ACSWP members meet annually with representatives of the GAMC Executive Committee for strategic reflection and anticipation of social witness policy concerns. However, this meeting did not occur in each of the years under review. The ACSWP has been concerned to re-establish its communications with the GAMC, and has recommended resuming annual meetings with the GAMC Executive Committee. In September 2008 and September 2009, at the request of ACSWP leadership, meetings with GAMC leadership took place as both entities recognized the need for joint strategy. Both GAMC and ACSWP leadership see the importance of ethical witness as part of leadership, as well as the need to be strategic in a time of many competing interests and a suffering of the common good. The ACSWP has also appreciated the willingness of the GAMC to include time on its docket regularly to inform GAMC members of current work. Integral to this relationship with the GAMC has been the leadership of the Justice Committee and the staff expertise of the executive administrator, supervisor of the ACSWP coordinator.

B. *Relationships with the Advocacy Committees*

Over the review period ACSWP has profited from productive collaborative relationships with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC). Such relationships are important for social witness because ACSWP and the advocacy committees have distinct but complementary functions with regard to the promotion of social justice in the church and in society. Using the lists of assigned functions found in the GAMC Manual of Operations, Figure 1 presents a schema comparing the areas of social witness focus and the functional emphases of each of the three committees. The different levels of emphasis are judged from content analyses of the lists of functions for each committee. (The data from which the schema is made are included as a comparison chart in Appendix D.)

The complementarity of the mandated assignments is most important for understanding the relationships between the committees. First, the advocacy committees are charged with specific foci (gender and racial ethnic concerns) while ACSWP is mandated to address a wide array of social justice issues. Second, both advocacy committees have large monitoring and advocacy roles vis-à-vis the church as a whole and a more focused nurturing role vis-à-vis their particular focal communities. Their advocacy is to be in the spheres of both church and the social order, and they build on the overall body of policies and previous positions of the General Assembly developed by ACSWP or in collaboration with ACSWP. Most important, the advocacy committees need to identify changes in the lived experience of each of their constituencies and to recommend new issues for attention by ACSWP as well as other Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and GAMC committees, staff, or task forces. The ACSWP, on the other hand, does not advocate on the behalf of any specific constituency and its monitoring of policy implementation is less emphasized in its listed functions than its role as an adviser who informs and recommends policy.

Figure 1. Comparative Functions of the Three Advisory and Advocacy Committees

Functions	ACWC	ACREC	ACSWP
Policy study, development, and compilation	Gender justice	Racial ethnic justice	Social/economic/political/ environmental justice issues
Advice and counsel to GA and GAMC	Gender justice	Racial ethnic justice	Social/economic/political/ environmental justice issues
Monitoring of Policy Implementation	Gender justice	Racial ethnic justice	Ancillary function
Advocacy for a Constituency	Women and girls	Racial ethnic populations	Not an assigned function

The ACSWP depends on the knowledge and contributions of both ACREC and ACWC to hold its work accountable to the concerns of racial and ethnic and gender justice. Over the review period, issues such as employment, war, and immigration have had gender and racial ethnic dimensions that needed to be included in good social policy. A recent example of collaborative work is the resolution *God's Work in Human Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation* developed with ACWC.

Collaboration includes the ways in which the committees communicate and work together. As they evolved through the 1980s, the Advisory Council on Church and Society sent liaisons to the meetings of the two advocacy committees and they reciprocated. This important way to learn about the work of the committees continued and occurred often during the present review period. In the last six years, ACSWP members have attended approximately 85 percent of ACREC and ACWC meetings. The advocacy committees also have had regular attendees at ACSWP meetings.

These liaisons actively engage in ACSWP discussion and contribute important insights from their constituencies to the work of ACSWP. Often, as at the most recent ACSWP meetings, liaisons from ACREC and ACWC seek to share their specific concerns and their work in progress. For example, in October 2009 the ACREC liaison brought to the attention of ACSWP members the fact that a disproportionate number of seminary professors who had lost their positions in the recent recession are persons of Hispanic racial ethnic heritage. The ACSWP examined the overall value of Hispanic professorial representation in relation to this growing ethnic population and advised the ACREC representative to consider asking the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) to look systemically at the issue. The loss of professors of Hispanic racial ethnic heritage was considered by ACSWP to have potential impact for the church's social witness as it is often professors of racial and ethnic heritage who fully communicate and interpret General Assembly (GA) policies to seminary students as well as contribute to the field of social ethics used to develop GA policy.

A tradition of holding coordinated and parallel ACREC, ACWC, and ACSWP meetings once a year was reduced to once every two years during the review period. This decrease of face-to-face meeting time is unfortunate, but has been necessary as a result of budget decreases. With the reduction of common meeting time, the roles of the liaisons have become especially

important. All three of the joint meetings in the review period were held in Louisville for optimum consultation with program staff involved in the range of issues that all three committees consider. In meeting together, the committees' different areas of expertise and emphasis have been quite evident, though they have been joined in principle on matters coming before the General Assembly. In addition to the biennial joint meetings, the committees work together at Advice and Counsel meetings in advance of the General Assembly. In these joint Advice and Counsel meetings, efforts have been made to streamline material and decisions by grouping and rephrasing topics for the commissioners so that material is not repeated.

Several ACSWP studies completed in the review period have included participation by advocacy committee members or their nominees in the ACSWP study groups. This collaborative work resulted when the work proposed received attention from more than one committee. For example, the resolution on the Gulf Coast (Post-Katrina), *Struck Down But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future*, involved hearings and consultations with ACREC.

The report submitted to the 219th General Assembly (2010) by the Review Committee of the Advisory and Advocacy Committees concurs with this positive assessment of cooperation. The review committee members interviewed both the leaders and members of all three committees. The responses of both ACREC and ACWC interviewees were very positive about the relationships between each of the advocacy committees and ACSWP.

III. Accomplishments and Contributions

The ACSWP products take the form of documents that are submitted to the GA or GAMC for approval, interpretation, and dissemination. "Forming Social Policy" in the General Assembly *Manual* lists the following five types of documents to be developed by ACSWP:"

- *Policy Statements.* Developed in response to General Assembly action, position statements can take the form of longer proposed "policies" that develop principles based on biblical and confessional resources, review history and data, and provide a theological and ethical framework for church strategies on major questions.

- *Resolutions.* These policy documents, usually shorter than full policy statements, apply previously approved policies to particular matters, such as applying church human rights policy to a particular national or regional crisis.

- *Study Papers.* The General Assembly can request that an issue be studied or ACSWP can determine that an emerging issue is important enough to stimulate church-wide study of a social concern. Sometimes studies are conducted as part of a multi-year process leading to recommendations in light of church-wide or more focused feedback. Each policy statement and most resolutions also include a rationale section as a reasoned and grounded basis for GA positions. Study papers provide such foundation for policy statements and resolutions.

- *Social Involvement and Monitoring Reports.* These documents address issues of urgency and importance, and may analyze ACSWP's own role in addressing a given subject. Monitoring reports examine how the church is applying its social policies in its program work. Monitoring of program work is often not put into formal reports, however, but is shared in on-going consultation and cooperation with program areas.

- *Advice and Counsel Memoranda.* These statements provide informed comment that applies existing policies of the General Assembly to new decisions. Of practical help to the commissioners, the memoranda often suggest ways to combine overtures so that the assembly does not need to vote repeatedly on similar matters. The memoranda assemble relevant data, descriptions of past and present church practice, and theologically informed comment on possible consequences and public policy implications. Such memoranda usually recommend concurrence or non-concurrence, based on the relevant policy, analysis, or consequences. Advice and Counsel memoranda may also be addressed to General Assembly Mission Council members as it deliberates, prepares recommendations for, or implements policies of the General Assembly.

The ACSWP has been requested to develop all five types of documents during the review period 2004–2009. These accomplishments are described below by document type. The tables in each section list the work assigned to ACSWP by the three assemblies during the review period. These accomplishments demonstrate ACSWP's "fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly." Work carried out over the review period also gives testimony to efforts by this committee to exhibit "a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA)."

A. PC(USA) Policy Statements

Three policy statements developed by ACSWP were approved by the General Assembly during the review period (see Table 1). All three policies focused on the systemic political and economic issues that impact families and individuals in U.S. society and recommend how our church should respond to the needs of these groups.

Table 1. Policy Statements Developed and Approved in the Review Period

GA Year	Referral Year	Policy Statements
2004—Approved	1997	<i>Transforming Families</i>
2006—Approved	1999	<i>Living into the Body of Christ: Towards Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities</i>
2008—Approved	1999	<i>Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness</i>

Two of these statements are linked in their content. The first, *Living into the Body of Christ: Towards Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities*, focuses on ministries with people with disabilities. The second statement, *Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness* focuses on ministries with persons who often have specific disabilities related to serious mental illness. These policy statements resulted from multi-year processes involving persons of diverse expertise from across the church. They involved widely distributed study materials and reflection upon the responses to these materials. While all statements include recommendations for congregational involvement as well as public policy advocacy, these two statements are particularly devoted to helping congregations in their ministries with persons frequently excluded from church life. Here the focus is on pastoral care and charitable living, recognizing that justice begins in right relationships. These are specific, theologically informed resources that show how to combine pastoral and prophetic elements. With the closure of the Health Ministries Office and the shift of Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA) to a more free-standing operation, these reports provide for continuity in the provision of resources by the church.

B. PC(USA) Resolutions

Much ACSWP work in the past six years has been the development of resolutions—statements that apply approved social policy to specific situations. Table 2 lists these resolutions submitted to the General Assembly.

Table 2. Resolutions Developed During Review Period

GA Year	Referral Year	Resolutions
2004—All Approved	GA: 2001	<i>Calling for a Comprehensive Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the U.S.</i> One recommendation called for the addition to OGA of a specialized lawyer to provide services to presbyteries, synods, and congregations.
	GA: 2003	<i>On Iraq: Our Responsibility and the Future.</i>
	GA: 2002	<i>Report and Recommendations on Limited Water Resources and Takings.</i>
2006—All Approved	GA: 2003	<i>Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership and Accountability.</i>
	Initiated by ACSWP	<i>Human Rights in a Time of Terrorism and Torture.</i> The ACSWP chose to reduce the length of the Human Rights Update and to focus it as a resolution, also bringing in recommendations from an overture from five presbyteries
	GA: 2004	<i>A Reformed Understanding of Usury.</i> This document identified a range of predatory loan practices including sub-prime mortgage lending.
2008—All Approved	GA: 2004	<i>Economic Security for Older Adults.</i> This is a document about Social Security, Medicare and other means by which older Americans have now largely moved out of poverty, but often not by much.
	GA: 2006	<i>Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: From Hurricane Katrina to a More Equitable Future (New Orleans and Gulf Coast).</i> Developed following hearings by ACREC. Request made by area PC(USA) members.
	GA: 2006	<i>Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights and Electoral Reform.</i> Action of 2006 GA based on ACREC recommendation.
	GA: 2004	<i>A Social Creed for the 21st Century, and Recognition of the Centennial of the “Social Creed of the Churches” of 1908.</i>
	GA: 1999	<i>God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation.</i>
GA: 2002	<i>The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming.</i>	

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	Initiated by ACSWP	<i>From Homelessness to Hope: Constructing Just, Sustainable Communities for All God's People.</i>
2008— <i>Not Approved</i>	Initiated by ACSWP	<i>Costly Lessons of the Iraq War</i> (similar, shorter overture approved).
2010— <i>Submitted</i>	GA: 2008	<i>Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call.</i>
	GA: 2008	<i>Loving Our Neighbors: For Equity and Quality in Public Education (K-12).</i>
	GA: 2008	<i>Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action.</i>

These resolutions are not all long papers. The Social Creed, for example, fits on one page, admittedly tightly! This resolution, although primarily developed by Presbyterians, has been adopted by the ecumenical movement, multiplying its influence. While the statement is short, individuals and congregations that wish to study and use the document have been directed to two books published by Westminster/John Knox press that accompany the statement, one of prayers and one of in-depth essays. A booklet, *Connecting to the Creed*, has also been developed as have posters.

C. *PC(USA) Study Papers*

A third set of accomplishments are study papers developed during the review period. These papers, which were submitted in 2004 and 2008, are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Study Papers Produced During Review Period

GA Year	Referral Year	GA Action	Product: Study Papers
2004	Three referrals: 1995, 2002, and 2003	Approved	<i>Violence, Religion and Terrorism.</i> An additional Just War Theory paper was written in conjunction with requested paper on Iraq war.
	Initiated by ACSWP	Approved	<i>Human Rights Update.</i> Combined reports from regional liaisons from Worldwide Ministries and reports from the Presbyterian UN and Washington, D.C., offices to address a wide range of country needs and ethical themes without having a large number of resolutions and studies.
2006		No referrals/papers	
2008	Initiated by ACSWP	Commended for study	<i>To Repent, To Restore, To Rebuild, and To Reconcile.</i> This study paper was prepared to accompany a resolution (<i>Costly Lessons of the Iraq War</i>) that was not approved by the GA. The study was “commended for study” with the shorter overture that was approved.
	Referral on Colombia	Approved	<i>Human Rights Update.</i> This year Colombia paramilitary, guerrilla war and population displacement became the focus, shared by a related action on the Philippines.
2010	GA: 2008	Submitted	<i>Neither Riches Nor Poverty: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church.</i>
	GA: 2000	Submitted	<i>On Living a Human Life Before God.</i> Updating the study the Nature and Value of Human Life.
	Initiated by ACSWP	Submitted	<i>Human Rights Update.</i> Combines reports on immigrant detention, human trafficking, and torture.

D. *PC(USA) Social Involvement and Monitoring Reports*

Due to reorganization in the GAMC justice area and vacancies in the Presbyterian Washington and UN offices, as well as a decrease in joint consultation with program staff, monitoring reports have been fewer in the later years of the review

period as the church's capacity to produce them has been curtailed. The most recent of these reports was completed in the fall of 2008 subsequent to ACSWP's meeting in Detroit. This report was shared with the GAMC and with ACSWP's on-line network. It was designed as an interim response to the current economic crisis to encourage concern and action in the face of challenges to Christian faith and witness in Detroit.

Table 4. Social Involvement and Monitoring Reports

GA Year	Year Referred	Social Involvement and Monitoring Reports
2004	No referrals	
2006	ACSWP asked to monitor—2003	Monitoring on the implementation of the <i>Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Private Prisons</i> .
	ACSWP asked to monitor—2000	Monitoring on the implementation of <i>the Problem Pregnancies and Abortion with Recommendations</i> .
	ACSWP asked to monitor—2001	Monitoring on the implementation of <i>Turn Mourning into Dancing: A Policy Statement on Healing Domestic Violence</i> .
	ACSWP asked to monitor—2004	Monitoring on the Implementation of <i>the Transforming Families Policy with Recommendations</i> .
2008	2006 GA referral	<i>Smithfield Foods unionization and working conditions</i> . An overture led to a strong statement but also a request that two North Carolina presbyteries work together with ACSWP to help encourage resolution of struggle by workers (NLRB had ruled against company). The ACSWP reported on engagement with both presbyteries and meetings with company, workers, and union. Workers ultimately voted for union. This was similar to monitoring actions in the past, but completed with no funds assigned by GA. The ACSWP staff used ACSWP travel budget and had cooperation from presbyteries, local pastors, and Hispanic missionaries for some expenses.
	Report to the GAMC 11/2008	<i>Christian solidarity in a time of social crisis: Reflections from Detroit on being Church in the 21st century</i> . A report reflecting on the challenges to Christian ministry and witness in Detroit.
2010	Initiated by ACSWP	<i>Living Through Economic Crisis</i> . Designed to help ministers preach and assist congregations in time of economic crisis

E. Advice and Counsel Memoranda

To inform the General Assembly process, ACSWP provides policy interpretation as a context for considering overtures from presbyteries, commissioners' resolutions, proposals by agencies and corresponding bodies through Advice and Counsel (A&C) memoranda. Table 5 in Appendix E lists the A&C statements written in each General Assembly (GA) year of the review period and notes the decision of the GA in relation to the advice in each A&C. Overall, the GA agreed with the majority of the advice in the A&C.

In applying the church's accumulated social witness policy decisions, however, many A&C memoranda suggest both wording changes to reflect previous policy and program recommendations, often reached after consultation with presbytery representatives and staff persons of the agency affected. In the case of one A&C addressing twelve overtures on Israel and Palestine sent to the 2008 assembly, the assembly accepted ACSWP's A&C as the basic strategy for grouping, combining, and editing most of the overtures. This streamlined the process of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and helped avoid redundancy in the final action. At the same time, the assembly did not utilize all of the A&C advice and wording, declining to take action on two of the overtures.

It is noteworthy that most A&C's agree with all or most of a given proposal. The goal of the A&C documents is to show how a recommendation may or may not work, to show policy precedents, to raise and address objections, or to outline implications. This ACSWP function is intended to help the commissioners make informed decisions. When the A&C opposes a given course of action, it often proposes an alternative that might represent something of a "win-win" compromise.

Another frequent situation that results in an A&C is when an overture requests that a study be done by a special committee. While ACSWP can in many cases carry out studies less expensively than can special committees, it will often leave it to the General Assembly to determine where to assign the work so as not to be "self-serving." (This was particularly the case in 2008 when six special committees were appointed.) The trade-off is sometimes a price differential of \$25,000 to \$50,000, depending on the number of years of work envisioned and number of members and staff to be involved. At the same time, special committees are not as guided by the social policy formation rules of the 1993 *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness* document. Consequently, in some cases shorter timeframes and more limited amounts of money may be appropriated and other personnel co-opted to help staff a given special committee.

In assessing the fidelity to its mission and the effectiveness of its service, ACSWP looks first to how the General Assembly responds to its offerings. All but one of the fourteen resolutions submitted to the past three General Assemblies

have been approved. The exception was in 2008 when the General Assembly approved a similar set of recommendations on the Iraq war forwarded by a presbytery, but even then it attached ACSWP's study paper in support of its action. When the reports are approved, given the policy development mandate of ACSWP's work, its primary task has been completed. Its responsibilities are also completed when assemblies ask for significant modifications in the committee's reports before approving them. In such cases, engagement, even controversial engagement, is part of the discernment process of the church. Furthermore, as listed in Table 5, the GA has concurred with the vast majority of the Advice and Comment statements provided to GA commissioners at the past three General Assemblies.

During the review period ACSWP has been linked to the General Assembly's stands against the Iraq war and for justice in Palestine. The General Assembly's environmental witness for renewable energy and against fossil and nuclear fuels is also rightly linked to the ACSWP's work, as well as every assembly's human rights update and the concern for economic justice that reflects the stance of the recent confessions.

Financial realities have pressed especially hard during the past three years. In 2009 ACSWP's budget had been reduced to about \$300,000 from \$327,394 in 2004. Resolutions, often now carried out over longer periods due to staffing constraints, are also done at a quarter to a third the cost of policy statements (\$30,000–40,000 versus \$120,000–150,000). The ACSWP's output is quite large for its small staff (four persons until the loss of the logistics and technology administrative assistant in mid 2006). The support staff expertise from Bonnie Hoff, formerly executive secretary to the president of Southern (Baptist) Seminary, has helped manage this large output. It is an accomplishment that ACSWP is extremely productive and cost-effective in its expenditure of its approximately \$300,000 annual budget. Notably ACSWP has successfully stayed within budget for all of the past six years. The ACSWP has been able to do more with less at many points during this review period.

This self-assessment led to much good discussion and some revision of the structure of ACSWP's subcommittees and procedures, especially in light of the new potential of the internet and fiscal realities. The committee changed a Personnel and Budget subcommittee into one focused on tracking study teams and report preparation, and designated the Coordinating Committee to be the Advice and Counsel subcommittee for the every-other year General Assembly. An Interpretation and Communication subcommittee continues, but a new subcommittee on projects such as curriculum development and consultations was developed.

IV. Leadership in Social Witness

In addition to fulfilling its mandate by developing social policy and providing advice and comment to the GA and GAMC, ACSWP has exhibited important leadership in "guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources" of social witness. (Assessment criterion listed in Appendix A —A.2) This leadership is evidenced in five types of activities presented below:

1. *Leadership in Applying Policies to Emergent Issues.* The ACSWP exhibits leadership in its efforts to keep the church current with topics addressed in the past. For example, ACSWP has helped both Stated Clerks and Moderators during the review period with public statements addressing human rights issues, military interventions, and issues of social justice, often also working with Washington and Presbyterian UN Office staff. To provide a different form of guidance, ACSWP initiated a briefing on human rights and humanitarian law, including a theological framing of these concerns, in the spring of 2009. On a larger scale, changing social conditions and trends can often require revision or updating of prior policies and recommendations. One example is the report, *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*, approved by General Assembly in 2008. The last comprehensive study of this issue was in 1981, although a 1990 study on *Restoring Creation* had reaffirmed basic principles and dealt with the environment more broadly. In such efforts, ACSWP is proactive and able to bring to the attention of GA and GAMC potential areas where social witness will be required of the church: the issue of torture, for instance.

2. *ACSWP Staff Leadership with GAMC Staff and Elected Leaders.* The ACSWP staff work continuously with GAMC staff and elected members and OGA staff to interpret social witness policies. Each year:

a. Both the ACSWP coordinator and associate staff attend General Assembly Mission Council meetings, most often with the Justice Committee. The staff provides updates on projects to keep GAMC elected members aware of social witness opportunities and challenges.

b. The associate and coordinator both sit at "tables" with program staff, providing policy bases for projects and helping develop applications of General Assembly actions.

c. The associate coordinates the production of the Human Rights Update, working with Global Mission regional liaisons, the Washington Office, and particularly with the Presbyterian UN Office.

d. The coordinator consults with the Stated Clerk on proposed statements and letters done in fulfillment of General Assembly actions and in response to current events and crises.

e. Both the coordinator and associate work with mission networks, such as the Iraq mission network, to contribute background and knowledge from General Assembly policy and studies.

3. *Leadership in Policy Interpretation Using Presentations and Trainings:* In all six years, the members and staff of ACSWP have made many presentations, workshops, and sermons to classes, church groups, and conferences, including sermons and talks at San Francisco, Fuller, Princeton, and Louisville seminaries, leading program for an annual conference of the Texas Conference of Churches, and teaching a weeklong summer class at Ghost Ranch. Joint Colloquia with Peacemaking Program at Stony Point: These have focused recently on Peacemaking (2006); Christian and Muslim Peacemaking (2007); and Gun Violence (2008); and a colloquium on the Accra and Belhar Confessions in early 2010 involved other parts of the Mission Council and Ecumenical Relations structure.

4. *Leadership Provided to Educators.* The ACSWP staff and elected members meet regularly with theological and ethical educators to strengthen the connection of educators with the work of the General Assembly and the social witness of the church more broadly. This leadership includes working with the *Forum with Theological Educators for Presbyterian Social Witness (TEPSW)*. This group of professors meets annually on matters of social witness policy where it reviews papers and provides a testing ground for Christian social-ethical analysis of many issues. The ACSWP coordinator assists this group informally and its members provide a willing pool of academically proven volunteers and consultants on ACSWP study projects. These college and seminary professors are also encouraged to use PC(USA) social policies in their classes.

5. *Leadership in Ecumenical and Evangelical Connections.* The ACSWP reaches out to other mainline and evangelical churches:

a. The coordinator serves on the staff team of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations, advising the group primarily on areas of ecumenical social thought, including currently the Covenanting for Justice Program related to the Accra Confession of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (now becoming the World Communion of Reformed Churches). The Social Creed was also developed in coordination with the National Council of Churches' Commission on Justice and Compassion.

b. The associate participated in Churches Uniting in Christ (CUiC) meetings in 2007–2008 at the request of the director of the General Assembly Ecumenical Relations Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

c. The ACSWP has been concerned to build stronger relationships with evangelicals within the PC(USA). The ACSWP co-sponsored Envision 08 (2008) on the Princeton University and Seminary campuses, a gathering of approximately five hundred young people, including many of whom could be described on some issues as “progressive evangelicals.” The meeting goal was to explore convergence points in theology and ethics. At this forum the coordinator presented the Social Creed and facilitated discussion of this policy statement. The coordinator was also invited to a smaller gathering of thirty-five primarily evangelical scholars in 2009.

d. The ACSWP has also taken a lead to engage in mission conversations with other Evangelical Christians. Currently this effort is in the area of human rights and human trafficking, an area where other mainline churches and women's organizations (notably Presbyterian Women) have initiated advocacy efforts. The ACSWP staff and elected members have sought to learn from Evangelical Christian efforts of rescue and rehabilitation with sex trafficking victims and have engaged in dialogue about the place of justice in evangelism overseas.

V. ACSWP Challenges and Limitations

The ACSWP has persistently confronted challenges and limitations in this review period. Its three major challenges and limitations are described in this section: (1) dissemination of PC(USA) social witness documents; (2) criticism and controversy as a perennial risk of ACSWP “doing its job”; and (3) engaging youth and young adults in social witness policy.

A. *Dissemination of PC(USA) Social Witness Statements*

One major challenge and limitation involves the responsibility and resources to communicate and interpret PC(USA) social witness policies, resolutions, and study papers. This dissemination task has not been a mandated direct responsibility of ACSWP. Rather the GAMC Manual of Operations states that ACSWP should assist others in their responsibility. The ACSWP is assigned the responsibility to “Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret the social witness policies of the General Assembly” (GAMC Manual of Operations, p. 21). The ACSWP staff works with these General Assembly (GA), Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) leaders whose responsibility it is to communicate and interpret social witness policy. Additionally there is the expectation among many church leaders that it is ACSWP's responsibility (over and above its more limited mandate) to more broadly communicate and interpret PC(USA) documents. The ACSWP staff and elected members have also perceived a great need for additional general communication and interpretation of the church's social witness statements once they are approved by General Assembly.

In the attempt to meet this need and fulfill expectations to assume some responsibility for dissemination of PC(USA) statements of social witness, ACSWP has made the following efforts during the review period to communicate and interpret PC(USA) social witness policies, resolutions, and study papers:

- *Mailed Policy, Resolutions, and Study Paper Documents.* Complimentary copies of policies were sent to more than 10,000 Presbyterian congregations, 171 presbyteries, 16 synods, the 10 Presbyterian theological institutions, and General Assembly commissioners. As in 2006, all major 2008 policies were put on CD (in coordination with OGA) and mailed to all congregations. Three hundred copies of the policies regarding witness with persons who have disabilities and persons who have serious mental illness were distributed to the networks of the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA), twelve members of ACREC, twelve members of ACWC, the members of the GAMC, and others. These policy statements have been used to strengthen the church's disability and serious mental illness mission and are used by both church and secular organizations.

- *Study Guide.* Subsequent to the approval of the policy statement, *Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness*, a congregational study guide was developed. The document assists congregations to learn the PC(USA) policy and consider ways in which the congregation might respond. New to such study guides, this four-session study also includes time and ideas for participants to plan and conduct a worship service that highlights this social witness as a congregation of hospitality to persons with mental illness and their families, a community of healing and of advocacy for such marginalized populations.

- *Church & Society.* This magazine was a vehicle used to communicate PC(USA) policies and study papers to both local congregants as well as seminary professors and students. Its name was chosen to match a prior name of ACSWP, the Council on Church & Society. The ACSWP staff had long served on the editorial board of this journal that published six times per year. After the magazine was ended in October 2006, ACSWP helped close the office, salvage publication stock, and market back issues on its website. This journal was a unifying factor among GAMC programs, especially in the Peacemaking and Justice ministries' areas, and helped link ACSWP to these programs. It took in approximately \$30,000 per year in subscriptions and sales of back issues used as adult education resources.

- *Internet Communication.* While ACSWP improved the fairly limited website that existed prior to 2006, it has been a mixed achievement. The website provides access to a variety of articles written about the work of ACSWP by the Presbyterian News Service as well as articles written by staff. A link to this Internet communication is <http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/news.htm>. Use of the Internet should enhance dissemination as most recent statements are downloadable at no cost. Email notes are sent to a list of potentially interested individuals as a mechanism to alert individuals about postings on the website. The number of members of the ACSWP e-group has grown from approximately 200 in early 2006 to 2,778 as of December 2009.

- *Video Material.* A 28-minute documentary, *Toward a New Social Awakening*, on the Social Creed (surveying social witness from 1908 to 2008) has been developed, posted on the webpage, advertized, and sent to all middle governing bodies, ethics professors, and other groups.

Comments from the recent survey conducted by Research Services regarding the work of ACSWP indicate that there are church leaders who know and use the PC(USA) documents. For example, respondents mentioned using the study guide on serious mental illness policy, the Social Creed, the resource *From Homelessness to Hope: Constructing Just, Sustainable Communities for All People*, the paper on *A Reformed Understanding of Usury for the Twenty-First Century*, and *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming* resolution. Still, knowledge about PC(USA) social witness statements continues to be a challenge as survey results of governing body executives, GA commissioners, and leaders of local congregations indicate continued limited awareness of the social witness of the church. One attempt to meet this challenge is a recommendation in the 2010 Report of the Review of the Three Advisory and Advocacy Committees to designate a GAMC staff person to take additional responsibility for dissemination of social witness policy. If the recommendation is implemented it is likely that the shared responsibility of dissemination by GAMC and ACSWP would be clarified and resources to perform this important task enhanced.

B. ACSWP as a "Lightning Rod"

The General Assembly Manual recognizes that ACSWP can be a "lightning rod" at times, and that this can be the case precisely when ACSWP is doing its job. The beginning of this review period was a particular time of such challenge for ACSWP. That year the General Assembly approved a policy of corporate engagement with companies in Israel/Palestine that contemplated divesting of securities in those companies specifically profiting from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. In that year as well, ACSWP went on a long-planned visit to several Middle Eastern countries to learn if an updated policy statement should be written in light of quickly changing realities, including the Iraq war. While in Lebanon, an elected member's side comment to a representative of Hezbollah was picked up on videotape and presented in various ways to media in Israel, Muslim countries, and in the United States. In the subsequent heat of public reactions, the ACSWP coordinator and another GAMC executive were dismissed. But, due in large part to the strength of the ACSWP's elected membership and the

ACSWP staff team at the time, ACSWP maintained its deliberative process and the position of ACSWP coordinator was permanently filled in 2005.

The ACSWP and GAMC drew some lessons from this process. For ACSWP there was and is understandable caution in relating to the press. Little use of the interview format has been made since that time, though some pod-casting has begun. On the GAMC side, following the appointment of the new coordinator, changes were made in the selection process to equalize the representation of GAMC and ACSWP members on the search committee (leaving flexibility for those who serve on both bodies).

On issues of social witness with a potential to spark conflict and public criticism, ACSWP strives for discretion while maintaining commitment to its mandate. Facing critical issues and taking stands are necessary for healthy leadership. Conflict avoidance at the top can weaken an organization, while unnecessary conflict can be divisive. Proactive responses must be prepared for tough decisions of all kinds, especially when integrity and morale of the whole church may be affected. Both GAMC and ACSWP leadership see the importance of ethical witness as part of leadership, as well as the need to be strategic in a time of many competing interests. The church's core identity depends on the integrity of its witness; "by their fruits" remains the watchword. The church's individual congregations need to be healthy, but the church also needs stands, campaigns, and symbols of Presbyterian identity and activity that transcend localities and regions, and grasp the imaginations of young people.

Because social witness inherently includes differing opinions and normal controversy, ACSWP works in a milieu of persistent criticism. Such criticism is evidenced in the survey results provided by Research Services for this review. Specifically some respondents reported that ACSWP is politically biased and lacks sufficient balance in its advisory capacity to the church. In addition to these survey responses, there is also steady criticism from a subset of ACSWP meeting observers—some of whom are paid staff of nondenominational organizations that seek to change the PC(USA) approach to social witness. These individuals attend ACSWP meetings under the church's open meeting policy. With some regularity, this particular set of observers has publicly reported ACSWP's deliberations in an unfavorable light, occasionally passing judgment on some of ACSWP's individual volunteer members. In an attempt to hear criticism in a potentially more constructive way, recent effort has been made to provide opportunity for dialogue between ACSWP members and observers at ACSWP meetings. This milieu of persistent criticism, however, has required and likely will continue to require forbearance and forgiveness among both elected ACSWP members and ACSWP staff.

C. *Engaging Youth and Young Adults in Social Witness Policy*

The biggest challenge before ACSWP is shared broadly with the GAMC's social witness programs, including the Presbyterian United Nations and Washington Offices. This challenge is how to serve new generations of the church in faithful yet more innovative ways, not only with new technology, but with new ways of engaging young people. Especially as younger evangelicals have come to share many views of justice, particularly racial and environment justice, they welcome the Gospel that contains a social conscience. For example, the student organization, *Intervarsity*, now speaks of Jesus and justice frequently together. The justice concern gives their witness a credibility that seems right for the whole church.

The ACSWP recognizes the need of the church to develop new ways to witness to a younger generation who know much less of Bible and Christian faith, but who thirst for a deeper understanding of justice and love. The redemptive power of God that we know in Christ is mocked and ignored if it is not connected to justice and social vision. The challenge is to communicate and sustain a church-wide conversation when relationships and programs have been weakened and memories and traditions lost. Fortunately, the General Assembly's social witness agenda has been on target in many areas including environmental issues and green energy, racial justice, the Iraq war, universal health care availability, greater economic equality, an end to new forms of usury, and a renewed commitment to education. In each of these areas, the church has done its homework and ACSWP stands ready to help the church strengthen its voice and credibility among youth and young adults.

A related challenge is to more fully engage youth and young adults in the development of policy because of the unpaid time required to attend ACSWP meetings. Employment and family duties compete for volunteer time and energy. It has been easier to engage persons whose careers and families are at later stages and can allow the travel and meeting time necessary to fully participate in ACSWP meetings. The engagement of a good number of youth and young adults in policy development remains an unmet challenge, but one that will receive explicit attention in the new decade.

VI. FUTURE OBJECTIVES OF THE ACSWP

Christians in the U.S. continue to occupy a critical role in the world, both in relation to secular modernity, which would ignore or demean the Gospel, and in relation the many issues of justice and environmental sustainability. Will the church be part of the solution or part of the problem? Amid this time of great cultural and social transition, PC(USA) holds the potential to play an influentially positive role. With wisdom and courage, we pray that it may play an energizing and evangelizing role.

In order to help the PC(USA) be faithful in this process of change—aware that our touchstone is a cross of love and not a crown of power—ACSWP seeks to continue to do theology with its ethics. The leadership of the church must be theologically informed and linked to the best thinking in a range of disciplines. The ACSWP perceives its continuing mandate as providing well-reasoned and credible reports with recommendations for faithful action. These are not done in isolation from the church’s life and mission; rather, they must be part of what the church offers to God and God’s mission in Christ to the *oikoumene*, the whole inhabited earth.

In practical terms, ACSWP has given itself a set of goals for the near term:

1. Continue to support the tradition of the General Assembly as a source of wisdom and a celebration of unity for Presbyterians, helping it represent the whole gospel for the whole church.
2. Help create a new forum for discussion and engagement across the church, particularly to help persons struggling with current economic challenges by sharing “confession driven” and parish-connected thinking on ways to face potential social as well as environmental crises.
3. Complete the transition to greater cyber service within the new PC(USA) website offerings, updating and making accessible the best of the past output while engaging new challenges. On health policy, for example, members should be able to access pastoral and prophetic discussions of basic rights, services, and cost trade-offs.
4. Complete new interpretive resources on the *Social Creed for the 21st Century* and *Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership, and Accountability*. If the update of the nature and value of human life study, *On Living a Human Life Before God* is approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010), resource materials will also be developed for congregations to assist in moral discourse on related topics.
5. In consultation with GAMC leadership and program areas, and the concerned thinkers in our colleges and seminaries: (a) develop new thinking in the area of peacemaking and international relations, especially in light of climate change and natural resource impacts, and (b) help strengthen the campus witness of the PC(USA) by connecting students with social-ethical priorities.
6. Assist the international mission agencies of the church in their work on the ethical and social dimensions of our witness and evangelism.
7. Provide analysis of ecumenical social teaching in relation to the World Communion of Reformed Churches and in relation to enhanced ecumenical cooperation and church unity efforts in the U.S.

In the medium term, ACSWP’s role will depend on the shape of the denomination, and whether it pursues significant ecumenical partnerships. Economically and demographically, it may be argued that church partnerships with reasonably similar denominations could be a fruitful medium term way to preserve connectional systems, seminaries with serious educational commitments, and an engagement with the mainstream of U.S. culture.

The church has a very challenging decade ahead. As church leaders consider the theme of this 219th General Assembly (2010)—“Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38)—it is the belief of ACSWP members and staff that the future work of this committee will contribute to the re-envisioning of what it is to be church. The spirit of Jesus the Christ is the living water that will direct and sustain this work of social witness policy development and the social witness of PC(USA).

Appendix A

Standards for Review of Assembly Permanent, Advocacy and Advisory Committees and Commissions*

A. *Fidelity to Mission and Partnership*

1. Each committee or commission was created by the church and exists to serve and support the church’s mission in a particular area. Each committee or commission is expected to exhibit a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).
2. The basic process of the committee or commission should demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly. The committee or commission should exhibit leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources in which the committee or commission acts.
3. The committee or commission should exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies or committees of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity.
4. The committee or commission should provide timely responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly.

B. *Effectiveness of Services*

The services of the committee or commission are consistent with its assembly or constitutional mandate.

1. The committee or commission has a defined and consistent process for completing its work.
2. The committee or commission has a regular process of self-evaluation of its services.
3. The committee or commission employs a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large.
4. The committee or commission utilizes current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission.
5. The committee or commission has developed a vision and plans for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before and context of the PC(USA).

*Standards as listed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*, 2010, page 73.

Appendix B

Brief History of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

Part of the committee's history has involved program activity as well as policy formation. This outline includes antecedents in both the Board of Home Missions and the Boards of Christian Education in both of the denominations united in 1983. The word "Advisory" does not indicate that the committee's recommendations do not favor certain clear moral positions; rather, when added from 1970–1987, and from 1993 forward, the term emphasizes the policy rather than program function.

In 1903, faced with rising numbers of immigrants and industrialization, the Board of Home Missions created a Workingmen's Department, which soon became a Department of Church and Labor. In 1908, the director of that department, Charles Stelzle, was one of those present at the founding meeting of the Federal Council of Churches who helped develop the "Social Creed of the Churches," a foundational social policy document inspired by the Social Gospel movement. Stelzle was also the initial head of the department of Immigration. In 1912, both Labor and Immigration were included in a Bureau of Social Service. The "Home Board" continued to do urban and immigrant outreach until 1922–23 when it became a primary part of the Board of National Missions. (The 1922–23 reorganization combined thirteen boards into four; the Women's Home Mission Board, also merged into National Missions, was in the early 20s the largest board in fund-raising terms).

In 1906, the General Assembly approved a Permanent Committee on Temperance, which soon became a board, and then was renamed the Board of Temperance and Moral Welfare. It was the Temperance Board that started a journal of its social and moral concerns called *The Amethyst*, in September of 1908.

In 1920, following the great success of the Prohibition movement in outlawing alcohol, the Board of Temperance and Moral Welfare began increasingly to emphasize other moral concerns, including child labor, prison reform, marriage and divorce, and social hygiene. In the 1922–23 reorganization, the board became the Department of Moral Welfare within the Board of Christian Education.

In 1931, as the Depression deepened, the Board of National Missions created a Committee on Social and Industrial Relations, building on the bureau and then Commission on Social Service.

In 1934, after the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, the Department of Moral Welfare changed the name of its publication to *Social Progress*, focusing increasingly on economic and peace concerns though never abandoning a concern for liquor, tobacco, gambling, and other vices.

In 1936 the Boards of Education and National Missions developed an inter-board Commission on Social Education and Action to bring unity to the pronouncements and programs those and other boards were developing on social concerns.

[T]hat the Presbyterian Church is under obligation to show how... Christian principles apply to all social, moral, economic, national and international relationships... that responsibility for ... this vital and far-reaching task be lodged with a group of socially-minded and consecrated men and women, authorized by the GA...and that the group so appointed [Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education] be clothed with authority commensurate with their responsibility" (*Minutes*, PCUSA, 1936, Part I. p. 199).

This becomes the clearest precursor of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. In 1944, additional commission members were added from the Board of National Missions.

In 1935 and 1936, on a somewhat parallel track in the former Presbyterian Church, U.S., the General Assembly was adopting policies from its Committee on Moral and Social Welfare that changed the doctrine of the "spirituality of the church" to affirm the "Lordship of Christ" in all of life (*Church & Society*, Nov–Dec 1999, "Lessons of the Past," Vernon Broyles, p. 17).

In 1944, the Social Education and Action Committee's Report on Industrial Relations led to the formation of the Presbyterian Institute for Industrial Relations, both a continuing education and training center for ministers (similar to clinical pastoral education today) and an influence on ecumenical urban-industrial mission in Asia and Latin America. Initial statements on race relations began with a 1946 call for desegregation stronger than the previous Race Relations Sundays and Brotherhood Days of the 1930s.

In 1958, the union of the United Presbyterian Church of North America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was accomplished with both social witness staffs joining in the Social Education and Action (SEA) Department of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

In 1960, the SEA Department became the Department of Church and Society, to embody an intent to affect the society through structural and social change. Similar name changes marked other denominations: the United Methodist Church retains its Board on Church and Society. This approach reflects some of the theological stance of Christian Realism, aware of power, interests, and social movements. In 1970, the journal of moral and social concerns was renamed, *Church & Society* magazine.

In 1966, in the former PCUS, the Council on Church and Society was established under the Board of Christian Education.

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The adoption of the Confession of 1967, with its emphases on mission and reconciliation, provides a basis for re-organizing national structures (a “confession-driven” church). Its explicit naming of peace and racial and economic justice offers a thematic approach to social ethics different from interpretations of the 10 Commandments found in older Reformed Confessions.

In 1972–73, with consolidation of boards into three agencies in the UPCUSA, the Advisory Council on Church and Society was developed (along with a parallel Advisory Council on Discipleship and Worship), with the directors of both bodies serving at the top level of GAMC leadership. The categories of policy and resolution rather than pronouncement or deliverance came to be formalized in 1977 to connect better to concrete programs and specific communication strategies.

In 1974, the General Assembly Mission Board of the PCUS established the Council on Theology and Culture. This council combined functions of both UPCUSA advisory councils. The council worked closely with the Division of Corporate and Social Mission, and contributed to its ethics education occasional periodical, *Response-Ability*.

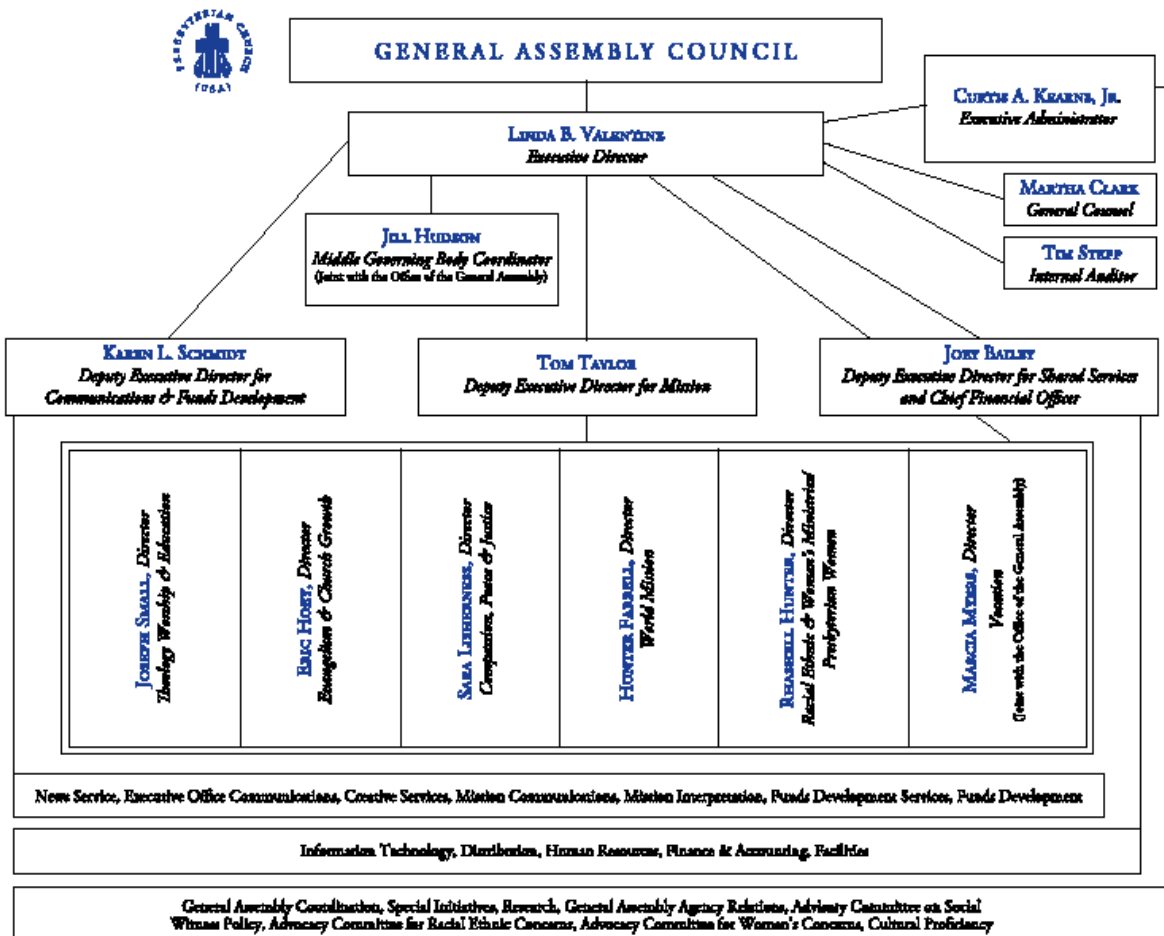
In 1983, the Plan for Reunion combined elements from both predecessor churches, confirming that a social witness function would be contained in the reunited church’s structure and that all previous policies of the General Assembly would be honored in the combined denomination. The memberships of both the Advisory Council on Church and Society and the Council on Theology and Culture were combined in the transition period in the Committee on Social Witness Policy.

In 1993, after three years of study, *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness* includes a further name change. It was at this time that “Advisory” was again added to the committee’s name. Two things are perhaps most significant: the recommendations build on the new A Brief Statement of Faith, and the study part of the report emphasized discernment, which was picked up in a somewhat different way in the more recent “PUP” report on the peace, unity, and purity of the church. Organizationally, the director of ACSWP became a coordinator who sat with the leadership team of the former National Ministries Division director.

In 2006, the re-structuring of the General Assembly Mission Council concentrated three previous ministry divisions into one. The ACSWP retained three GAMC members in its own membership and its ability to choose its staff was diluted a bit. Of considerable consequence, *Church & Society* magazine was discontinued, though with ACSWP able to steward its legacy to some degree. This ends the ninety-eight-year life of a vehicle that often enriched and publicized the church’s social witness policy formation (*The Amethyst* 1908–1920); *Moral Welfare* (1920–1934); *Social Progress* (1934–1969); and *Church & Society* (1970–2006).

Appendix C

General Assembly Mission Council Staff Organizational Chart



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Appendix D

Comparison of Assigned Functions of the Advisory and Advocacy Committees
(letters in parenthesis are from assigned functions in GAMC manual)

Functions	ACSWP	ACREC	ACWC
Prepare policy documents	Explicit in two assigned tasks. Prepare policy statements, resolutions, study papers, social involvement reports, or Advice and Counsel Memoranda on the church's social witness for study and recommendation to the GA at the request of the GA, the GAMC, or on its own initiative. (a) Prepare special studies at the request of the GA, the GAMC, or its Ministries on matters of social witness. (c)	Explicit assigned task with regard to racial concerns—Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and Advice and Counsel Memoranda on racial concerns to the GA at the request of the GA, the GAMC, or on its own initiative (a)	Explicit assigned task with regard to women's concerns—Prepare policy statements, resolutions, reports, recommendations, and Advice and Counsel Memoranda on women's concerns to the GA at the request of the GA, the GAMC, or on its own initiative (a)
Advise GA and GAMC	Explicit in two assigned tasks—Advise GAMC on matters of social witness policy or strategy, including interim statements concerning pressing social issues, the council may wish to consider between meetings of the GA. Facilitate two-way communication with all parties throughout policy development and advisory processes. (b) Provide advice and counsel to the GA and its representative committees on overtures, commissioner resolutions, reports, and actions before the GA that recommend policy direction or action on social witness. (e)	Explicit in two assigned tasks—Advise GAMC on matters of racial ethnic concerns, including statements concerning pressing issues, the council may wish to consider between meetings of the GA. (b) Provide advice and counsel to the GA and its representative committees on overtures, commissioner resolutions, reports, and actions before the GA that impact issues of racial ethnic concern. (c)	Explicit in two assigned tasks—Advise GAMC on matters of women's concerns, including statements concerning pressing issues, the council may wish to consider between meetings of the GA. (b) Provide advice and counsel to the GA and its representative committees on overtures, commissioner resolutions, reports, and actions before the GA that impact women's concerns. (c)
Maintain social policy compilation	Maintain an up-to-date and accurate Social Policy Compilation of GA social witness policy and provide information to the church as requested. (f)	ACREC assigned to assist ACSWP with regard to racial ethnic policies. (d)	ACWC assigned to assist ACSWP with regard to policy on women's concerns. (d)
Monitor policy implementation	Assigned as a joint task with other bodies—Work cooperatively with all governing bodies in coordinating the interdependent process of social policy formation, implementation and monitoring (d); Identify facets of the church's social witness that enable or obstruct effective action. Analyze, in cooperation with the GA Ministries, the effectiveness of social witness in governing bodies, institutions, and the GAMC. (h)	Assigned exclusively to ACREC—Monitor the implementation of racial justice policies and programs relative to racial ethnic concerns. (f)	Assigned exclusively to ACWC—Monitor the implementation of women's policies and programs relative to women's concerns. (f)
Advocacy	The term "advocacy" is not used in the assigned ACSWP functions. The second half of the task of analysis of effectiveness of social witness (h) has the element of advocacy—After consulting entities that primary ministry responsibility and the GAMC, report to the GA on the advisory committee's findings, together with recommendations for improving social witness.	Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of racial ethnic concern. (g)	Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women's concerns. (g)
Provide Information (Similar function across committees with differentiation of information content.)	Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the GA, and the Executive Director of the GAMC with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret the social witness policies of the GA. (g)	Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the GA, and the Executive Director of the GAMC with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret GA policies on racial ethnic concerns. (e)	Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the GA, and the Executive Director of the GAMC with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret GA policies on women's concerns. (e)

Appendix E

Table E-1

THE 216th GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2004)
ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL

Advice and Counsel Subject	Advice Recommended	General Assembly Action	Advice Accepted
Item 06-12: CR 04-23 On Reviewing PC(USA) Relationship with the WCC (Andrew/Worley) (see 12-05)	Disapproval	Disapproved	✓
Item 08-18: CR 04-10 on Celebrating the “Social Creed” of the Churches and Considering a 21st Century Social Creed (Brewster/Murdoch)	Approval	Approved w/amendment “4. This work should be coordinated with the Office of Theology and Worship.”	✓
Item 09-11: Ovt.04-7—Supporting the Assn of Presbyterian Schools (APS) (Pby of Salem)	Approve w/comment	Approved	✓
Item 10-07: Ovt.04-12—Setting Compensation Standards (Pby of New Hope)	Approve w/substitute recommendation	Approved with substitute resolution advised by ACSWP A&C	✓
Item 10-08: Ovt. 04-44—Patriot Act be Repealed (Pby of No.NY)	Disapprove the recommendation (w/ACREC)	Disapproved the recommendation	✓
Item 10-09: Ovt. 04-59—Policy Statement on Usury in the U.S. (Pby of Utah)	Approve w/amendments (w/ACREC and ACWC)	Approved with amendments advised by ACSWP, ACREC and ACWC A&C	✓
Item 10-10: Ovt. 04-67—Reaffirming Importance of Nation’s Social Insurance System (Pby of Hudson River)	Approval (w/ACWC)	Approved	✓
Item 10-11: Ovt. 04-70—Endorsing “A Christian Declaration of Marriage” (Pby of San Diego)	Advised alternate wording.	Approved “That the 216th GA (2004) ask all church members to join in a year of prayer for marriage renewal and reconciliation, and urge synods, presbyteries, and local congregations to seek ways of working with other Christian bodies in their areas toward these same purposes.”	
Item 10-13: CR 04-2—Seeking a Thorough, Calm, and Reasoned Review of the USA Patriot ACT (Fohl/Johnson)	Advised disapproval and referred to 12-06 Resolution on VRT	Approved	
Item 10-16: CR 04-24—On Supporting the Federal Marriage Amendment	Advised 10-16 be answered by the action taken on Item 10-11.	Approved alternate resolution in response to this item: “Nothing the 216th General Assembly (2004) has said or acted upon is to be construed to state or imply a position for or against the Federal Marriage Amendment. General Assembly entities shall not advocate for or against the Federal Marriage Amendment.”	
Item 10-17: CR 04-26—Recognize Civil Marriage for Same-Gender Couples	Advised 10-17 be answered by the action taken on Item 10-11	Approved alternate resolution from committee with amended statement.	
Item 11-01: Ovt. 04-05—Calling for the End of Abortion and inserting a statement in the <i>Book of Order</i> Regarding Abortion (Pby of Upper Ohio Valley)	Advised disapproval w/comment	Disapproved with comment as advised by the ACSWP A&C	✓
Item 11-02: Ovt. 04-10—Urging Churches to Affirm their ministries the protection of babies in the womb who are viable (Pby of Charlotte)	Advised disapproval w/comment(w/ACWC)	Approved minority report. Moderator and SC shall write a pastoral letter to congregations and include <i>Statement on Post-Viability and Late-Term Abortion (2003) + other resources (ACWC)</i> .	✓
Item 11-03: Ovt. 04-30—Clarity of Late Term Pregnancy	Advised disapproval w/comment (w/ACWC)	Answered by 11-02	✓
Item 11-05: Ovt. 04-15—Opposing the Change in Requirements of Emission from Smoke Stack Industries (Pby of Savannah)	Advised approval w/amendment	Approved w/amendment proposed by ACSWP A&C	✓

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Item 12-01: Ovt. 04-32—Supporting Geneva Accord Urging Israel and Palestine to Implement the Accord (Pby of St. Augustine)	Advised approval w/alt. Statement and recommendations (w/ACREC)	Approved w/alternate statement and recommendations advised by ACSWP and ACREC A&C.	✓
Item 12-02: Ovt. 04-33—Calling for an end to the construction of a Wall by the State of Israel (Pby of Chicago)	Advised approval w/GAC comment (w/ACREC)	Approved w/comment	✓
Item 12-03: Ovt. 04-34—Confronting Christian Zionism (Pby of Chicago)	Advised approval w/amendment	Approved w/amendment—alternate statement and recommendations advised by ACSWP and ACREC A&C	✓
Item 12-04: Ovt. 04-65—Urging Peace in Colombia, South America (Pby of Baltimore)	Advised approval w/amendment (w/ACREC)	Approved w/amendment—alternate recommendations advised by ACSWP and ACREC A&C	✓
Item 12-10: CR 04-23—Calling for the Stated Clerk to Justify is Endorsement of the WCC (Andrew/ Worley)	Advised no action as issues are met in Item 12-05, Iraq: Our Responsibility and the Future	Disapproved the recommendation.	✓
Item 13-01: Ovt 04-64—Solidarity w/the PC in Taiwan and with the Taiwanese People (Pby of New Covenant)	Advised approval with alternate recommendations	Approved recommendation to answer with action taken on Item 13-07.	✓
Item 13-07: Ovt. 04-71—Solidarity w/the PC in Taiwan and with the Taiwanese people (Pby of the Pacific)	Advised approval w/alternate recommendations from 13-01.	Approved recommendations advised by ACSWP A&C.	✓
Item 13-08: CR 04-4—On the Murders of Women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico (Zumwalt/Martinez)	Advised approval (w/ACREC and ACWC)	Approved with amendment	✓
Item 13-09: CR 04-7—Opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) (Sarmiento/ Winters)	Advised approval w/amended recommendations (w/ACREC)	Approved with amended recommendations by ACSWP and ACREC A&C	✓
Item 13-10: CR 04-9—On Rescinding Policies Regarding Cuba that cause Hardship to Families (Winley/Krehbiel)	Advised approval as amended.	Approved with amendment advised by ACSWP.	✓
Item 13-11: CR 04-11—Regarding Adult Basic Education (Carlson/McKissick)	Advised disapproval.	Referred to GAC	
Item 14-09: Ovt. 04-20—Directing BoP to revise their rules for the calculation of salary for churches with a clergy couple installed to one position (Pby. of Southeastern Illinois)	Advised approval and combine w/14-12	Approved	✓
Item 14-12: Ovt. 04-29—Urging BoP to correct inequity for churches calling a married couple as co-pastors ... (Pby of No. New England)	Advised approval w/14-09.	Approved	✓

Table E-2
THE 217th GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2006)
ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL

Title	Recommendation	Committee Recommendation	Plenary Recommendation
Item 03-09: On Amending Standing Rule B.5.Regarding Overtures and Resolutions Affecting Investment Policies—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.	Disapproval	Disapproval	Disapproval
Item 03-23: CR: Amending the “Open Meeting Policy” to Include the Whole Church in the Church’s Work	Disapproval	Referred to Cmte on the OGA for further study and report to the 218th GA	Approved cmte’s recommendation to refer.
Item 04-11: On Amending W-4.9001, Christian Marriage—From the Presbytery of Mississippi.	Disapproval	Disapproval	Disapproval
Item 04-12: On Reaffirming That Marriage Between a Man and a Woman Is a Gift God Has to All Humankind—From the Presbytery of Redstone.	Disapproval	Disapproval	Disapproval
Item 04-13: On Pastoral Counsel for Sexual Sin—From the Presbytery of Redstone. Concurrence: Shenango	Disapproval	Disapproval	Disapproval

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Item 05-08: On Amending G-13.0103p. and q. Responsibilities of the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Nevada	Disapproval w/comment	Disapproval	Disapproval Consent agenda
Item 05-22: On Establishing a Committee or Task Force to Conduct a Feasibility Study for Creating a Non-Geographic Korean-American Synod—From the Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi. Concurrence: Atlantic Korean American Pby	Consideration	Referral and direct COGA and SC to work with NKPC and CCKAP leaders to address concerns	Approved the committee's recommendation to refer this item to the COGA, SC, and OGA
Item 06-01: On the Report of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity—From the Presbytery of the James	Approval	Approval See actions on Rec. 1–7	Approval See actions on Rec. 1–7
Item 07-11: CR: Denial of HR in the Philippines	Approval	Approval	Approval
Item 08-01: On Clarifying the Practice of Our Theology of Call for Those Serving General Assembly Entities—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe	Approval w/amendment	Approval	Approval
Item 08-04: On Limiting Staff Participation in Elected Bodies—From the Presbytery of San Joaquin.	Disapproval w/comment	Disapproval	Disapproval
Item 08-17: CR: Moderator Convening a Meeting Re Worldwide Mission Work of the PC(USA)	Approval	Approval, as amended	Approved, as amended by cmte
Item 08-18: CR: Theological Diversity and the Women's Ministries Program Area	Disapproval	Disapproval	Disapproval consensus
Item 09-01: Petitions Against Torture—From the Presbytery of San Francisco. Concurrences: Redwoods, Seattle, Milwaukee	Answered by 09-11	Approval	Approval
Item 09-14: On Appointing a Task Force to Assess the Effects of Government Faith Based Initiatives—From the Presbytery of New York City	Rec. alternate resolution	Approved as Amended per ACSWP A&C 37/23/2	Approved committee's alternate resolution
Item 09-15: On Advocacy and Welcome for All Immigrants—From the Presbytery of New York City	Approval w/amendment	Approval as amended See action 55/6/0	Approved committee's recommendation as amended. consensus
Item 09-16: On Being Faithfully Engaged in the Ministry of Ending Homelessness—From the Presbytery of New York City	Approval w/amendment	Approval as amended. See action, 61/0/1	Approved as amended by committee and assembly. 424/33/5
Item 09-20: CR: Declaring Suicide Bombing a Crime Against Humanity	Disapproval	Disapproval	Disapproved the committee's recommendation to disapprove 189/299/6; Approved the original CR as amended by the assembly.
Item 09-21: CR: On Raising the Federal Minimum Wage	Approval w/ amendments	Approval w/amendment from ACSWP/ACWC	Approval of committee's recommendation to approve as amended
Item 09-22: CR: On Calling All Presbyterians to Take Positive and Immediate Steps to Live Carbon Neutral Lives	Approval w/amendment	Approval w/ACSWP amendment	Approval of Committee's recommendation to approve w/ACSWP amendment
Item 10-01: On Late Term Pregnancy—From the Presbytery of Redstone Concurrence with additional rationale: Presbytery of Lake Erie, Shenango (w/o rationale)	Disapproval w/comment	Approval as amended (deleting “and declare that it supersedes and replaces all other statements”)	Assembly voted (402/74/5) to amend language of this Item to add, at the beginning of 10-01 from the 2003 Statement on Post-Viability and Late-Term Abortion beginning at line 3 with “The church has a responsibility to provide public witness...” all the way through “For any choice, we are accountable to God, however even when we err, God offers to forgive us.” (ending on line 35) Approve (381/117/6) to

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			approve Cmte's recommendation to approve as amended by cmte and then by the Assembly
Item 10-02: On Financial Support for or Against Abortion—From the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler. Concurrency: Shenango	Disapproval	Disapproval	Disapproval
Item 10-03: On Standing Clearly Against the Practice of Abortion While Extending the Love of Christ to Those Who Have Suffered its Practice—From the Presbytery of Mississippi.	Disapproval	Answered with alt. Res: That the General Assembly answer Item 10-03 with the following alternative resolution: To commend the Presbytery of Mississippi for its use of group discernment concerning abortion, and recommend that all Presbyteries create task forces to replicate their process of prayer and study, that hearts and minds may be open to God's wisdom through scripture, other resources, and one another, and to direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate this action to the presbyteries	Approval of cmte's recommendation to answer with alternate resolution.
Item 10-05: On Teen Suicide and Self-Injury—From the Presbytery of St. Augustine.	Approval w/amendment	Approval as amended.	Approval w/cmte's recommendation to approve as amended
Item 10-08: On Affirming MRTI's Advocacy Efforts with Pharmaceutical Companies That Have Not Granted Licenses on Life Saving Medications That Treat Diseases of Poverty—From the Presbytery of the Pacific	Approval w/amendment"	Approval with changes recommended by ACSWP striking word "advocacy"	Approval of cmte's recommendation to approve as amended
Item 11-01: On Rescinding And Modifying Certain Actions of the 216th General Assembly Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict—From the Presbytery of Mississippi. Concurrency: Presbyteries of Central Florida, Kendall, Salem, Santa Barbara Concurrency with rationale: Kendall	Advises referral	Recommended alternate resolution and comment	Assembly rejected 2 attempts to amend the recommendation and then approved the committee's recommendation to answer this item with alternate resolution and with comment.
Item 11-02: On Divestment in Multi-National Companies Doing Business in Israel—From the Presbytery of the James. Concurrency Presbyteries of Central Florida, Huntingdon	See 11-01	Answer with action on 11-01.	Approved committee's recommendation to answer item by its action on Item 11-01
Item 11-03: On Being Fair and Just on Issues Regarding Divestment and Investment—From the Presbytery of Florida.	See 11-01	"	"
Item 11-04: On Issues Affecting Israelis and Palestinians, and the 216th General Assembly Divestment Action—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.	See 11-01	"	"
Item 11-05: On Suspension of Divestment Resolution—From the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.	See 11-01	"	"
11-06: On Divestment and Israel—From the Pres. of San Francisco.	See 11-01	"	"
Item 11-07: On Actively Fostering Peace, Reconciliation, and Community Development Between Israelis and Palestinians—From the Presbytery of New York City.	See 11-01	"	"
Item 11-08: On Pursuing our Historic Vision of Peace in the Middle East, and on Suspending for	See 11-01	"	"

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Two Years the Phased, Selective Divestment Process—From the Presbytery of Seattle.			
Item 11-09: On Justice and Peace in the Middle East—From the Presbytery of Chicago.	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-10: On Rescinding the Actions of the 216th GA as They Apply to Divestment of Stock in Caterpillar, Inc.—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-11: On Instructing MRTI with Regard to Divestment, and Affirming Our Desire of Previous Assemblies for a Just Resolution of the Conflict in the Middle East—From the Presbytery of Sierra Blanca.	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-12: On Calling for the Suspension of the Phased, Selected Divestment Process and for a Reevaluation of Investment Strategies in the Middle East—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-13: On Working to Resolve the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict—From the Presbytery of New Brunswick	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-14: On Peace in the Middle East—From the Presbytery of Baltimore	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-15: On Being Pro-Palestinian and Pro-Israeli—From the Presbytery of Tampa Bay	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-17: On Proceeds from the Sale of Divestment Holdings—From the Presbytery of Transylvania.	See 11-01	“	“
11-18: On the Sale of Divested Holdings—From the Presbytery of Chicago.	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-19: On Pursuing Investment Strategies to Promote Peace Between the Israeli and Palestinian People, While Affirming the Importance of Maintaining Healthy Relationships among Presbyterians, Jews and Muslims in the USA—From the Presbytery of National Capital. Concurrence: Mission	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-20: On Moving from a Divestment Strategy to a Strategy of Investment in Business that Promote Peace and Reconciliation Between Israelis and Palestinians—From the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley.	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-21: On Continuing Investment Strategies that Promote Peace Between the Israeli and Palestinian People While Seeking Prosperity for Both Nations—From the Presbytery of Missouri Union.	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-22: On Pursuing Investment Strategies to Promote Peace Between the Israeli and Palestinian People, while Affirming the Importance of Maintaining Healthy Relationships—From the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-23: On Directing ACSWP to Constitute a Task Force to Draft a New Statement on Middle East Policy—From the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-24: On Creating a Task Force on the Middle East to Produce a Substantive Resource Document—From the Presbytery of New York City.	See 11-01	“	“
Item 11-25: On Condemning International Trafficking In and Sexual Exploitation of Children—From the Synod of the Northeast. Concurrence: Presbyteries of Northern New York, Susquehanna Valley, New Brunswick, Southern New England, Utica, West Jersey	See 11-01	Approval, as amended deleting “through its Worldwide Ministries Division” in #3 and amending #8	Approval of Cmte.’s recommendation
Item 11-26: On Expressing the Church’s Concern for the People of Haiti—From the Presbytery of Tropical Florida.	Alternate resolution	Approval of alternate resolution by ACSWP A&C	Approval of Cmte’s recommendation

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Item 11-28: On Supporting the Peace Process in Sudan—From the Presbytery of Trinity. Concurrences: From the Presbyteries of Shenango, Redstone, Denver	Approval with comment	Approval, as amended	Approval as Cmte's recommendation
Item 11-34: On Supporting the continuation of MRTI's Selective and Careful Process of Corporate Engagement Relating to Human Rights Abuses in Israel and Palestine—From the Presbytery of Newark	See 11-01	Answer with action on 11-01	Approval
Item 11-38: On Supporting the Democratic Aspirations of the People of Haiti—From the Presbytery of New York City	See 11-01 Approval	Approval with action on 11-26.	Approval with cmte action.
Item 11-39: On Moving to a Strategy of Investment in Businesses that Promote Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation Between Israelis and Palestinians—From the Presbytery of Western Reserve	See 11-01	Approval with action on 11-01	Approval with cmte action
Item 11-41: On Moving from a Policy of Divestment to a Policy of Active Engagement in Peacemaking Activities—From the Presbytery of Carlisle	See 11-01	Approval with action on 11-01.	Approval with cmte action as amended

Table E-3
THE 218th GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2008)
ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL

Description	ACSWP Advice	GA Action	Advice Accepted
Item 03-13 Amending Open Meeting Policy	Approve with amendment	Approved without amendment	✓
Items 05-01, 02, 04, 05, 07, 10 On Rescinding the Action of the 217th General Assembly (2006) on Recommendation Five of the Report of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity	Answer w/action on 05-12 (disapprove)	ACSWP advice taken.	✓
Item 05-11 On Amending G-6.0106b and Providing a New Authoritative Interpretation.	Answer w/action on 05-12 (disapprove)	ACSWP advice not taken.	
Item 05-12 On Approving an Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108 to Ensure Proper Application of Ordination Standards.	Approved w/1,2,4,5,7,10, and 11 (disapprove)	Approved ACSWP's A&C +. Approved, as amended.	✓
Item 06-02 On Entrusting the Proposed FOG Revision to the Church for at Least Two Years	Answer w/action on 06-06	Answered by 06-01	
Item 06-03 On Entrusting the Proposed FOG Revision to the Church for at Least Two Years, and Dismissing the Task Force with Gratitude.	Answer w/action on 06-06	Answered by 06-01	
Items 06-04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 13 On Instructing the FOG Task Force to Solicit Feedback and Bring a Revised Version of the Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010).	Approve as amended	Approved as recommended by ACSWP, but advice to amend not taken	✓
Item 07-02 On Response to an Invitation to Interfaith Dialogue.	Approve	Approved ACSWP's advice.	✓
Items 08-10, 11 On Reinstating the Office of Environmental Justice as an Integral Part of the Mission of the Church.	Approve, as amended	ACSWP advice taken to approve.	✓
Item 08-16 Review Committee for GAC's Advisory and Advocacy Committees.	Concur with ACREC advice w/ACSWP recommendation	ACSWP advice to combine its self-review with participation in the proposed overall review not taken.	✓
Item 09-01 On the Church Addressing Intergenerational Injustice in America	ACSWP recommended alternate response	ACSWP advice not taken.	
Item 09-06 On Addressing the Tragedy of America's Gun Violence	Approve with amendments	Approved most of ACSWP's amendments	✓

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Item 09-11 A Resolution to Study Immigration Detention in the United States.	Approve with amendment to Rec. 1	Approved ACSWP's advice.	✓
Items 10-01, 02 On Directing the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Develop a New Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Policy for the Church	Answer with action taken on 10-02., approve with amendment	ACSWP advice with amendment approved.	✓
Item 10-03 On Directing PC(USA) Entities to Reflect Balance in Advocating Both Sides of the Abortion Issue	Disapprove	Approved alternate resolution	
Item 10-04 On Advocating and Funding Either Both Sides of the Abortion Issue or Neither.	Answer w/action on 10-03	Approved ACSWP advice.	✓
Item 10-06 On Supporting Single Payer Universal Healthcare Reform.	Approve with amendment	Accepted ACSWP's advice with amendment.	✓
Item 11-01 On Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel	Approve alternate recommendations	Accepted ACSWP's advice.	✓
Item 11-02 On Pursuing a Culture of a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine	Approve, as amended	Disapproved	
Item 11-03 On Endorsing the "Amman Call" Regarding Arab-Israeli Peace.	Answer w/action on 11-01	Accepted ACSWP's advice. 53-7-2/voice vote	✓
Item 11-04 On Travel to Israel and Palestine.	Answer w/action on 11-01	Accepted ACSWP's advice.	✓
Item 11-06 On the 218th General Assembly (2008) Being a Voice for the Victims of Violence in Israel and Palestine.	Alternate recommendation	Approved original ovt.	
Item 11-07 On Supporting Israel's Right to Exist, But Calling for Temporary Suspension of Military Aid to the State of Israel.	Approve, as amended	Disapproved.	
Item 11-09 Regarding Assistance for Iraqi Refugees.	Approve, with amendments	Approved, no amendments.	✓
Item 11-10 On Building Peace in Iraq.	Approve, with amendment to #6	Approved as amended, but ACSWP's advice not taken.	✓
Item 11-12 On Preventing the Trafficking of Women, Internationally and Nationally	Approve with amendments 4 and 5	Accepted ACSWP's advice.	✓
Item 11-13 A Resolution to Expand the Church's Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking.	Approve	Accepted ACSWP's advice. Approved.	✓
Item 11-14 On Endorsing the "Publish What You Pay" Campaign	Approve	Approved as amended.	✓
Item 11-15 On Support for the Presbyterian Church in Zimbabwe.	Approve with comments	Approved ACSWP's advice.	✓
Item 11-16 On Peacemaking and the Pursuit of Justice and Fairness of Shalom.	Approve	Approved	✓
Item 11-17 Overture on War, Mercenaries, and Profiteering	Approve with amendments	Approved ACSWP's advice.	✓
Item 11-18 On Peacemaking in Colombia	Alternate. Answered with action on 11-18	Approved ACSWP's advice	✓
Item 11-22 On Supporting Those Who Feel Called to Seek Status as Conscientious Objectors.	Approve with amendments	Approved, but ACSWP's advice not taken.	✓
Item 11-23 On Divestment from Caterpillar, Inc., and Motorola, Inc., for Profiting from the Israeli Military Occupation of Palestinian Territories	Answer by action on 11-01	Disapprove.	
Item 11-25 On Becoming Non-Partisan Advocates for Peace	Answer by action on 11-06	Accepted ACSWP advice.	✓
Item 11-26 On Middle East Peacemaking.	Disapprove	Answer with action on 11-01.	
Item 15-01 On Urging the Board of Pensions to Expand the Definition of Medical Necessity to Include Habilitative Services for Children with Congenital Developmental Disabilities.	Approve	Accepted ACSWP advice.	✓

Item 15-02 Directing the Board of Pensions to Provide a Relief of Conscience Plan Report Annually.	Disapprove	Approved as amended.	
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Item 17-Self-Study GACER

General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations Self-Study

I. IDENTITY AND MISSION

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) functions to give a high profile to the vision of ecumenical involvement and work as central to the gospel and key to the life of the church. It plans and coordinates, in consultation with the agencies and governing bodies of the church, the involvement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ecumenical relations and work. The foundational commitment of the church remains, as it has through more than 200 years of ecumenical mission and witness, Jesus' prayer of John 17: "that they may all be one." That search for unity is not optional, though the obstacles are also not insignificant.

The GACER seeks to connect the ecumenical efforts of all governing body levels of the church and provide a common point for all ecumenical efforts with those beyond our church. The goal of GACER is to:

- keep a unity of vision that includes the ecclesiastical, programmatic, public advocacy and witness, ecumenical, and denominational (organizational) parts of our ministries and commitments,
- articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our ecumenical commitments, and
- promote awareness of the unity of the church as an exhibition of the kingdom of heaven to the world and a foretaste of the unity of the whole human family.

The GACER assists the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in fulfilling its commitment to its ecumenical vision and stance that together, with Christians in every time and place, Presbyterians confess belief in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church ...

- welcoming diverse patterns of the visible unity of Christ's church, seeking concord in essential things: faith, sacraments, mission, and ministry;
- participating in mission and witness globally with ecumenical church partners, and in mission and witness nationally with regional councils, local associations, and neighboring congregations;
- engaging in bilateral and multilateral dialogues with other churches and traditions to remove barriers of misunderstanding and establish common affirmation;
- working for the union or reunion of separate churches in the Presbyterian and Reformed family;
- reaching out to unfamiliar traditions and associations of churches; and
- searching for the fuller expression of the visible unity to which we are called.

The GACER gives guidance to General Assembly agencies on new opportunities to strengthen the relationships with other faith communities and on strategies for fulfilling the General Assembly mandates on interreligious relationships. As Christians, we remain open to the working of God's Spirit among people of other religious traditions in their individual and corporate lives. As we are called by Jesus Christ, we are prepared to dialogue and cooperate everywhere with people of good will on behalf of justice, peace, and the common good, and pursue the journey of faith with Christ wherever we find ourselves, in whatever company, all in each place.

II. THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

The theological rationale for ecumenical relations in the PC(USA), and by extension, for oversight of such relations by the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER), is a multidimensional understanding that runs deep and long in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and in its antecedent churches and organizations. Several major themes are summarized in the document, "The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)," approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Attachment A).

Several biblical texts are foundational to our church's ecumenical commitment:

- John 17:21, expressing Jesus' prayer for the unity of the church,
- 2 Corinthians 5:19, our call to be agents of reconciliation, and
- Ephesians 4:3–4, Romans 12, and 1 Corinthians 12, where we are encouraged to maintain the bond of unity in the one body of Christ.

These foundational scriptural texts are often cited in the confessions of our church, expressly The Confession of 1967, The Westminster Confession of Faith, The Second Helvetic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism, and others in *The Book of Confessions*.

It is clear from Scripture and our confessions that the unity of the church is God's doing, a gift of God in Jesus Christ. Our divisions, though they may obscure our unity, cannot undo what God has already accomplished for us. When we come together at ecumenical tables, we are seeking to make visible what, by the grace of God, is already the case: We are one in Christ.

From the earliest days of European settlement in North America, there has been a dynamic tension between the distinctively Reformed identity claimed by Presbyterians and our confession of "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church" that embraces the larger community of believers and churches. This has played out over the years in varying degrees of emphasis on a Presbyterian "brand" in doctrine and polity, and a simultaneous commitment to unity in Christian ministry and mission. Central to this discussion is the Lund principle¹ that churches should do together all that is possible in good conscience, affirming the importance of this principle as part of the framework for ecumenical policy in the coming years.

III. OUR CHANGING ECUMENICAL LANDSCAPE & ITS IMPLICATIONS

Our commitment to an ecumenical vision in this time and place involves a study of the changing ecumenical landscape. One dimension of that landscape is the growing set of internal tensions coupled with diminished denominational identity within traditional mainline churches, raising up significant *intra-denominational* challenges ecumenically in addition to the challenges of external relationships with other Christian bodies.

We also note what some see as a media-driven deepening of ideological polarities within U.S. society, sometimes reflected in the "red" and "blue" region shorthand. If economic and other forces are intensifying the coloration of the map, then the task of ecumenism is even more important.

A demographic shift in the global church from the north to the south has reshaped the dynamics of the ecumenical movement in a number of ways. Most importantly, the flow of influence is no longer from north to south or even west to east, but from every part of the world to every other part of the world. This has meant that ecumenical conversation partners are shaped geographically as well as denominationally.

In this regard, contextualized realities have become as important as confessional considerations; thus, the PC(USA) needs to include new and different partners to address the needs of today. The new partners include:

1. Churches made up of new immigrants bringing their languages and traditions from home, churches that are now a part of the PC(USA) context. New immigrants bring different understandings of the church and the world, shaped by the cultures of the places they have left. Their visions and understandings can infuse and enrich our own and help the PC(USA) to see the world in new ways.

2. Faith-based service and justice coalitions that are not denominationally circumscribed. Groups such as Habitat for Humanity, Bread for the World, and the Heifer Project respond to human suffering through emergency relief and development programs to help heal a divided world. Many Presbyterian congregations support these organizations.

3. The constellation of new service and justice groups that have emerged in the modern world and exhibited by the explosive growth of nongovernmental organizations since World War II. Many of these, Christian or church-based in origin but now secular—or secular or other-religious from their foundation—are doing the traditional work of humanitarian aid often associated with Christian mission.

4. Churches that have been a part of the conciliar movement, including the National and World Councils of Churches, along with their related networks such as Church Women United and the World Student Christian Federation. Also included are those churches, some of which are "post-denominational" and most of which have not participated in the traditional conciliar organizations. These churches are helping to create cooperative ecumenical ties across a broader spectrum of the Christian family, such as the Global Christian Forum (GCF) and Christian Churches Together (CCT) here in the United States. The merger of the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches is yet another example of efforts to broaden the ecumenical table.

5. People of other faiths and religious traditions. In a world where fear of the “other” exacerbates violence and suffering, working in partnership with them is of central importance. We are called by God to join with all those willing to work for the healing of the whole earth and the whole human family, and thus our level of interreligious engagement is becoming increasingly important.

The purpose of the ecumenical movement is to help make manifest God’s intention for the household of God. In the past, churches have often limited that vision to a unified Church that would help bring about a unified world or even unify the world within it. The ecumenical vision that is part of God’s vision is actually much larger. John 10:10b describes the vision as God’s desire that the inhabitants of the household of God “may have life, and have it abundantly.” This is a vision of justice and peace that allows space for all of God’s creation to live life in its fullness. God is continually active in bringing loving wholeness to creation, where all can live in peace. God is especially attentive to those who have been excluded from the fullness of life and calls the church to cooperate in this process.

The Holy Spirit, the Advocate whom Jesus promised, invites us to this work. Dialogue with churches of the Pentecostal movement is essential, as well as attending to the often-surprising movements of the Spirit in our churches and ecumenical bodies. The discernment of God’s vision for the household of God is a gift of the Spirit, since we understand the household of God to cut across all human lines. Biblically speaking, Pentecost was a unique moment when the Holy Spirit acted in an amazing way, enabling the church to communicate across differences and to practice a new kind of hospitality. Living with this gift of the Spirit in our present moment in history encourages us to hear the voices of people long silenced. Enabled to read the signs of the time, the church becomes empowered by the Spirit to champion a theology of life by amplifying voices that contend with life-denying forces. In this way, the church may become a “blessing to the nations” and offer hope for healing, reconciliation, and justice in the earth and the economy.

Reframing ecumenism in the face of new contextual realities requires a more carefully nuanced ecumenism that is adjusted to organizational and structural changes, often as consequences of globalization, whether this is the compression of space (made possible by modern forms of transportation) or of time (due to the Internet and other forms of communication technology).

Our Reformed theology in light of our changing context must now be drawn to the two contemporary challenges for ecumenical relationships in our world:

1. We need a more developed theology, or theologies, for interreligious work, and a focus for theological reflection on the work of the Spirit in human consciousness and in the world (foreshadowed in Paul’s argument about God’s work among all humanity in the early chapters of Romans).

2. We need a more developed theology that helps guide our work as we network with other ecclesial and non-ecclesial bodies, whether religious or secular. Much of this theological work and reflection might be developed in response to the document, “The Nature and Mission of the Church,” set forth for ecumenical reflection by the World Council of Churches. This document clearly looks for a church aligned with the *mission dei* (mission of God), one in which the true identity of the church is eschatological but worked out in time.

IV. GACER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The work of GACER under the auspices of the General Assembly has been marked by new opportunities and continuing challenges. These have been a consequence both of changes in the ecumenical landscape and changes within the PC(USA). They are reflected in our conciliar relationships, bilateral and multilateral ecclesial relationships, interreligious relationships, and partnerships and organizational structures to implement the ecumenical agenda of the PC(USA).

1. *Within the PC(USA)*

The 211th General Assembly (1999), upon recommendation of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council (now General Assembly Mission Council), created the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER). This new committee replaced the Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and “Special Committees of the General Assembly” with ecumenical mandates.

2. *Conciliar Level*

The PC(USA) holds membership as an ecclesial body in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the National Council of Churches of Christ, all of which have faced organizational and fiscal challenges. Elected representatives from the PC(USA) on these councils and staff members working with them have contributed to a sense of renewal in their mission and financial stability.

3. *Multilateral Ecclesial Relationships*

The 209th General Assembly (1997) approved *A Formula of Agreement* between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. This was a historic agreement of Full Communion, the result of thirty-five years of dialogue among these churches. The Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee has overseen the implementation of this agreement, and closer collaboration and cooperation have emerged in shared ministries between congregations.

In January 2002, the Consultation on Church Union culminated its decades of work by being transformed into Churches Uniting in Christ (CUiC), with the goals of expressing unity in Christ and combating racism together.

The PC(USA) has been an active and energetic participant in CUiC through the body's coordinating council and its task forces on ministry, racial justice, and local/regional work. As churches in the context of the United States, CUiC member communions share a long history of a call to racial reconciliation. Even as we commit to answer God's call to racial reconciliation, however, a breach of relationship has occurred within the fellowship as some of the churches have recently stated that they have not experienced CUiC as a place of racial reconciliation. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has severed their relationship with CUiC, but all recognize that as churches in covenant relationship, we have not sufficiently attended to racial injustice as a church dividing issue and have not faithfully fulfilled this mark of our covenant relationship.

At a national plenary gathering in 2008, the churches determined that in the face of this disconnect between intent and impact, they would take time to grieve this breach in our covenant relationship, understand how racism operates both within our CUiC relationship and the wider church, and discern how God's call to racial reconciliation and justice is served through CUiC as a fellowship of churches.

4. *Bilateral Ecclesial Relationships*

The sixth round of Reformed-Catholic dialogue (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) concluded in 2001, with a focus on pastoral issues in marriages between members of the Roman Catholic Church and Reformed churches. In response to the papal encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*, a delegation from the PC(USA) entered into conversation with the Vatican in December 2000 and March 2001. The response of the PC(USA) was presented in the paper, "The Successor to Peter." Several recommendations from this conversation were implemented through the 213th General Assembly (2001).

The seventh round of Reformed-United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) dialogue, mandated by the 215th General Assembly (2003), began meeting that same year. This dialogue also included the Christian Reformed Church in North America, the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. The dialogue was charged to work on developing a means for the mutual recognition of baptism and to explore issues related to the Eucharist. The proposal for mutual recognition of baptism was approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and ratified by the presbyteries. Unfortunately, the USCCB did not approve the agreement. Because the USCCB has not approved the agreement, it will now become a document archived for study and future dialogue, but will not have authoritative standing in any of the above churches. The *Common Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Baptism*, along with the study document *These Living Waters* stands as a record of our dialogue and an offering for future study and dialogue. We recognize that Reformed congregations and Roman Catholic parishes have long since recognized the baptisms in one another's churches. We anticipate that this will continue, despite our current inability to formally reach consensus on a national level. The bilateral dialogue is now beginning to explore issues related to the Eucharist.

The Moravian-Reformed dialogue was mandated by the 212th General Assembly (2000). The dialogue began in April 2002 with the following goals: (1) to reach an understanding of each tradition's ministry of oversight; (2) to explore areas of cooperative work in global, national, and local settings so that our congregations may have greater knowledge of each other and our cooperative work; and (3) to seek common agreements that could lead to establishing Full Communion between the Moravian Church and one or all of the Reformed churches. The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved entering into a covenant relationship with the Moravian Church. The Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church will act upon this agreement at their respective synod meetings in 2010.

The Episcopal-Presbyterian bilateral dialogue was mandated by the 212th General Assembly (2000). The focus of the dialogue was the reconciliation of ministries between the two churches. This bilateral dialogue worked closely with the Ministry Task Force of Churches Uniting in Christ. While unable to achieve full reconciliation of ministries, the 218th General Assembly (2008) approved mutual recognition of our ministries and this agreement was ratified by the presbyteries. It was also approved by the Episcopal Church General Convention in 2009. The next round of dialogue will focus on further study and dialogue in the areas of diaconal ministries, historic episcopate, the office of elder, and other related subjects as a continued effort toward the full reconciliation of our ministries and interchangeability of our ministers.

The Joint Committee on Presbyterian Cooperation Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Korean Presbyterian Church in America was mandated by the 204th General Assembly (1992). It was charged to foster greater unity of witness between our two churches and to explore the possibility of eventual union between the two denominations. A

proposal to enter covenant relationship was approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and ratified by the presbyteries. The covenant has also been adopted and ratified by the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad (formerly in America). Proposals for the orderly exchange of ministers and congregations are in the process of being developed.

The Joint Cooperative Committee with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was mandated by the 212th General Assembly (2000) and charged to enter church-to-church conversations searching for means to strengthen mutual relationships. The work of this cooperative committee culminated in holding concurrent General Assemblies in 2006 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Presbyterian witness in the United States.

The GACER convened an ecumenical consultation in 2007, bringing together a broad cross-section of the PC(USA) and representatives from our full communion partners, to assess the current ecumenical landscape and consider ways the PC(USA) might strengthen and revitalize its ecumenical commitment. Several broad themes emerged from this consultation:

- (a) Reclaiming the historic ecumenical commitment that we are called to do all things together, except those things that, in conscience, we need to do separately;
- (b) Calling upon the church to engage a new dialogue between our core ecumenical commitments and emerging forms of church life;
- (c) Calling the whole church to a commitment to justice in the economy and the earth;
- (d) Calling the church to be peacemakers between building bridges of dialogue and common work for peace and justice with people of other faiths;
- (e) Celebrating ecumenism at the local level;
- (f) Continuing the work of peacemaking in a war-torn world.

The principal result of this consultation was a broad consensus that led to the development of “The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” which will guide the ecumenical work of the church through the next decade.

5. *Interreligious Relationships*

The GACER is responsible for a change in the General Assembly Standing Rules to allow representatives from other religious traditions to attend General Assembly and participate in the life of our church at the national level. Over the last decade, GACER has grown in its capacity to engage interreligious relationships with more intentionality. A subcommittee of GACER is now focused on our church’s interreligious commitments.

6. *Ministry and Formation*

In recent years, GACER has worked to strengthen ecumenical formation within the PC(USA) by producing educational resources for congregations (e.g. most recently a study guide on “The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”), developing a network of ecumenical liaisons with middle governing bodies, promoting ecumenical reception of full communion agreements, and encouraging the participation of young adults in the ecumenical movement and its conciliar bodies.

7. *Partnerships and Organizational Structures*

Throughout its work, the General Assembly staff seeks to work ecumenically with counterparts in other denominations, ecumenical councils, and project-specific task groups that involve ecumenical partners. Significant areas of ecumenical cooperation are seen in the areas of disaster relief and development, national and international public witness and advocacy, national and international hunger concerns, theological engagement, youth and young adult ministries, communications, and international mission partnerships. These partnerships are not only significant for shaping the mission of the PC(USA), but also for bringing PC(USA) resources and insight to the work of our ecumenical partners. A key component has been the understanding that we “do mission in partnership,” which is one of the ways the PC(USA) seeks to realize the ecumenical imperative of the Lund Principle.

V. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In order for GACER to accomplish the tasks the General Assembly has outlined for it in “The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” several arenas of work will need to be strengthened in the next few years.

A. *Living Constructively with the Tension Between the Academic and the Practical*

Historically, the search to discover our unity in Christ through the exploration of doctrinal differences among the churches has been seen as an academic exercise. Theologians and ecclesiologists have met in bilateral and multilateral

dialogues, some of which have continued for decades, to seek common ground on matters of theology. As a result, ecumenism is perceived by many in the church as something academicians do, without practical consequences for the life of the church.

On the other hand, ecumenism is a very practical matter. When full communion agreements are entered into by churches, there are consequences: new relationships among brothers and sisters in the faith who were once divided; the sharing of the Eucharist in places where it has not been shared; and the orderly exchange of ministers of Word and Sacrament among churches that have not enjoyed the benefits of receiving ministers from the other tradition, for example.

Until recently, GACER's work tilted towards the academic side of ecumenical engagement by finding experienced persons to participate in bilateral and multilateral dialogues and sharing the results of these dialogues with the General Assembly for its approval. A number of these dialogues, as mentioned previously, have resulted in significant agreements.

More recently, GACER has taken initiative on the practical side of ecumenical engagement by producing resources, securing ecumenical liaisons with middle governing bodies to build communication networks, and developing strategies to facilitate ecumenical formation at the local level.

As we move into the future, GACER believes that it must find ways to live constructively with the tension between the academic and the practical. While different seasons of church's life will require different emphases, GACER wants to lift up *both* the academic work of ecumenical engagement and the practical work of implementation for the church as a whole, recognizing that both are critical components of the church's ecumenical life and witness.

B. *Increased Programmatic Focus*

Given the staff reductions within the General Assembly Mission Council related to ecumenical programmatic work in recent years, GACER sees the need to move more proactively into developing a programmatic thrust and educational resources that were once the sole purview of the GAMC. These include study resources related to our church's conciliar relationships and full communion agreements, and increased attention to the need for ecumenical formation throughout the denomination. Appropriate faculty at PC(USA) seminaries and others should be brought into this process.

C. *Strengthening Ecumenical Reception at the Local Level*

While the PC(USA) has invested considerable resources over the last several decades to participate in bilateral and multilateral dialogues, some of which have led to full communion agreements, less effort has been invested in implementing the results of these agreements at the local level. Cutbacks in staff, along with the lack of an overarching strategy for implementation, have contributed to this disparity.

The GACER should develop an implementation strategy for ecumenical reception, in partnership with middle governing bodies, and then provide initiative, coordination, and two-way communication in order to assure that the church's ecumenical agreements are fully embraced throughout all levels of the church's life.

D. *Broadening and Strengthening Interreligious Relationships*

Interreligious relations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) take place primarily through global, national, and local efforts that should be better connected and strengthened. The maintenance of formal relations between the church and organizations of other religious communities (e.g., the Islamic Society of North America, or Union for Reform Judaism, Buddhist Churches of America) is important, and provides useful links among national leaders. At the same time, the maintenance and expansion of local relationships, which are often less institutional and more related to specific agendas for action or peace-building, is critical for the health of our local cities and towns, and for the face-to-face engagement of our communities. National efforts could more effectively involve a wider cross-section of participation, and thereby better support local efforts. Local efforts could more effectively share the models of what they are learning and doing with others across the denomination, and with the national church, in order to energize and resource the efforts of others. Global, national, and local efforts would benefit from more sustained theological reflection, both among the Christians involved (for greater understanding of the significance of this work for Christian faith), and as an interreligious endeavor (to learn more clearly how it is we are theologically significant for one another). All of this also needs to be done in the context of the dynamic interreligious realities of our ecumenical partners in other parts of the world.

E. *Improving Relationships Between GACER and the GAMC*

In October 2009, a group of eight elected representatives from the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations and the General Assembly Mission Council met for the purposes of building relationships between GACER and the GAMC and to foster the fulfillment of our Presbyterian ecumenical calling in our mission program and financial commitments

The committee identified many dynamics at work in the church at this point in time:

- Decreased funding for basic mission support, resulting in staff cuts and reduced financial support for ecumenical agencies.
- Tendency to shift focus from commitments to conciliar agencies (international, national, state, and regional councils of churches) to local, bilateral or multilateral church-to-church engagement.
- Decreased understanding of the importance of ecumenical ministry at all levels of the church—coupled with limited efforts at ecumenical formation by pastors and middle governing body leaders.
- Bifurcation of responsibilities between the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council in attending to ecumenical ministries.
- False split between matters of inter-church relations (Faith and Order) and cooperative ministries (Life and Work).

In spite of these dynamics, the members of this group felt that there was much at stake in keeping ecumenical ministry at the center of the church's life. Working in partnership with one another, beginning with GAMC and GACER elected members and staff, is one important first step in strengthening the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as it lives out the ecumenical vision that *all might be one* (John 17:21).

As the GACER and GAMC continue responding to the changing context and landscape of ecumenism, both are encouraged by the possibilities of further dialogue and closer relationship. Both affirm our denomination's commitment to exploring ecumenical activity in its many forms throughout the church at the national, regional, and local levels.

As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called to listen in new ways to what the Spirit is saying to the whole church, GACER and the GAMC make the following commitments:

1. The GAMC approves the adding of an advisory member of GAMC from GACER. This person will be named by GACER.
2. Facilitate study and conversation at a GAMC meeting of "The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" (document approved by the 218th General Assembly 2008), and plan an overlapping meeting between GACER and GAMC (with the possibility of also including the middle governing bodies).
3. Pending GACER engagement with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), the chairs of the GAMC and COGA will appoint a task force, to include a representative from GACER, to: (a) forge structural relationships between the GAMC and OGA and (b) explore the potential programmatic consequences for both the GAMC and OGA.

F. *Strengthening Relationships with All Agencies of the General Assembly*

The process of engagement over the last year between GACER and the GAMC leadership can serve as a model for GACER and it seeks to build a constructive partnership with all six agencies of the General Assembly over the longer term.

G. *Improving Linkages with Ecumenical Dialogues and Conciliar Bodies*

Historically, GACER has overseen the process of General Assembly appointments to ecumenical dialogues and to conciliar bodies (such as the National Council of Christian Churches in the U.S.A.). In order to provide better communication and strengthen the linkages with these groups, GACER now believes it is important that a part of its membership includes PC(USA) representatives from both ecumenical dialogues and conciliar bodies with which the church has relationships.

VI. ADEQUACY OF OUR MANDATE

The General Assembly mandate for the GACER was originally approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999) upon the recommendation of the General Assembly Council and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The GACER replaced the former Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and "Special Committees of the General Assembly" with ecumenical mandates. One of the goals of the new GACER was to consolidate the work of special committees of the General Assembly with ecumenical mandates that reported directly to the assembly into one ongoing permanent committee. Other goals included giving greater coordination and high profile to the ecumenical involvement of the PC(USA) as central to our life and witness to the gospel.

One of the significant changes in the movement from the Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations was the dropping of primary accompaniment for Interfaith Relations. The GACER has responsibility to "give guidance to General Assembly agencies on new opportunities to strengthen the relationships with other faith communities and on strategies for fulfilling the General Assembly mandates on interfaith [interreligious] relationships" but does not have power to make recommendations directly to staff or the General Assembly on matters of interreligious relationships.

The central mandate of the GACER remains strong and important to the life of the PC(USA). It would be strengthened with a mandated focus on interreligious relationships. Since the formation of GACER, the complexity of interreligious relations in the world and the need for more attention to interreligious cooperation and relationship-building in the wider ecumenical arena, have dramatically increased. Currently, particular interreligious matters that require attention are cared for by the General Assembly Mission Council. There is a need for an elected body to oversee the involvement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in interreligious relations and work; to connect the interreligious efforts of all governing body levels of the church; to provide a common point for all interreligious efforts connecting us with those outside our church; and to articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our interreligious relations. The GACER is positioned well to do this work in the wider context of our ecumenical mandate. It would be appropriate to include responsibilities for both ecumenical and interreligious relationships in the overall mandate of GACER. With this change it would be appropriate to change the name of GACER to the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships.

VII. PROCESS OF SELF-STUDY

In the spring of 2009, GACER appointed a subcommittee to oversee the process of self-study. The subcommittee implemented a number of strategies to review the work GACER and to gather feedback from several constituencies for this report. The subcommittee:

1. reviewed the minutes of GACER over the past decade, along with all other public documents and reports that the committee produced;
2. reviewed General Assembly-approved reports related to GACER’s work, including *The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*;
3. developed survey instruments, in collaboration with Research Services, that were sent to all commissioners to the 218th General Assembly (2008) and more than fifty individuals who have been a vital part of GACER’s work, including former committee members and chairpersons, participants in ecumenical dialogues, and conciliar bodies.

The process of self-study for GACER has been a productive experience for the committee, helping it celebrate both its considerable accomplishments over the last decade as well as identify areas for future work.

Endnote

1. The third world conference on Faith and Order in Lund, Sweden (1952) issued this challenge, “should not our churches ask themselves whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other churches, and whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?” This principle has been adapted in many forms as the Lund Principle and often is formulated as “we should do together all things except those in which deep differences of conscience demand that we do separately.”

Item 17-Self-Study COTE

Committee on Theological Education Self-Study Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010), Fall 2003—Fall 2009

Prologue

Even in the early moments of our developing nation, the Presbyterian church—one of the earliest and most influential churches during and beyond the colonial period—steadfastly planted educational institutions in order to nurture the stewardship of the mind. Further, because of the church’s historic commitment to an educated clergy, Presbyterian theological institutions began springing up as early as 1794, when the earliest predecessor institution to Pittsburgh Theological Seminary was founded, and 1812, when Princeton Theological Seminary was founded. Some of these theological institutions closed over time, merged with other schools, or shifted from the preparation of clergy to other missions; but eleven of them have flourished and continue to be relevant resources for the PC(USA).

In 1983, when the two largest Presbyterian bodies reunited, finally healing a rupture brought about by the American Civil War, the seven seminaries of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) (the so-called “Northern Presbyterian Church”) combined with the four seminaries of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) (the so-called “Southern Presbyterian Church”). The UPCUSA seminaries were Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, McCormick Theological Seminary (1829), University of Dubuque School of Theology (1852), Louisville Theological Seminary (aligned dually with both denominations and dating back to 1853), Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (1867), and San Francisco Theological Seminary (1871). The PCUS seminaries were Union Presbyterian Seminary (1812), Columbia Theological Seminary (1828), Louisville Theological Seminary, and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (1902). Since reunion the General Assembly has established renewable covenant

agreements with two additional seminaries with historical ties to the PC(USA)'s predecessors—Auburn Theological Seminary (1818) and the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (1919).

Although “theological education” takes place in many venues across the church, most notably in congregations week in and week out, the focus of the work of the COTE is the ministry of theological education expressed through the mission and work of the theological schools related to the PC(USA) whose primary calling is the preparation and enhancement of women and men for ministry in the church of Jesus Christ. The ten theological schools of the PC(USA) named above and the two in covenant agreement are vital centers of teaching and learning. Collectively these schools have more than 3,000 students in degrees ranging from the Master of Divinity (MDiv) and other master's degrees to the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). These students are prepared by about 250 full-time faculty as well as by scores of adjunct professors. The library resources of these schools represent some of the most important collections in the United States and the world. The scholarly work of seminary faculty members regularly appears in curriculum, journals, and books that support the work of pastors and teachers across the church.

Although preparation of leaders for the PC(USA) is the historical mission of these schools, students from many other denominations and from churches around the world are attracted to our seminaries because of the rich theological resources and the strong history of scholarship and teaching. The schools offering PhD programs (Princeton and Union) are important providers of faculty for theological schools in the United States and around the world. Of the twenty largest Doctor of Ministry programs in the United States, four are from “mainline” denominational traditions; three of those are Presbyterian schools (Columbia, McCormick, and San Francisco). While the degree programs that these schools offer are similar, each school responds to the unique needs of the church in its region and seeks to provide a distinctive focus in its education so as to enhance the range of resources available to the church.

The theological schools of the PC(USA) represent collectively one of the strongest systems of theological education of any denomination. Even after the devastating economic challenges of 2008–2009, our seminaries are among the strongest in the United States in terms of financial reserves. Much of this strength is due to the stewardship of the seminaries' board of trustees, made up almost entirely of members and officers of the PC(USA). Their dedication and professional expertise has greatly contributed to the robust character of the schools.

The Committee on Theological Education is a fairly recent phenomenon. Established in 1986, this committee of seminary presidents selected by seminary boards and ministers and elders elected by the General Assembly has become a unique governing body in the world of theological education and in the church at-large. This is not a *council of the seminaries*, but a *committee of the church* not fully elected by the church. The largest project of the Committee on Theological Education is the Theological Education Fund (TEF), the only denomination-wide way PC(USA) seminaries are funded. On average, less than 2 percent of annual seminary operating budgets is funded by the TEF, and only about 20 percent of our congregations normally participate in this specific appeal.

Introduction

The *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, as amended by the 216th General Assembly (2004), states:

The General Assembly Mission Council ensures the continuation of a committee that includes representatives of each Presbyterian theological institution, and that will review the effectiveness and stewardship of the schools on behalf of the church, will exercise the governance responsibilities of the church to the schools, and will encourage and enhance cooperation among the church's theological schools. The committee will be provided direct access to the General Assembly Mission Council and the General Assembly. (*Manual*, 2010, p. 19, *Organization for Mission*, Section V.F.1.)

The 198th General Assembly (1986) voted to adopt the report and recommendations of the Special Committee on Theological Institutions (CTI) that established the Committee on Theological Education (COTE), a *committee of the church* rather than a *council of the seminaries*.

The Committee on Theological Education will be responsible: a) to further the cause of theological education in the church; b) to provide a vehicle through which individual theological schools can coordinate their activities and report to the church; c) to provide for official communication from the church to the schools; d) to preserve the freedom of the schools for the benefit of the church; e) to assure visible representation of theological education at high levels of the church's organization. (*Minutes*, 1986, Part 1, p. 267)

With this same action, thirteen functions of COTE were assigned:

1. To develop and maintain a comprehensive overview of theological education from the perspective of the whole church;
2. To identify, develop, and propose strategies for a systemic approach to theological education with the denomination;
3. To serve as an advocate before the whole church for theological education and to interpret the mission of the denomination's theological schools to the whole church;

4. To provide a way for the church's needs to be addressed to the denomination's theological schools;
5. To review the effectiveness and stewardship of the schools on behalf of the church;
6. To encourage and enhance cooperation among the theological schools of the denomination;
7. To relate to governing bodies and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), particularly those which have responsibilities for theology and worship, for education, for candidacy, and for leadership development of pastors and church members;
8. To maintain appropriate relationships with those responsible for theological education in other branches of the church catholic;
9. To prepare an appropriate formula for disbursement of funds [from the Theological Education Fund and other restricted funds and endowments] to the theological schools of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to advocate for their financial support;
10. To recommend to the General Assembly those theological schools that qualify as members of the Committee on Theological Education;
11. To maintain relations with educational and ecumenical associations that share common concerns with the committee;
12. To serve as an agency of the denomination for relating to theological schools and agencies other than those of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and
13. To report directly to the General Assembly.

With this new committee, an increased emphasis on cooperation among the seminaries and between the seminaries and the PC(USA) was born, improved communication and information sharing was prioritized, the independent nature of and ownership of the seminaries was affirmed, and a new way of supporting the seminaries financially was developed. The 205th General Assembly (1993) reaffirmed the 1986 purpose and functions of the COTE after a comprehensive review and report by the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions (CSTI).

I. Governance

The governance of COTE is described by the General Assembly Mission Council Manual of Operations, COTE Manual of Operations, and General Assembly *Minutes*, Standing Rules, and *Organization for Mission* and is outlined below. A detailed description of COTE governance, the COTE Manual of Operations, is attached in the appendices and was thoroughly revised in April 2007.

A. *Governance within COTE*

1. *Members*

The committee consists of a majority of members elected by the General Assembly, serving four-year renewable terms, and representatives, usually presidents, of each related seminary. Together these elected and institutional members constitute the COTE for the benefit of the church and the schools. There are three membership categories: Elected/Church-at-Large, Institutional Representatives, and Corresponding Members.

a. *Elected Committee Members (Eleven Plus Two Elected by the GAMC)*

Currently serving are the following:

Class of 2010 (elected by General Assembly): Joseph Doh, Mesa, Arizona; Kenneth E. Kovacs, Catonsville, Maryland; Fran Lane-Lawrence, Wheeling, West Virginia; K. Nicholas Yoda, Lakewood, Ohio; Chandler Stokes, Berkeley, California.

Class of 2012 (elected by the General Assembly): Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Terry Holland, Fresno, California; Mindy Douglas Adams, Nashville, Tennessee; Max Sherman, Austin, Texas; Kathy Wolf Reed, Nashville, Tennessee; Landon Whitsitt, Liberty, Missouri.

Selected by GAMC/Class: Andy Sonneborn/2010, Springfield, Illinois; Roger Gench/2012, Washington, D.C.

b. *COTE Institutional Representatives (Ten Currently Serve)*

The theological schools are selected by General Assembly as recommended by the COTE, and representatives are selected by institutions.

Institutional representatives: Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Theodore J. Wardlaw, president, Austin, Texas; Columbia Theological Seminary, Stephen A. Hayner, president, Decatur, Georgia; University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Jeffrey F. Bullock, president, Dubuque, Iowa; Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Dean K. Thompson, president, Louisville, Kentucky; McCormick Theological Seminary, Cynthia M. Campbell, president, Chicago, Illinois; Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, William J. Carl III, president, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Princeton Theological Seminary, Iain R. Torrance, president, Princeton, New Jersey; San Francisco Theological Seminary, Laird Stuart, interim president, San Anselmo, California; J. C. Smith Theological Seminary, Paul T. Roberts, interim dean, Atlanta, Georgia.

c. *Corresponding Members*

Five currently serve with voice but no vote on the committee.

In covenant with the General Assembly: Auburn Theological Seminary, Katharine R. Henderson, president, New York, New York; Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, Sergio Ojeda-Cárcamo, president, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Corresponding Member as Designated by the General Assembly: Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation, Gary Eller, President, Omaha, Nebraska.

Invited Annually by the COTE for the Last Six Years: Fuller Theological Seminary, Ron Kernaghan, Pasadena, California; Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Alvin Padilla, South Hamilton, Massachusetts; Memphis Theological Seminary, Daniel J. Earheart-Brown, Memphis, Tennessee.

2. *Officers/Executive Committee—Those Currently Serving*

Officers serve two-year terms (General Assembly to General Assembly), have the power to appoint new members to serve on subcommittees and to fill temporary vacancies, and are chaired by the committee chair.

- a. Chair of COTE and Executive Committee of COTE—Fran Lane-Lawrence
- b. Vice-Chair of COTE—Vacant (Phil Butin served until January 31, 2009)
- c. Chairs of Subcommittees:
 - (1) Institutional Review Committee—Chaired by Kenneth Kovacs
 - (2) Implementation & Interpretation—Chaired by Nicholas Yoda
 - (3) Interschool & Mission Cooperation—Chaired by Bill Carl
 - (4) Theological & Church Concerns—Chaired by Cynthia Campbell

The tradition of the COTE has been to rotate the chair of the committee from institutional representatives/presidents to elected/church-at-large members. Chairs over the last six years demonstrate this pattern: The Reverend Dr. Liza Hendricks, presbytery executive—Western Reserve; the Reverend Dr. Samuel Calian—former president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; the Reverend Dr. James Kitchens—pastor of Second Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee; the Reverend Dr. Laura Mendenhall—former president of Columbia Theological Seminary; the Reverend Dr. Joel Weible—pastor of Pee Wee Valley Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Kentucky; and the Reverend Fran Lane-Lawrence—executive director of Laughlin Memorial Chapel, Wheeling, West Virginia. The chair-elect is the Reverend Dr. Theodore J. Wardlaw, president of Austin Presbyterian Seminary.

3. Nominating Committee (appointed by chair of COTE to nominate COTE officers directly to the committee as a whole).

4. *Meetings*

a. Regular meetings are held once in even-numbered years and twice in odd-numbered years, are scheduled by the executive committee, customarily near a PC(USA) seminary campus on a rotating basis, and are approved by COTE.

- b. Past and upcoming meetings and locations: (A new regular meeting schedule has been established.)
 - (1) April 6–8, 2003—Louisville Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

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- (2) November 12–13, 2003—San Francisco Theological Seminary, Claremont, Calif. (Southern California).
- (3) November 8–10, 2004—McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.
- (4) March 14–16, 2005—Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- (5) October 24–26, 2005—Austin Seminary, Austin, Tex.
- (6) November 13– 5, 2006—University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.
- (7) April 10–12, 2007—Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga.
- (8) October 15–17, 2007—Louisville Seminary, Louisville, Ky.
- (9) October 21–23, 2008—Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J.
- (10) April 27–29, 2009—Union PSCE, Richmond, Va.
- (11) November 16–18, 2009—San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, Calif.
- (12) September 14–16, 2010—McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.

c. Special meetings may be called as needed by the executive committee or by written request of at least three other committee members.

d. A quorum is fifteen (15) voting members.

e. The coordinator is responsible for the preparation and distribution of minutes of the committee and of its executive committee.

B. *Relationship to the General Assembly Mission Council*

As quoted in the introduction above, the 216th General Assembly (2004) reestablished direct reporting relationships to the General Assembly (GA) and the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). The relationships between the GAMC, the GA, the COTE, and the member schools is best described as NOT one of *authority over*, but *in dialogue with* so “the freedom of the schools for the benefit of the church” can be “preserved.”

1. The COTE directly reports via a corresponding member of the GAMC who is an institutional member of COTE (a seminary president or dean on a rotating basis) selected by COTE.

2. Two GAMC members, appointed by the GAMC, are elected/voting members of COTE.

3. The Office of Theological Education is a part of the General Assembly Mission Council staff.

C. *Relationship to the General Assembly*

1. The COTE directly reports to the General Assembly via the chair of COTE, who is a GA corresponding member.

2. All of the PC(USA) seminary presidents are invited to serve as corresponding members of the General Assembly.

II. Staff

The Office of Theological Education currently includes four (4) full-time staff persons and a network of sixteen (16) contract staff, plus more than one hundred and fifty (150) volunteers who serve in judicatories throughout the country on behalf of COTE and the Theological Education Fund.

A. *Full-Time Staff*

1. *Coordinator for Theological Education and Seminary Relations*: The Reverend Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty. The coordinator reports to the director of Theology Worship and Education. The coordinator is the primary staff person to COTE and the lead staff person for the Office of Theological Education. (The GAMC pays 100 percent of salary and benefits.)

2. *Associate for Theological Education and Seminary Relations*: The Reverend Dr. Rose Eileen Niles. The associate is the lead staff person for interpreting the Theological Education Fund. She leads more than 150 volunteers and 16 contract staff who serve as “advocates before the whole church for theological education and to interpret the mission of the denomination’s theological schools to the whole church.” Together they raise close to two million dollars annually that is

distributed by an agreed-upon formula to PC(USA) seminaries and pays for network and other interpretation expenses. (The Theological Education Fund [TEF] pays 85 percent of salary and benefits of the associate.)

3. *Program Assistant for Theological Education and Seminary Relations*: Rob Fohr. The program assistant relates directly with the seminaries and staff on a daily basis and partners with the coordinator to manage the work of COTE and the Office of Theological Education. (The GAMC pays 100 percent of salary and benefits.)

4. *Administrative Assistant for Theological Education and Seminary Relations*: Cindy Pope. The assistant works closely with the associate to support the work of the Theological Education Seminary Support Network and assists with COTE and office projects as needed. (The TEF pays 100 percent of salary and benefits.)

B. *Other Staff*

1. *Contract Staff Funded by the TEF*

a. Marketing and promotional material firms for TEF as determined by staff in consultation with the Implementation and Interpretation Committee.

b. Fifteen (15) regional representatives (train and support volunteer TEF presbytery representatives).

2. *Adjunct Staff from GAMC and OGA as Invited by COTE*

a. Director, Office of Vocation—Marcia Clark Myers.

b. Director, Theology Worship and Education—Joseph D. Small.

III. Budget

More than 60 percent of the Office of Theological Education budget, not counting the Theological Education Fund (TEF) allocation to PC(USA) seminaries, is funded by the Theological Education Fund. This includes salaries, benefits, and program. The General Assembly Mission Council funds the remaining portion (not quite 40 percent). This GAMC budget includes the cost of governance for the Committee on Theological Education meetings rather than the per capita budget of other General Assembly committees.

IV. History, Mission, and Purpose

The *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* as amended by the 218th General Assembly (2008) states:

The General Assembly Mission Council ensures the continuation of a committee that includes representatives of each Presbyterian theological institution, and that will review the effectiveness and stewardship of the schools on behalf of the church, will exercise the governance responsibilities of the church to the schools, and will encourage and enhance cooperation among the church's theological schools. The committee will be provided direct access to the General Assembly Mission Council and the General Assembly. (*Manual of the General Assembly*, 2010, p. 19; *Organization for Mission*, V.F.1.)

The 198th General Assembly (1986) voted to adopt the report and recommendations of the Special Committee on Theological Institutions (CTI) that established a committee of the church rather than a council of the seminaries.

Specific COTE assigned functions were designated by the 198th General Assembly (1986). With the creation of COTE, an increased emphasis on cooperation among the seminaries and between the seminaries and the PC(USA) was born, improved communication and information sharing was prioritized, the independent nature and ownership of the seminaries was affirmed, and a new way of supporting the seminaries was developed—the Theological Education Fund (TEF).

In 1993 these assigned functions were reaffirmed by the 205th General Assembly (1993) with the approval of a report by the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions (CSTI). The CSTI report was distributed to PC(USA) seminaries as well as to middle governing bodies with a cover letter from the then Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, James Andrews. Stated Clerk Andrews highlighted that the CSTI report encouraged seminaries “to continue to study in-depth the issues raised in the report, and to give serious consideration to the issues raised in the report, and to give serious consideration to the suggestions made by the special committee in planning for the future.” We have found that although many of these issues have been addressed, some have not, some have been addressed that are not named, and many new issues are arising for theological schools at an astounding and rapidly increasing rate.

In the letter from the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) accompanying the CSTI distributed to presbyteries it goes on to “commend the eleven Presbyterian theological institutions for their faithful and energetic efforts to serve the whole church, especially those areas where the special committee research shows they have been most effective in recent years: innovative programs for new constituencies; identification of resources to secure the future of theological education; and cooperative efforts among the schools.” The COTE affirms this to continue to be true.

Worth highlighting, however, is the ability of our schools to “identify[y] resource to secure the future.” Declining denominational support has made gifts from individuals and foundations more and more important over the last thirty years. This began more than twenty years ago even when the pre-reunion denominations had distinctly different denominational relationships and funding patterns of their seminaries. In the old “Northern” church, their primary accountability and funding relationships were with the General Assembly, and in the old “Southern” church, the denominational identity and funding were expressed through organic relationships with one or more regional synods. In the wake of reunion, the pattern in the larger predecessor church—in which the relationships were expressed at the General Assembly level—was adopted, and is now expressed through the Committee on Theological Education and, in terms of funding, through the Theological Education Fund. Residual cultural differences can still be felt—for example, through Princeton Seminary’s genuinely national reach, or through the formerly “Southern” schools’ often palpable sense of regional constituencies.

In other ways, too, each seminary has unique accents, emphases, and institutional priorities. All of them, however, are memory-bearing institutions that hold in common the historic Presbyterian and Reformed sense of the life of the mind dedicated to the glory of God. They also hold in common the seminary’s role in bequeathing, from one generation to another, the apostolic tradition that nourished the earliest churches. This tradition presumes such *information* as scriptural study, theology, church history, liturgics, homiletics, and the pastoral arts, and *formation* in the deeply-rooted life and reality of Christian practices and faithful living. While contemporary life demands that seminary curricula also be attentive to the challenges of technology, business and financial management, training in conflict resolution, entrepreneurial skills, and other such matters, in the coming years these needs will need to be balanced with the expectation that the enduring ancient values, texts, and traditions of the ages not be ignored. With respect to the landscape of American theological education, there is a growing refrain within the gamut of Christian faith communities, but especially within the more entrepreneurial expressions of mainline and evangelical Christianity, that is calling for what is finally a “trade school” approach to preparing future pastors and servants of the church. When the PC(USA) seminaries are challenged to respond to this refrain, they will need to balance it with the ongoing urgency of passing on the vital substance and content of a faith that was, in turn, handed down to us.

Practically speaking, our seminaries are more nimble than in times past with respect to modes of delivery of theological education. Two of them, Union and San Francisco, have degree-granting additional campuses. Others, including McCormick, Pittsburgh, and now Columbia, have options for classes at night and on weekends. One of them, Dubuque, has a Master of Divinity program offered largely online. Virtually all of the PC(USA) seminaries have distance-learning capabilities. Almost all of our Presbyterian seminaries also offer other educational opportunities for continuing education of all as well as certificate and commissioned lay pastor training.

More and more, our seminaries also balance the preparation for full-time Christian service with the equally necessary role of contributing to the faith of the church and equipping the work of all Christians. Through lay institutes, special workshops and lecture series, certificate programs, and a variety of other resources, the seminaries’ faculty, staff, and campuses endeavor to demonstrate ongoing attentiveness to the changing needs of the church and other communities of faith.

At stake in all of these dimensions of our seminaries’ lives is that fundamental obligation of bearing a memory. Barbara Brown Taylor once drew a distinction between ink and blood, and lamented that Christians often try to solve their conflicts by turning to the Bible until “defending the dried ink marks on the page becomes more vital than defending the neighbor.” In response to such a sad reflex, she made this corrective statement: “The whole purpose of the Bible, it seems to me, is to convince people to set the written words down, in order to become living words in the world for God’s sake.” She concluded: “For me, this willing conversion of ink back to blood is the full substance of faith” (Barbara Brown Taylor, *Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith* [HarperSanFrancisco, 2006], pp. 106–107).

V. Self-Study Process

In its October 2007 meeting at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, the COTE voted to establish a Self-Study Task Force to assess the work of the committee for the six years to be reviewed: Fall 2003 through Fall 2009.

A. Task Force Members

The members of the task force nominated by the COTE Nominating Committee and elected were as follows:

The Reverend Dr. Theodore J. Wardlaw: Self-Study Task Force convener; institutional representative on COTE; president and professor of Homiletics, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, Texas; minister member of the Presbytery of Grace, Synod of the Sun.

The Reverend Dr. Kenneth Kovacs: elected member on COTE (Class of 2010); pastor, Catonsville Presbyterian Church, Catonsville, Maryland; minister member of the Presbytery of Baltimore, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.

The Reverend Dr. Cynthia M. Campbell: institutional representative on COTE; president and Cyrus McCormick Professor of Church and Ministry, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois; minister member of the Presbytery of Chicago, Synod of Lincoln Trails.

The Reverend Neal Presa (Resigned in Spring 2008): elected member on COTE (Class of 2012); pastor, Middlesex Presbyterian Church, Middlesex, New Jersey; minister member of the Presbytery of Elizabeth, Synod of the Northeast.

Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri (Replaced Neal Presa on the task force in Fall 2008): elected member on COTE (Class of 2012); elder, Iglesia Presbiteriana en Hato Rey, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Presbytery of San Juan, Synod of Boriquén (Puerto Rico).

B. *Meetings*

The task force met periodically over the course of the last two years, largely during meetings of the Committee on Theological Education, via conference call, and face-to-face in Louisville, Kentucky, for three days in August of 2009.

C. *Staffing*

The staff in the Office of Theological Education worked closely and cooperatively with the Office of the General Assembly and PC(USA) Research Services as they independently studied the effectiveness and fidelity to mission of the COTE. The Reverend Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty, coordinator for Theological Education and Seminary Relations, served as the primary staff person.

D. *Research*

Three research projects initiated by the task force assisted us in the evaluation of the committee's effectiveness of service and the fidelity to its mission.

1. The task force closely reviewed the following COTE documents dated 2003–2008:

- a. Founding Document: The 198th General Assembly (1986) approved report of the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions (CTI).
- b. Review by the 205th General Assembly (1993) in the approved report by the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions (CSTI).
- c. Undergirding mandates and policies.
- d. Manual of Operations (revised in Spring 2007).
- e. Membership rosters.
- f. Meeting evaluations (initiated in Fall 2005).
- g. Minutes of all meetings.
- h. The COTE reports to the General Assembly.

2. The task force led a process that engaged the committee itself. During the April 2009 meeting, the Committee on Theological Education broke into five small focus groups to evaluate the committee's five General Assembly (GA) assigned purposes and fifteen GA assigned functions. Members of the Self-Study Task Force facilitated five focus groups, each of which consisted of three to five COTE members, including one PC(USA) national staff member who served as recorder. Each group met for sixty to ninety minutes, engaging in discussion and evaluating one of COTE's five GA assigned purposes. The results, "Summary of COTE Focus Groups on Assigned Purpose and Functions" are available upon request from the Office of Theological Education, coordinator, Lee Hinson-Hasty, lee.hinson-hasty@pcusa.org.

3. The task force met face-to-face in August 2009 to draft a report to submit to the committee and ultimately to the General Assembly, and to briefly engage another COTE task force reviewing the Theological Education Fund (TEF).

As a result,

- a. The publics and constituents of the committee were clarified, and the perceptions of effectiveness of service to assigned purposes and functions were recorded and analyzed;
- b. The task force was given an additional charge by the COTE:

“As the task force formulates a report for the November (2009) meeting and ultimately the General Assembly the following areas need to be addressed, including possible recommendations:

“(1) Clarity on the Mission and Role of COTE,

“(2) Membership and Structure of COTE,

“(3) Stated Meeting Norms,

“(4) Coordination of Seminary Resources.”

The task force reviewed the additional COTE charge immediately above (3.b.) and came to the following conclusions:

- Further study was needed and the assistance of an outside research firm would be a first step. A firm was contracted for this service, and the results are forthcoming.
- A report other than the self-study would be needed but would not be ready before Fall 2010. This report should be in response to the November 2009 TEF Review, the report and recommendations of the Joint Committee on Leadership Needs (COGA, GAMC, and COTE) due in February 2010, and other research accomplished by an outside firm and PC(USA) Research Services by Spring 2010.

VI. Commendations and Accomplishments

The self-study by the COTE from the Fall of 2003 through the Fall of 2009 found the following accomplishments of COTE worth commending:

- A. The COTE fulfilled all governance responsibilities outlined above.
- B. The COTE developed friendship and raised funds for benefit of churches and seminaries.
 1. Almost two million dollars a year was raised from close to 2,000 churches annually.
 2. Conducted annual “Thank You” calls and sent related communications to donor congregations; provided an opportunity for COTE members to hear directly from congregations and vice versa.
- C. Consulted and/or collaborated with:
 1. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC),
 2. General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC),
 3. Presbyteries Cooperative Committee on Examination of Candidates (PCCEC),
 4. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA),
 5. Presbyterian Tentmakers,
 6. Urban Theological Educators Roundtable,
 7. Worldwide Ministries, GAMC,
 8. National Hispanic Caucus.
- D. Financially supported the following cooperative projects through the Theological Education Fund:
 1. Entrance into Pastoral Ministry Project,
 2. Pastoral Leadership Search Effort of the Fund for Theological Education, 2005,
 3. Advocates for Ministry Program, 2005–2007,
 4. Pedagogies of African American Presbyterians, 2008,
 5. Faculty and Faculty Dean Consultation with the Presbyteries Cooperative Committee on Examinations of Candidates, 2006,
 6. Korean American Presbyterian Theological Educators,
 7. Online Supervised Ministry Tools.
- E. Financially supported the following projects with GAMC funds:
 1. Award for Excellence in Theological Education, each General Assembly,

2. Site visits to four seminaries,
 3. Seminary and church conversations with COTE, COGA, and GAMC to each Presbyterian seminary except Johnson C. Smith,
 4. Commissioned Lay Pastor Study of Educational Programs posted at www.pcusa.org/clp,
 5. Joint Committee on Leadership Needs Report.
- F. Other committee projects worth noting:
1. Endorsed and/or assisted with the following projects:
 - a. PC(USA) Office of Vocations Pastoral Residency Proposal,
 - b. Presbyterian AIDS Network Seminary Consultation,
 - c. Study of Seminarian Healthcare,
 - d. Background Checks for Seminararians.
 2. Cosponsored cooperative courses:
 - a. Annual “Leaders for a Connectional Church” with GAMC, COGA, and Louisville Seminary in the Presbyterian Center during the January term,
 - b. “Presbyterian Principles and Practice” during each General Assembly,
 - c. American Waldensian Society with Union Presbyterian Seminary,
 - d. Interfaith Youth Core with McCormick Theological Seminary.
- G. Commended “A Common Word Between Us and You” to COTE member institutions for study, October 2007.
- H. Revised and recommend renewed covenants on behalf of the General Assembly with
1. Auburn Theological Seminary,
 2. Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico.
- I. Discussed in-depth the following/resourced by
1. Seminary trustees/Barbara Wheeler, Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education,
 2. Growing seminarian debt/Tony Ruger and Barbara Wheeler, Auburn Center,
 3. Distance education/Charles Willard of the Association of Theological Schools,
 4. Pastoral formation/Charles Wiley, Marcia Clark Myers and Barbara Wheeler,
 5. Funding theological education/Tony Ruger, Auburn Center,
 6. The future of theological education and the PC(USA)/committee members.
- J. Approved or revised the following policies and/or manuals and posted them on the Internet:
1. COTE Manual of Operations—standardizing the format and policies,
 2. Meeting Development Guidelines—making our meetings more accessible and transparent,
 3. Joint Presbyterian Seminary Display Guidelines,
 4. COTE Communications Policy and Procedures,
 5. Cross-Registration/ Exchange Policy,
 6. Cooperative Grant Guidelines and Application Process,
 7. Consistent meeting schedule—starting in Fall 2010.

VII. Fidelity to Mission and Partnership

- A. Does the COTE, as it was created by the church, serve and support the church’s mission in a particular area? Does the COTE demonstrate a constant faithfulness to and fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA)?

Yes, the COTE serves and supports the church's mission by "furthering the cause of theological education," as one of its purposes states. According to the Self-Study Focus Groups, COTE effectively addresses this purpose through the interpretation and communication with congregations that support the Theological Education Fund (TEF), providing for the collegial and cooperative relationships of the seminary presidents and the effectiveness of the Office of Theological Education staff. Also, COTE demonstrates constant faithfulness to and fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the church by complying with two of its purposes by being a vehicle of the theological schools for their coordination of activities and serving as a channel of communication from the church to the schools and vice-versa. According to the Self-Study Focus Groups, the effective implementation of these two purposes is seen in ongoing faculty group's inter-seminary/cooperative staff groups, joint displays in conferences and assemblies, a joint seminary view book, presidents gatherings, relationship building, good communication from staff, liaisons to seminaries, and seminary site visits, among others.

- B. Does the basic process of the COTE demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly? Does the COTE exhibit leadership in guiding the Church in engagement with the work and resources in which the COTE acts?

According to our research, the answer is yes with room for improvement. Our functions are less clear and focused than the committee would like for them to be. They have not changed in more than twenty years and are in need of revision. We are in the process of revising them and appreciated this opportunity to revisit our core mission and mandate. We have found that a number of the recommendations in our 1986 founding document (CSI) as well as the 1993 comprehensive study (CTSI) may assist us as we imagine the future that God is leading us toward. There are foundational issues and items that need to be revisited as COTE moves into an ever-changing future.

One area of growing strength is the cooperation and collegiality among the PC(USA) seminaries, their staff, students, boards, and especially their presidents.

- C. Does the COTE exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies or committees of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity?

Yes, the COTE has regular engagement and partnership with various agencies, entities, committees, governing bodies, and other organizations of and related to the PC(USA). Most notable is how the office that staffs the committee is integrated into the Theology Worship and Education ministry area of the General Assembly Mission Council. The GAMC sends two member liaisons as full voting members to COTE, and COTE sends one corresponding member to each GAMC meeting. Constituent committees of the GAMC, especially the Vocations Committee, are consistent partners and collaborators on issues related to pastoral formation and leadership needs. The Joint Committee on Leadership Needs, initiated by COTE in response to the GAMC and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), is an outstanding example of the collaboration and cooperation in this area. The Office of Vocations embodies the GAMC and COGA partnership as it is a joint office of the COGA and the GAMC; this office staffs committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry. Studies such as the Commissioned Lay Pastor Study were done with this office. The COTE regularly partners with the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on (ordination) Examinations of Candidates by welcoming staff to each meeting, hearing regular reports, passing on concerns, and working together to improve the exam process for everyone involved. Other organizations named above including the General Assembly Nominating Committee, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, National Hispanic Latina/o Caucus, and others have been welcomed and responded to promptly.

One area of concern is fulfilling our charge "to assure visible representation of theological education at high levels of the church's organization." Discussions about becoming a permanent committee of the General Assembly, placement of the office in the GAMC structure, as well as seeking per capita funds for our governance expenses have faltered. In the coming years, these issues will need to be addressed.

- D. Does the COTE provide timely responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly?

Yes. COTE submits timely, complete, succinct, and regular reports to the GAMC, the General Assembly. Our reports have been reviewed and accepted each time without amendment.

VIII. Effectiveness of Service

- A. Does the COTE have a defined and consistent process for completing its work?

Yes. The COTE Manual of Operations and the Agenda Development Guidelines, along with other policies and procedures described in the COTE Manual of Operations, provide for the accomplishment of our mission and mandates. Staff support in the area of raising funds for the Theological Education Fund is critical for the committee's success. Furthermore, staff coordination of complex institutional, agency, global, national, regional, and local relationships is essential to our success.

Our research shows that COTE is mostly effective in accomplishing the functions assigned by the General Assembly. One area of growth is determining how the committee might best assess the “stewardship and health of the schools” while also “preserving the freedom of the schools for the benefit of the church.” Each school is guided by an independent board that is ultimately responsible for its respective school.

In terms of our responsibility for “furthering the cause of theological education in the church,” we have faltered in the area of raising funds to support the schools. In any given year, not quite 20 percent of PC(USA) congregations give to the General Assembly established Theological Education Fund (TEF). Fewer than half have given in the twenty-year history of the fund. Although many give as much as or more than the 1 percent of their congregational mission or outreach budget to this special appeal, most do not. The GAMC Mission Funding Plan does not highlight this need, which has been reaffirmed by General Assemblies and congregations year in and year out. Plans to enhance the Theological Schools Endowment Fund and other strategies must be reconsidered and prioritized by the committee and the church as a whole if we are to maintain the high quality of the education and the relationship to the PC(USA) theological schools.

B. Does the COTE have a regular process of self-evaluation of its services?

Yes and no. We have a regular process for evaluating our meetings and projects. We do not have a regular process in place to evaluate our effectiveness beyond this self-study now required each six years. See recommendation in IX. Recommendations and Conclusions below.

C. Does the COTE employ a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large?

Yes, with congregations and national governing bodies. Electronic and print materials from the committee abound, including a Web site, online log (blog), e-mail newsletter, social networking communications, and a dedicated toll-free phone number. Possibly more effective is our committee itself, the institutions represented, and the TEF Seminary Support Network of more than 150 Presbyterians committed to learning more about our schools and theological education, passing that information on in their judicatories, visiting a campus annually, and raising funds for the TEF. Thank-you phone calls from committee members and regular mailings to congregations and resource centers, including mailings of attractive posters and multimedia resources, all reach the larger church and are well-received, according to our research of those who use them. Digital media tracking shows consistent growth in viewing and use of these resources, especially over the last two years (2007–2009). A better communication strategy with middle governing bodies, including those responsible for the nurture, care, and formation of ministers in the presbyteries, is needed.

One difficult area of communication is that seminaries are just one partner in theological education, which takes place regularly in congregations as well. Seminaries and the COTE stand ready to assist, but are not, as often is perceived, the only ones leading this effort and creating the leadership and educational ethos of the PC(USA).

D. Does the COTE utilize current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission?

Yes. See question C above.

E. Does the COTE have a developed vision and plan for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before and context of the PC(USA)?

Yes, a collaborative plan is in place that is being guided by forthcoming recommendations from the following projects:

1. Joint Committee on Leadership Needs;
2. a continuing Self-Study Task Force charge to clarify the mission and role of COTE, advise the committee on possible adjustments to the membership and structure of COTE, possible recommendations on stated meeting norms, and new ways to better coordinate seminary resources;
3. a review of the Theological Education Fund; and
4. research conclusion by PC(USA) Research Services and an independent firm contracted by COTE that are each currently conducting research with key constituents.

Specifics of the plan are expected in the Fall of 2010.

IX. Conclusions and Recommendations

The COTE is a unique committee in the life of the PC(USA) and one that navigates complex relationships on a daily basis for the benefit of PC(USA) congregations, governing bodies, and seminaries. The committee seeks to listen to church and respond appropriately. As leadership becomes increasingly valued by culture and church, the relationships, initiatives,

communications, and responses of the Committee on Theological Education, we believe, will only become more critical for the health and well-being of all.

We believe that what Robert Lynn said is as true today as it was over twenty years ago:

Make no mistake about it. What happens today in the theological schools will affect the church in the decades to come. As the seminary goes, so goes American Protestantism. Or, to put it another way, God's script for the 21st century is being partly written right now in such institutions as our Presbyterian theological schools.

Based on this report, COTE is taking the following actions:

1. The establishment of an ongoing Strategic Planning and Effectiveness Committee of COTE consisting of three or more current and/or former committee members that reports to the executive committee and no less than annually to the COTE. This committee would be charged with conducting ongoing evaluation and visioning for the COTE, including the six-year reviews by the General Assembly.
2. The reevaluation of the functions assigned to COTE and its mission, role, and structure with results to be reported to the 220th General Assembly (2012).
3. The reinvestment in ways to ensure the funding of theological education for the benefit of the church and the seminaries.
4. The sharing of this self-study with PC(USA) seminary boards and other interested parties.

X. Appendices

A. Committee on Theological Education Manual of Operations (available upon request from the Office of Theological Education, coordinator, Lee Hinson-Hasty, lee.hinson-hasty@pcusa.org).

B. Summary of COTE Focus Groups on Assigned Purpose and Functions (available upon request from the Office of Theological Education, coordinator, Lee Hinson-Hasty, lee.hinson-hasty@pcusa.org).

17-Self-Study GANC

General Assembly Nominating Committee Self-Study

I. A Reformed Understanding of "Calling to Service:" Foundational to the Work of the General Assembly Nominating Committee

"... Let them be carefully chosen by the Church or by those delegated from the Church for that purpose in a proper order without any uproar, dissension and rivalry" (The Book of Confessions, Second Helvetic Confession, 5.150).

The Second Helvetic Confession speaks of calling pastors, but its advice also covers the calling of all Christians to various forms of service in the church. Although the church uses the terms "nomination" and "election," the church is not proposing candidates and conducting campaigns in the manner of the American political system or the nomination processes of some other denominations. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is engaging in a prayerful personal and communal process of discerning God's call.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee (GA Nominating Committee, GANC) does not simply propose candidates for election. Instead, it presents to the General Assembly the conclusions of its discernment—the persons who, in its judgment, are called by God for particular service at a particular time in the life of the church. The GANC's judgment is not final, for the General Assembly itself is responsible for exercising its own discernment, affirming or altering the committee's proposals. Ultimately, God's call is made known through the "concurring judgment of a governing body of the church" (*Book of Order*, G.6-0106a).

God's call to service on a national board or agency may come to a person individually or through the counsel of others. When a person's sense of call is presented to the GA Nominating Committee, it joins many others in a pool of persons much larger than the positions of service that need to be filled. Thus, the GANC engages in a serious process of discernment, correlating personal gifts and the church's needs. The GANC's singular and essential task is to assist the General Assembly in discerning God's call for particular individuals to serve the church in special ways. The *Book of Order* states:

To ensure careful nominations of members of such boards, agencies, and committees as the General Assembly shall from time to time designate, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose nominees to the General Assembly for such bodies. (G-13.0111)

Indeed, the process of nominating, electing, and serving contributes to the faithfulness and effectiveness of the whole church. Because the church is the Body of Christ, every call is important to its proper functioning. (“But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? ... The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you,’” 1 Cor. 12:18–21). Each person’s call to serve (whether issued by the GANC through the assembly’s election, the GA Moderator’s appointment, or by other means) contributes in some part to the fulfillment of the church’s mission. Consequently, the GA Nominating Committee has more than the welfare of each entity (board, agency, committee, commission, and council) to which it nominates in its sight. It also understands that through its process of careful nomination and election, it assists the organization and structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to live more faithfully as the Body of Christ.

The PC(USA) is more fully that living Body of Christ when it “give[s] full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and ... provide[s] means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0403.) The task of calling forth those whose particular gifts are underutilized and whose perspectives are underrepresented is integral to the discerning work of the GANC. It ensures that voices from every sector within the church have a place at the decision-making tables of the church.

*God calls plain folk from ordinary places
to do extraordinary work with God’s people.
God called Abraham and Sarah to pack their belongings and
sojourn to a new land.
So Abraham and Sarah packed up and answered God’s Call*

© 2006 *ideas! for Church Leaders*, Volume six, Issue One, Fall 2006, “Fulfilling Our Promise to Make Faithful Disciples!” The litany is an adaptation from the *Book of Occasional Services* and from the questions found in G-14.0207 of the *Book of Order*, 2005–2007.

II. Faithfulness to the Mission

“The call of Christ is to willing, dedicated discipleship. ... Discipleship is a gift and a commitment, an offering and a responsibility” (Commissioning service from the *Book of Occasional Services*).

As Christians, we are called to respond to 1 Peter 4:10, “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you received.” An important task of the church is to help its members discover their gifts for service and their calling to particular ministries. While some members are eager to claim their gifts and offer them to the church, others need a bit more encouragement. (One thinks of Jonah who required considerable coaxing by God!) The GA Nominating Committee lifts up the common belief in the priesthood of all believers, that all are gifted by God and called to service, as it seeks to present for election available individuals who reflect a broad range of gifts and perspectives in service to more than thirty entities of the General Assembly.

The members of the GANC (one residing in each of the sixteen synods, nominated by the Moderator of the General Assembly, and elected by the General Assembly) arrive at this ministry with different perspectives, experiences, and personalities. Yet GANC members answer the same call to discern those whom God has called to serve, understanding that God works through both individuals and groups elected to serve on behalf of the whole church. Central to the work of the committee is a commitment to confidentiality. A core strength of its process and deliberations is a high level of trust within the committee as well as with applicants and those who provide references for the applicants.

A. *Getting the Job Done*

1. *The Nomination Process*

Not infrequently you will hear people complain about the never-ending use of committees in the Presbyterian Church...; The notion that we are called to *be* together has led Presbyterians to conclude that this is how we should make decisions: not independently or unilaterally, but together. Decisions are shared among the various members or governing bodies for the good of the whole, because *together* we are the body of Christ. (*Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers*, Third Edition, Gray & Tucker, p. xii)

The *Book of Order* entrusts the GA Nominating Committee with the responsibility of ensuring a careful process for nominating persons equipped for service on the thirty-one entities to which it makes nominations.

The GANC solicits from each entity a description of its work, skills and qualifications for its membership, and time required for meetings and other assignments. This material is posted on the website www.pcusa.org/nominations—providing potential applicants with the information they need as they discern God’s call to service. Along with subsequent correspondence on needed skills and abilities from each entity, this information assists the GANC as it evaluates the qualification of candidates for consideration.

The GANC uses an application-based process where persons wishing to be considered for service share their sense of Christian commitment, interest, skills and gifts, as well as church and professional experience by completing an application form.

The committee's discernment includes careful consideration of applicants' responses on this required form, assessment of personal and governing body references, review of entities needs and goals, and consideration for fair representation. All are instrumental in the nomination of persons to the slate presented to the General Assembly. The GANC selects its slate of nominees for each General Assembly election from approximately 300 applications that it has received. Nominees are also presented to fill vacancies due to an incumbent's completing her/his term and for mid-term vacancies due to resignation, death, or other causes, and to fill at-large, middle-governing body, caucus, ecumenical, and liaison positions.

A considerable percentage of the nominations brought to commissioners at each General Assembly are persons who are being re-nominated to an additional term. Re-nomination to a second term on an entity is not automatic, however. The GANC determines whether or not to re-nominate a person based on a variety of factors, including an honest evaluation of the person's contribution to the work of the entity.

Completed application forms are sent to each member of the GANC throughout the open application period. In addition, a copy of the application is sent to the specified committee or entity. Reference forms are sent to the committee member who resides in the synod of the applicant and are also made available to all GANC members when the committee meets to make nominations. All GANC members are eligible to propose names of applicants with complete files for each open at-large or middle governing body slot.

Prior to the General Assembly a brief descriptive paragraph for each nominee is made available on the GANC website, with printed copies available during the General Assembly. The report provided by the GANC to the General Assembly identifies each nomination as filling an at-large position (AL), a designated presbytery (P), or synod (S) position, or another entity linkage such as GAMC. In addition, the report includes diversity information following the name of each nominee and a chart describing the diversity composition of the entity to which the General Assembly is electing members. This enables General Assembly commissioners to immediately assess the effectiveness of the church's mandate to give expression to the full diversity of its membership. The chart below is typical of this kind of diversity information.

Mariana Pardo (D) (YA) HFE 26-35 Milwaukee LAK AL NEW

③ ④ ② ①

① Gender and Ordination Category:

FC—Female Minister of the Word and Sacrament
 FE—Female Elder
 FL—Female Church Member
 MC—Male Minister of the Word and Sacrament
 ME—Male Elder
 ML—Male Church Member

② Racial/Ethnic Category

A—Asian American
 B—African American
 H—Hispanic/Latina/Latino
 M—Middle Eastern
 N—Native American
 O—Other
 W—Caucasian
 Combination of letter codes may be used when applicant indicates more than one racial ethnic category

③ Person living with disability designation

D- Disability

④ Youth/Young Adult designations:

Y—Youth (GA Committee on Representation; 25 years or younger when nominated)

YA—Young Adult (35 years or younger when nominated)

Following the General Assembly, the GANC notifies persons who were elected, as well as notifying those who were nominated but, through the floor nomination process, were not elected. Because all applications for nomination are considered "active" for two consecutive General Assembly cycles, applicants who are eligible for nomination and election by

the next General Assembly election are so advised. Persons whose application for nomination has expired are also notified. Each member of the committee, as well as the manager for General Assembly Nominations, assumes individual responsibility for communicating with his or her respective synod and the applicants who reside in the synod.

2. *Ensuring Careful Nomination*

The *Book of Order* (G-13.0111a) charges the GA Nominating Committee “to ensure careful nomination of members of such boards, agencies and committees as the General Assembly shall ... designate. ...” Defining “*careful* nomination” informs and shapes how the GANC conducts its work in order to accomplish the tasks described above and to remain faithful to the church’s mission.

First and foremost, “*careful*” means *prayerful*. The GANC is a worshipping community that continually seeks God’s guidance in all facets of its work. Each meeting’s very full agenda is punctuated by multiple times of worship and prayer throughout each day. Seeking to discern the Spirit’s leading as members consider and deliberate over each vacancy and potential nominee is a constant reality.

“*Careful*” means *being open to the Spirit and the wisdom of the General Assembly*. In addition to presenting its slate of nominees to the General Assembly, the GANC also provides an orderly and fair process for receiving nominations from the floor of the assembly, thereby modeling the committee’s openness to the Spirit as it moves through the assembly, resulting—on occasion—in the election of persons other than those presented in the GANC report.

“*Careful*” means *paying attention—listening*.

Listening to one another; listening to what the words on the application form strive to communicate; listening to the stated needs and desires of various entities; listening to both explicit and nuanced references and appraisals; listening for the voices of the non or underrepresented; listening to the voice of the General Assembly and its expressed priorities.

“*Careful*” means *balancing multiple criteria and concerns*. The GANC is committed to the vision of the church as expressed in G-3.0401b: “The Church is called ... to a new openness to its own membership, by affirming itself as a community of diversity, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, and conditions, and by providing for inclusiveness as a visible sign of the new humanity.” In seeking those best equipped to serve, the committee considers carefully the inclusiveness requirements outlined in the *Book of Order* or mandated by the General Assembly: racial ethnic, geographic, various disabilities, theological, marital status, and age diversity, as well as gender and clergy/lay balance (see *Book of Order*, G-4.0403). The committee is also sensitive to the needs for specific expertise expressed by the entities themselves. Nominations may be made that do not fulfill these expressed preferences or needs when the priorities of the whole church take precedence. At times the committee must weigh the perceived needs of an entity against the needs and welfare of the whole church, such as working toward theological and other diversity representations. Addressing the interests and concerns of entities and the *Book of Order* mandates for diversity and inclusiveness is a balancing act that the GANC takes seriously, faithfully, and carefully.

“*Careful*” means *consulting and receiving counsel*. The GANC does not work in a vacuum. Rather, the committee constantly seeks input from entities to which nominations are made, from middle governing bodies, from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and from others. Further elaboration of these relationships is described below in the section, “B. Partners in Mission.”

B. *Partners in Mission*

Inherent in the GA Nominating Committee’s work and its faithfulness to the mission of the church is the necessity of being in partnership with groups that express various aspects of the church’s life. To that end the GANC is in partnership with the following groups:

1. *The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)*

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is required by the Constitution to “advise the General Assembly Nominating Committee of any need for nominations in particular categories needing increased representation (G-13.0108). The GANC willingly seeks GACOR’s advice and counsel. Several times between General Assemblies, the GANC gives GACOR the opportunity to review the diversity composition of every entity as well as the applications for nomination of racial ethnic persons, youth, and persons living with disability who are in the pool of potential nominees. This process assists the GACOR to fulfill its advocacy role. The General Assembly Committee on Representation’s advice and counsel is always welcomed, reviewed, and considered as the GANC selects its nominees. In addition, the GACOR is provided the opportunity to review the committee’s slate of nominees before it is presented to the General Assembly for election. Members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee meet in joint consultation with GACOR members on an annual basis to share common interests and to strategize ways to encourage, educate, and empower persons to become fully active in the life, ministry, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

2. *Advocacy and Affinity Groups, Racial Ethnic Caucuses*

Through conversation and engagement with racial ethnic caucuses, advocacy and affinity groups, and with the support and assistance of GACOR, the GANC constantly strives to increase the number of racial ethnic persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with differing theological perspective in its pool of applicants.

3. *Middle Governing Bodies*

Members of the GANC are encouraged to relate actively to middle governing bodies, by contacting the nominating committee of the synod in which the members reside and making themselves available to meet at least biennially with the appropriate synod body in order to review the nomination process. The governing body of every applicant for nomination is requested to provide the GANC with a requisite appraisal of the potential nominee. The GANC takes these appraisals seriously as it assesses suitability for service. For vacancies on entities that require representation from specific synods or presbyteries, the GANC depends largely (although not exclusively) upon middle governing bodies to propose several names from which the GANC will select one to nominate. Such partnership requires mutual honesty, trust, and confidentiality.

4. *Entities to Which the GANC Makes Nominations*

The GANC sends copies of every application form to the entity for which the applicant wishes to be considered. In addition, every entity is assigned a liaison member of GANC and is invited to be in contact directly with its liaison so that the nominating process can be explained and the GANC member can learn firsthand of the skills and expertise needed. The committee also invites all General Assembly entities to submit a written report biennially concerning the specific needs of the entity regarding its membership.

The following are typical samplings from the advice and counsel letters received from various entities:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposed nominees for election to membership on the [name removed to respect confidentiality] ... A review of members continuing to serve in 2010 and 2012 revealed a number of skills and experiences needed in new members: law, finance, fund development, ecumenical experience, ministry experience with youth and older adults [etc.] ... After careful review of the proposed nominees ..., we believe the following persons will best fit [our] needs...

As we assess it, [name removed to respect confidentiality]... will need new members that have collective skills and/or experience in middle governing body work ... ecumenical background and interest, legal skills ... We also see it as an opportunity to get a broader age range on the committee ... Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with the GANC both the needs of the [name removed to respect confidentiality] ... and recommendations for persons whom {we} believe will help to strengthen our work.

While the GANC takes seriously such advice and counsel, the committee is not bound by any specific nominee recommendations or requests. As previously stated, there are times when the committee must carefully weigh the desires of an entity against other competing interests or requirements. Re-nominations to a second, four-year term are not made automatically, but depend to a significant degree upon an evaluation instrument completed by the entity on which the member serves.

C. *Encouraging Others to Respond to Their Call to Service*

The GA Nominating Committee works continuously to deepen and widen the pool of persons interested in and capable of serving General Assembly entities. Acquiring applicants with greater knowledge, skills, and experience relevant to the work of the various entities to which nominations are made will deepen the pool. Increasing the number of applications, especially from those who represent the broad diversity of individuals in our church, will widen the pool. Although the GANC does not specifically recruit individuals for vacant positions, it strives to inform Presbyterians at all levels of the church of the many and diverse opportunities for service, and makes every effort to encourage those wishing to be considered for service to engage in the nomination process.

- The GANC website (www.pcusa.org/nominations) provides the following:
 - information on the nominating process;
 - a list of positions open for election;
 - an online application that is easy to use, safe, secure, and relatively quick;
 - a description and purpose of each entity to which the committee makes nominations, along with skills and expertise needed, and anticipated time requirements;
 - a place to request a paper or electronic form for those unable to access application forms via the web.

- Printed materials with similar information are available at many conferences and events such as meetings of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators, Presbyterian Women gatherings, The Big Tent Event, etc. The manager for General Assembly Nominations and/or members of the GANC are often present at these events to answer questions and provide information. A booth in the exhibit hall at each General Assembly invites commissioners and observers to find answers to their questions or to submit an application with on-site computers.

- The GANC solicits from presbyteries and synods applications for nominations to at-large positions as well as for designated governing body positions, reminding them of the church's commitment to be as inclusive as possible. Individual members of the GANC often serve as "ambassadors" to their synods and presbyteries, raising interest in service and encouraging participation in the nomination process.

- Through informal networking and conversations with racial ethnic caucuses and affinity groups, and collaboration with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, GANC members seek to encourage others to examine the possibility that God might be calling them to service in the church and to respond accordingly.

By developing a comprehensive process of nomination, partnering with other entities throughout the church, and encouraging Presbyterians everywhere to respond to God's call to service, culminating in the election by the General Assembly of women and men who faithfully contribute their gifts, the GA Nominating Committee is faithful to its mission and to the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

*God called David to be king even though he was Jesse's youngest son.
So Samuel anointed David and he rose up to be a great king.*

III. Challenges Facing the GANC

"For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us" (Rom. 12:4–6a).

Imagine that you are a member of a nominating committee in your church, your presbytery, or your synod. You have a pool of two and half million people from whom to nominate people. Sounds like a dream, doesn't it? So many people from whom to choose. But, it is not nearly as simple as it may appear. There are many challenges and obstacles that affect either the willingness or the ability of those persons to serve or that may impact the work of the General Assembly Nominating Committee in a variety of ways.

- *Time demands and needed support:* Service on the various entities of the General Assembly all require time—time that may amount to as much as several weeks a year just for meetings. For certain entities, many additional hours of work between meetings are also required. For some persons it may mean forfeiting vacation or family time. Young adults or persons new to a job, especially, may find it more difficult to take leave from their employment than older, more established employees. Time away from employment may incur loss of wages. In almost every case, national travel is involved, which can be costly in additional time spent away from home. Travel for persons with certain disabling conditions may be especially challenging. The need or cost for childcare or other dependent care may be a significant obstacle to service or even to applying.

- *Diversity and other considerations:* The GANC may face potential challenges when ensuring that specific entity requirements are met such as ordination status, geographic location of the person serving, gender balance, theological perspective, racial or ethnic representation, or other. For some members of the denomination, language or cultural barriers may keep them from applying for service. Methods of meeting, time requirements, and child support needs (above) often discourage young adults from applying for service. Although the *Book of Order* requires it and the church is committed to it, there is no way to easily identify theological diversity. There are no standard definitions to which everyone could or would agree. As one applicant put it, "I consider myself to be biblically and theologically conservative, but socially progressive from a faith perspective." Nominating persons with disabilities can, likewise, be challenging because disabling conditions recognized by the federal Disabilities Act may not be considered a disability by one living with the condition. Consequently, the "disability" box on the application form may go unchecked. Or, for a variety of reasons, other applicants may intentionally choose not to identify their disability.

- *Re-nomination and changing patterns of volunteerism:* Two very different and opposing norms regarding length of service present challenges to the GANC's work. Because it is generally expected that people who have been elected once to a committee will be re-nominated for an additional term, a committee will frequently recommend a re-nomination, even if the committee's needs have changed or the member is no longer contributing positively to its work. Unfortunately, when the recommendation involves such a person, the work of the committee may suffer. Furthermore, when many people serve multiple terms, the opportunity for new persons to offer their gifts to the church through the nomination process is diminished. On the other hand, the committee has also noted significantly changing patterns of volunteerism. While people once welcomed the idea of being on a committee for an extended period of time, this is not the case for many people today.

They prefer making commitments to short-term assignments that are not available on the entities to which the GANC nominates. Ordinarily, terms are at least four-years long.

- *Engaging the nominations process:* Many members of the denomination do not know about committees for which they may have expertise and interest. Others who are aware of opportunities well-suited to their gifts and skills simply do not hear or experience God's call to service. Oftentimes people are more interested in the "big name" committees and less interested in the less prestigious committees. Some may also be unaware of how the process for nomination works, and some just don't have the patience to work through the process. Some pastors and presbyteries prefer to retain their best talented pool of people and, consequently, do not encourage them to apply for service at the General Assembly level.

- *Technology:* Although we live in an age of electronic communication, and many of the church's entities conduct much of their work electronically, we still live in a betwixt-and-between world where not everyone has access to the internet or has the computer skills to feel comfortable working electronically.

- *Unmet expectations:* The GANC often receives far more applications for a particular committee or agency than there are vacancies to be filled. Many middle governing bodies expect that they will have a turn being represented on various GA entities in a fairly short period of time. However, given that there are almost 200 middle governing bodies, a longer time period is often required. The particular gifts, skills, and experience of many applicants in the GANC pool of potential nominees simply do not match the needs of the entity on which they are seeking service. Failure to be nominated or disappointment with committee experience can and sometimes does lead to misunderstanding, distrust, discontent, and even cynicism about the nominating process.

- *Floor nominations:* While the GANC fully supports the ability of the General Assembly to make GA commissioner nominations from the floor, experience shows that sometimes these nominations are not carefully and thoughtfully made. Therefore, they have the potential of being an obstacle to the well-being of the affected entities. Some floor nominees have been recruited on very short notice and have not fully understood the work of the committee or agency. Consequently, if they are elected they are unable to offer what is needed. Some floor nominees have not been given the opportunity to consider carefully the scope of the commitment that is required, and find that they are unable to meet the time and energy demands. Some persons are nominated because a particular group within the church feels disenfranchised or that their voices have not been heard and they feel the nominating slate is not addressing that need. More often than not these new members do not complete a full term of service, thus limiting personal and committee effectiveness.

There are many opportunities for service and people willing to respond. Yet these and other challenges remain. Some obstacles are beyond the power of the GANC to overcome, but the committee continues to work within these realities to present those persons who, in its judgment, are called by God for particular service at a particular time in the life of the church.

*God said, "Go down, Moses, and tell Pharaoh to let my people go."
Moses said, "No, Lord, not me. I'm a terrible speaker."
God said, "Aaron your brother will speak for you."
So Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and into freedom.*

IV. Evidence of Effectiveness

*"Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have been trustworthy in a few things,
I will put you in charge of many things ..." (Mt. 25:23; RSV).*

Just as Jesus judged the servants who had invested their talents wisely so as to multiply their worth, so the GANC is judged on how effective it has been in fulfilling its constitutional and General Assembly mandates, thereby enriching and expanding the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).

There are several criteria by which the evidence of effectiveness may be evaluated.

A. *Statistical Information*

Hans Rosling, a Swedish professor of International Health, gave an address, "How to Unveil the Beauty of Statistics." He told his audience that he was going to show them something very beautiful. Rosling then projected the score of Chopin's Nocturne on a screen. He went on to say, "But ... few people will appreciate it if I only show the notes. Most of us need to listen to the music to understand how beautiful it is. But often that's how we present statistics; we show the notes and we don't play the music." "Don't just show the notes, play the music!" Technology offers a variety of ways to display statistical information, to bring the data to life.

1. *Diversity of Nominees*

Statistics cannot adequately express the beautiful, rich diversity of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Neither can the church's commitment to inclusivity be adequately displayed by statistical categories of persons serving on the various entities of the church. We only hear the music when the broad spectrum represented on the agencies, boards, committees, commission, and councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) engage in mission and ministry. The GA Nominating Committee takes care to make nominations that are consistent with the vision for inclusivity "as a visible sign of the new humanity" (G-3.0401b). Statistics of the last three General Assembly elections sing a melody of effectiveness.

2. *Entity Membership 2004–2010 General Assemblies*a. *Racial Ethnic Diversity*

The *Book of Order* calls us to live in a church where persons of all racial ethnic groups are guaranteed participation and representation in the decision-making of the church. To this end, statistical goals are assigned to some entities, i.e. 20 percent of the membership of the General Assembly Mission Council must be racial ethnic persons, while the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People must be composed of no less than 51 percent racial ethnic members, and the General Assembly Committee on Representation must be no less than 56 percent members of color.

With the election of persons at the 2004, 2006, 2008 General Assemblies, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s entities were composed of 30.5 percent, 35.5 percent, and 35.4 percent racial ethnic members respectively. The largest numbers of racial ethnic members were African American, followed by Asian American members, and persons of Hispanic/Latina/Latino heritage. Native American Presbyterian and those of Middle Eastern descent are represented by lower percentages.

The GANC will continue to work with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, the racial ethnic caucuses, and racial ethnic leaders to identify persons of color for service on General Assembly level committees. We seek to respond to the call for racial ethnic church growth in the membership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), understanding that increasing the number of people of color serving in elected service is an important witness to our commitment to enhance the rich diversity of our church.

b. *Age Diversity*

The largest numbers of persons serving are not of retirement age. The largest group is in the 56–65 age range, followed by the 46–55 age category, and then those 66 years old and older. Less than fifteen percent of members fall into the 36–45 age group; half as many in the 26–35 group. Not surprisingly, only 5–10 persons 25 years old and under have served during the periods 2004, 2006, and 2008.

In conversation with seminaries, and presence at Youth Triennium, young pastor events, and other gatherings of younger persons, the GANC continues to encourage the participation of youth and young adults. Their voices are critical to effective decision-making in the church. However, the current methods of meetings, meeting patterns, childcare/dependent policies, terms of service, etc. often discourage persons under age forty-five from applying for service.

c. *Persons Living with Disabilities*

For the years 2004, 2006 and 2008, only five persons serving on GA entities identified themselves as persons living with disabilities—a minuscule number. While the GANC is aware of the many challenges it faces in increasing this number, it remains committed to continued work with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and other appropriate bodies to increase the number of persons living with disabilities serving on General Assembly entities.

d. *Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Church Members*

The *Book of Order* mandates that consideration should "be given to the nomination of equal numbers of ministers (both men and women), laymen, and laywomen." During 2004, 2006, and 2008, ministers of the Word and Sacrament made up 37, 40, and 44 percent of entity membership with twice as many men as women. Church members, female and male, made up the difference in nearly even numbers. Because ministers of the Word and Sacrament submit applications for nomination in larger numbers than do elders and church members, the pool of ministers is broader than the pool of elders and church members. Consequently it is more difficult to achieve the directed one-third, one-third, one-third division of membership outlined in the *Book of Order*.

e. *Geographic Diversity*

In order to provide greater inclusiveness in the governance of the church, the *Book of Order* provides that persons from diverse geographical areas shall be guaranteed participation and access to representation in the church's decision-making. The GA nominations process includes an analysis of the number of persons currently serving on General Assembly entities, the number of open positions, and the number of Presbyterians in each synod. Together with a rotation system for presbytery

representation, this analysis provides a method for ensuring the equitable geographic distribution of applicants for service on all GA level entities.

3. *Resignations and Vacancies Filled in Between General Assemblies*

The *Organization for Mission* outlines procedures for filling vacancies created when persons can no longer serve in positions to which they were elected or appointed. “Any vacancy in a position for which the General Assembly Nominating Committee makes nominations *may* be filled until the next succeeding General Assembly by appointment of the Moderator of the General Assembly upon advice by the nominating committee that the committee has decided to present the name of the appointee to the next session of the General Assembly as its nominee for the position” (*Manual*, 2010, p. 12, *Organization for Mission*, IV.C.1.h.).

During the period of 2004–2008, forty-one persons resigned from service. Most persons resigned for personal reasons, including health concerns and family or work responsibilities.

B. *Responses to Referrals and GA Actions*

During the period covered by this review, the GA Nominating Committee responded thoughtfully to actions of the General Assembly, helping to ensure careful nominations.

1. *Biennial Assemblies*

Eight years ago, the General Assembly voted to move from annual to biennial assemblies beginning with the 217th General Assembly (2006).¹ This action required GANC to realign and convert terms for seats on almost thirty entities. The General Assembly provided for a limited number of adjustments and extensions for the terms of persons serving on General Assembly entities.²

The GANC engaged in two years of study, consultation, and negotiation with General Assembly entities. As a result of this work, the GA Nominating Committee brought to the 216th General Assembly (2004) a reconfiguration of the classes for all persons currently serving on a General Assembly entity to which it made nominations.³ All this was done while the GANC strove to ensure that *Book of Order* mandates for diversity and balance were met while also maintaining continuity and history. As entities adjusted to the new configuration, the need for minor adjustments was recognized and forwarded to the 217th General Assembly (2006).

2. *New Structure for General Assembly Council (Now General Assembly Mission Council)*

The GANC consulted with the General Assembly Council’s Governance Task Force in 2005 as it prepared to propose a new structure for the council. The GANC was given latitude by the 216th General Assembly (2004) to bypass the constitutional requirements for membership on the GAC (G-13.0202) during the transition “with the goal of being in compliance after the 218th General Assembly (2008).”⁴ The GANC worked swiftly to bring to the 218th General Assembly (2008) a slate of nominees for the General Assembly Council that complied with G-13.0202.

3. *Form of Government Task Force*

A task force was created by the 216th General Assembly (2004) to undertake a revision of the Form of Government.⁵ The assembly directed that Moderators of the 215th, 216th, and 217th General Assemblies (2003, 2004, 2006) to consult with the GA Nominating Committee as they appointed the FOG Task Force. The GANC provided the Moderators with names of potential candidates, and the moderator of the GANC met with the Moderators via conference call as they considered appointments to the task force.

4. *“Towards Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities”*

“Living Into the Body of Christ: Towards Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities,” a policy paper approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006), instructed the General Assembly Nominating Committee to encourage middle governing bodies to increase the percentage of qualified persons living with disabilities serving on General Assembly level committees by 1 percent per year through the year 2016.⁶ As members of the GANC consult with synod and presbytery nominating committees and committees on representation they encourage those groups to identify persons living with disabilities and to support them for service at the General Assembly level.

5. *Theological Diversity*

The 217th General Assembly (2006) referred to the GA Nominating Committee the “desirability of theological diversity in the membership composition” of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.⁷ The committee responded to the 218th General Assembly (2008) that determining the “different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition” (G-4.0403) of applicants is difficult but that the GANC, relying on a close reading of the application forms and appraisals,

had paid particular attention to theological diversity in its nominations and will continue to monitor the theological diversity of the advocacy committee's membership. The GANC has re-written the Application for Nomination form so that applicants have the opportunity to express more explicitly their biblical, theological, and social perspectives.

C. *Survey Results—Learnings*

As part of its self-evaluation, the GANC conducted an informal survey of randomly selected elected members, middle governing body executives and stated clerks, and commissioners to the previous three General Assemblies. The survey was designed to provide the GA Nominating Committee with insight into the ways persons experience the General Assembly nominations process. The following results provide the GANC with significant information as it reviews its work:

1. *Elected Members Currently or Formerly Serving*

More than 90 percent of staff and elected leadership of the entities to which the GANC makes nominations indicated that they understand the GA nominations process. However, only 75 percent of these leaders think their membership understand it.

More than 75 percent of those responding to the survey consulted with and provided advice and counsel to the GA Nominating Committee before the election process. Yet only 66 percent were confident that the GANC used this advice and counsel in its discernment process. The GANC will explain more clearly the ways in which entity advice and counsel is a factor in the committee's discernment process.

Sixty percent of entities have a process for encouraging persons to apply for service. The GANC will continue to encourage entities to take advantage of this partnership possibility.

When staff and elected leadership were asked if the skills of elected persons matched the needs of the entity almost 25 percent said "no." However, when surveying members currently serving or formerly serving on entities, all the respondents answered that their skills matched very well or well. The GANC will explore this discrepancy.

Most persons became aware of a vacancy on agencies, boards, committees, commissions, and councils through the encouragement of people in leadership positions rather than through print or electronic media. The GANC presence at church conferences and events and engagement with other groups and leaders continues to be a priority.

Slightly more than 33 percent of respondents spend more than twenty days a year serving on their entity. While most respondents indicated that the time given to service is what they expected, a significant minority indicated that the time exceeded their expectations. The GANC will stress to applicants the importance of reading the entity description and will encourage entities to provide complete descriptions of their work, including the time requirements.

The GANC asked persons to note any obstacles to their service. Comments included:

- a. Some congregations are not supportive of their pastor's service.
- b. Travel requirements, time requirements, and meeting patterns are burdensome.
- c. Lack of dependent care.
- d. Inadequate orientation for service.
- e. Youth/young adult and persons of color sometimes feel marginalized.

This data support the challenges identified in "III. Challenges Facing the GANC." The GANC hopes that previously approved policies that support youth and young adults, persons with childcare and other dependent needs, pastors, and church members as they seek to participate more fully in the church's decision-making will be implemented more broadly across the church. The GANC continues to encourage entities to have more thorough orientation.

2. *Middle Governing Body Leadership*

More than ninety percent of middle governing body leadership knows and understands the GANC's mandate, responsibilities, and process. However, only fifty percent knew who the GANC member from their synod was. About 25 percent feel that information about the process is not effectively disseminated. The GANC will increase its direct contact with presbytery and synod executives and stated clerks sharing information about the process and upcoming vacancies.

3. *General Assembly Commissioners*

Eighty percent of commissioners did not feel called to service on a GA level entity after serving as a General Assembly commissioner.

4. *GANC Members*

While the work of the GA Nominating Committee is not complicated it, is multifaceted and multilayered, and so the learning curve may be steep. Members of the GANC must know the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its polity, understand Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) structure, and value diversity. In addition, members must work collegially, honor confidentiality, and possess strong organizational communication and computer skills.

All current and former GANC members responding to the survey said that the orientation they received prepared them for participation in the committee's work. One respondent said, "I think that the orientation has helped as best as it can to prepare me to make nominations. It's a somewhat confusing process the first time around and, as with many things in life, the only real way to learn it well is to actually go through it."

All former and current GANC members agreed that the committee had built trust and community as it accomplished its work. The GANC and staff work hard to create an environment where its members—persons of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, ages, physical abilities, marital condition, and theological perspectives—can carefully and faithfully discern God's call to persons to service on GA level entities.

The majority of GANC members believe that adequate time is available for receiving and reviewing applications and reference materials, and for reviewing committee descriptions and needs, membership and demographic information, etc. All felt that the time allotted for notifying nominees and communicating their responses to other members and staff was adequate. While the majority of members felt that the two minute time limit on internal GANC nomination speeches was adequate, one -third thought that faithful discernment required more time for presentation of persons' qualifications. One possibility for addressing this issue may be to prepare members so they can craft nomination speeches ahead of the meeting. This deserves further exploration and the GANC leadership and staff will follow up accordingly.

The GANC members seem comfortable with the nomination process. Before the church moved to biennial assemblies, members had the opportunity to propose nominations in five nominating cycles. This provided the opportunity both to develop skills and have multiple nomination cycles to employ those skills. The GANC members now make nominations in only three nomination cycles. Moreover, the GANC used to meet three times a year but now meets only once a year due to budget reductions. Members cited committee dynamics, camaraderie, and trust as important components in the nominations process. It takes extra energy and creativity to ensure that these components are not lost as the number of face-to-face meetings is reduced. Although they felt that electronic meetings and conference calls were adequate supplements for some GANC business, respondents were clear that face-to-face meetings were more conducive to the practice of discernment.

The majority of GANC members and former members expressed appreciation for the helpful ways in which the staff prepared for and supported the committee's work and its members. When questioned, members acknowledged both the ways in which their participation had contributed to the General Assembly nominations process and the ways in which the committee process and their own participation could be enhanced. Several members commented that their skills were helpful in refining the GA nominations process. One member mentioned the pressure of having to nominate to more than thirty entities, and wondered if the number of entities to which the GANC nominates could be reduced. Another member yearned for a greater number of applicants that would fit all categories. Every GANC member, current and former, responded "Yes" to the question "Has your faith and commitment to the mission of the PC(USA) been strengthened by your participation?"

D. *Changes to the Process*

The General Assembly nominations process is just that—a process. It exists to help manage a multifaceted system of soliciting persons for service, identifying and cataloguing entity membership and needs, and matching the gifts of applicants and entities for service to the larger church. Without a clear process to guide and inform persons wishing to serve and those making decisions about who serves, identifying leadership in the church would be difficult and confusing for everyone. The GANC regularly reviews its processes, procedures, and practices. It is always open to suggestions from its own membership, members of other entities, and other concerned persons.

During the past six years improvements to the nominations process included:

- changes to the Application for Nomination form including updating and refining the online application process,
- expanded biographical information on nominees brought to the General Assembly,
- a procedure for notifying persons who have not been nominated in the current cycle,
- a new commissioner nomination procedure at General Assembly,
- a new application process for General Assembly Committee on Representation and General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in light of the removal of G-13.0107.

*Jesus called Peter and Andrew, James and John,
to leave their homes and their fishing nets and become disciples.
And they dropped everything and followed Jesus.*

V. Recommendations

Experience with biennial General Assemblies, consultations with General Assembly agencies, and the GANC self-study have led to some recommendations for change in the General Assembly nominations process. These are summarized below. The full text of these recommendations can be found in Items 03-14, 03-15, and 05-05.

1. *Amendments to G-13.0111*

a. The *Book of Order* stipulates that the GA Nominating Committee give consideration to the nomination of equal numbers of ministers (both men and women), laymen, and laywomen. The GA Nominating Committee is recommending a return to traditional Presbyterian practice of one-half ministers and one-half church members, both women and men.

b. The GA Nominating Committee is also recommending that the membership for *Book of Order* committees and commissions be amended to require that these entities be composed of equal number of ministers and elders, both women and men.

2. *Amendment to the Organization for Mission*

The GA Nominating Committee has proposed to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly that it consider an amendment to the *Organization for Mission* that will clarify the amount of time persons completing service on a GA entity must wait before they are eligible again for nomination for service.

3. *Amendment to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.*

The GA Nominating Committee has proposed to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly that it consider an amendment to the Standing Rules which would provide that the Moderator of the General Assembly appoint members of special committees in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

Endnotes

1. *Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 159.
2. *Minutes*, 2003, Part I, p. 139.
3. *Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 29–36; and pp. 105–107.
4. *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 746; *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 119.
5. *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 366; *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 119.
6. *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 924; *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 119.
7. *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 1164; *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 119.

Item 17-Info

A. *Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Agency Summary*

1. *Assigned Responsibilities: Strengthening Presbyterian Social Witness*

Social witness is part of what it means for the church to be “salt” and “light” in the world today. Coming from Jesus’ words in Mt. 5:13–14, the images of *Salt & Light* also give name to the ACSWP on-line newsletter. They undergird the committee’s faithfulness to its charge:

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), as a servant of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), develops, interprets, and monitors policies that encourage and challenge the Church and society to reflect and act in faithful response to God’s call to do justice. (Mission Statement, approved October 2002 in El Paso, Texas)

This brief narrative summarizes the committee’s responsibilities, its procedures and personnel, its accomplishments and activities.

In every age, the Spirit calls on the church to discern afresh God’s redemptive purpose in our particular time and place in history. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)’s work is to help the church discern what it means to

proclaim and embody the Gospel in relation to contemporary society. In this work, the ACSWP and its task forces draw upon a great wealth of resources:

- the voices of the biblical text;
- the wisdom of theological discourse;
- the guidance of the Reformed confessions;
- the tradition of past policy statements;
- the insights of sociopolitical disciplines;
- the advice of members and all governing bodies of the church;
- the insights of people who are poor, victims of existing policies, and those who have not had a voice in councils of the church; and
- the counsel of ecumenical partners. (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 769).

Social witness can occur at many different points: in a church session, in a presbytery, in an advocacy group, in the participation of Christians in mission, in a meeting of the ecumenical church, in an individual Christian's brave refusal to "go along" with injustice.

For Presbyterians, however, decisions about the church's social witness are made by persons elected to serve in governing bodies (session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly). As councils of the church meet, the elected persons are commissioned "... not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ ..." (*Book of Order*, G-4.0301d). The advisory committee's structure and function go back to 1936 when "consecrated" and justice-oriented persons from the Boards of Christian Education and National Missions were elected to a Social Education and Action Committee.

In providing service and resources to meet the needs of congregations, middle governing bodies, and the General Assembly, ACSWP members find guidance in the mission statement quoted above. Theologically grounded ethical reflection is part of the salt and light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The ACSWP engages with the grassroots in assisting the General Assembly to discern what it means to proclaim and embody the Gospel in a world that remains too grim for too many. At the same time, the committee's membership contains persons with expertise in theology, social ethics, and various other disciplines, more than half of whom hold advanced degrees.

Making a personal social witness begins with very individual ways of growing and developing as a Christian—prayerfully studying the Scriptures, being inspired by Jesus, the prophets, and courageous stands of the church, gaining insight from past ethical witness, connecting one's faith with others in the Christian community, and then being faithful in the world beyond the church. The ACSWP seeks to be a partner in the ministry of reconciliation, for "each member [who] is the church in the world ..." (*The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.38).

The churchwide work of the ACSWP is based on ethical guidance from the Scriptures, *The Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order*. The 1993 General Assembly policy statement, *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness* (OGA-93-019), provides extensive documentation of key biblical passages and is a useful document in congregational interpretation of the ACSWP and its mission.

All of those biblical texts have a common theme. The Gospel says that to confess Jesus Christ as Lord is to believe that God can and has overcome the powers of sin in the world. Christians do not work alone, but join the Lord Jesus Christ who is already at work in our world. John Calvin said that social concern, expressed by action on behalf of our neighbors, is a central part of the faith. Our historic confessions, the work of theologians, and the actions of 218 General Assemblies have reaffirmed that message. Our faithfulness as Reformed Christians means action.

This year, the ACSWP also performed a self-study of its work and participated in a three-committee review with the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). We encourage the interested reader to look at the self-study, which includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis. These reviews led to much good discussion and some revision of the structure of ACSWP's subcommittees and procedures, especially in light of the new potential of the internet and fiscal realities. The committee changed a Personnel and Budget subcommittee into one focused on tracking study teams and report preparation, and designated the Coordinating Committee to be the Advice and Counsel subcommittee for the biennial General Assembly. An Interpretation and Communication subcommittee continues, but a new subcommittee on projects such as curriculum development and consultations was developed.

Since the 218th General Assembly (2008), the committee met at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico; Detroit, Michigan; Berkeley, California; Washington, D.C.; Phoenix, Arizona; and Louisville, Kentucky. At each place, the committee met with representatives of the presbyteries and organizations and congregations doing vital forms of social witness, including immigrants' rights networks, environmental theology programs, Native American ministries, urban church projects, programs to end gun violence, peacemaking and human rights networks, etc. In Detroit, this led to a social involvement report bringing

to that de-industrialized context some of the analysis from the 2008 report on the Post-Katrina Gulf Coast, *Struck Down, But Not Destroyed*.

Procedures and Personnel

In support of the work of the assembly, the ACSWP is given direct access to the assembly as it meets biennially. Between sessions of the assembly, the ACSWP also assists the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and other agencies of the church as their work involves the development and interpretation of social witness policy.

The committee carries out its responsibilities in five major ways. They are the

1. development and recommendation of new social witness and policy for approval by the General Assembly;
2. interpretation and communication of the General Assembly's social witness and policy, both to the church and the world at large;
3. provision of advice and counsel to the entities and governing bodies of the church on matters of social witness policy when developments merit social-ethical attention;
4. provision of advice and counsel to the General Assembly when it meets as a governing body (in oral and memoranda form); and
5. monitoring of peace and justice concerns per mandates from the General Assembly.

The ACSWP develops and recommends new social witness and policies primarily in response to referrals from the General Assembly (GA) and its entities, and in a manner consistent with the *Manual of the General Assembly*, "On Forming Social Policy." This policy development requires depth of theological reflection, breadth of input, and diversity of participation. Before a policy statement is approved, extensive consultation is mandated at all stages of development. Thus, the committee's work is connected to the concerns of Presbyterians gathered in worshiping and serving communities across the land.

The committee's Advice and Counsel group carries out the task of providing advice and counsel at the meeting of the General Assembly (GA). This group of elected committee members, together with other staff and resource persons from several General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and Office of the General Assembly (OGA) entities, advises commissioners in assembly committees and other entities about social policies applicable to issues before the assembly. It may also comment on the need or direction for future social policy. Advice and counsel is provided throughout the meeting, through "Advice and Counsel Memoranda," by oral testimony before assembly committees, and informally. The ACSWP chair or a co-chairperson is a corresponding member to both the GA and GAMC. This chair or co-chairperson can offer advice and counsel if called upon in these meetings. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) consists of twelve members, nine of whom are at-large members elected by the General Assembly from the whole church and three who are General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) members. The members are: Gloria Albrecht (co-chair), Detroit, Michigan; Donna C. Bradley, Tucson, Arizona; Dianne L. Briscoe, Denver, Colorado; David Cortes-Fuentes, Claremont, California; Christine M. Darden, Hampton, Virginia; Jean Demmler, Denver, Colorado; Marsha Fowler, Altadena, California; Esperanza Guajardo, San Antonio, Texas; Ronald J. Kernaghan (co-chair), Pasadena, California; John Knapp, Birmingham, Alabama; William Saint, Fairfax, Virginia; and Linda D. Scholl, Memphis, Tennessee. In the fall of 2008, Michael Castronis, a member appointed by the former General Assembly Council (GAC) resigned from the committee. The GAC appointed Linda Scholl to fill this vacated position. On September 11, 2009, Lewis S. Mudge, an at-large member from Berkeley, California, died. The Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) appointed David Cortés-Fuentes to fill the position vacated by Dr. Mudge's sudden death. Staffing for the committee includes Christian T. Iosso, coordinator; Belinda M. Curry, associate; and Bonnie M. Hoff, senior administrative assistant.

2. Accomplishments

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) members and staff make themselves available for interpretive events as requested and as time allows. Such events included preaching at the Texas Conference of Churches, San Antonio's Beacon Hill Presbyterian Church, and the Swarthmore (Pa.) Presbyterian Church. The committee welcomes inquiries through its office in Louisville. All governing bodies, churches, and members are encouraged to use the "Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation," which contains the core of the assemblies' social policy statements since 1946. It is revised regularly to meet the needs of the church and can be downloaded from the worldwide web at (www.pcusa.org/acswp).

The ACSWP holds a stated meeting following each General Assembly to discern and prioritize its work; periodically between the assemblies, to review progress on papers and projects; and in January before an assembly, to edit and approve

final drafts for submission to the assembly. This year the committee has prepared the following reports to strengthen current social witness policies.

- On Living a Human Life Before God—a study paper updating the *Nature and Value of Human Life* (1981) study paper;
- Gun Violence and Gospel Values: Mobilizing to Respond to God’s Call;
- Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action;
- Living Through Economic Crisis: The Church’s Witness in Troubled Times (A Social Involvement Report);
- Loving Our Neighbors: For Equity and Quality in Public Education (K–12);
- Neither Poverty nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church (Study);
- Human Rights Update (focus on Immigrant Detention, Human Trafficking, and Torture);
- ACSWP Self-Study Report for the 219th General Assembly (2010).

In preparing this year’s General Assembly reports, ACSWP took into consideration the comments and reflections shared by individual Presbyterians and adult education classes, General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) program ministry areas, and other bodies within our church.

The ACSWP continues to explore ways to use the new web technologies to enhance the communal conversation and consensus-building that strengthens our shared social witness. The committee revised the resource section of its website in the fall of 2009. In addition, the committee revised the look of its e-list letter.

From 2008–2009, the committee assisted the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) in the publication of the following reports: *Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness* (PDS #02-052-09-003), *From Homelessness to Hope: Constructing Just, Sustainable Communities for All God’s People* (PDS #02-052-09-002), *God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation* (PDS #02-052-08-004), *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform* (PDS #02-052-08-003), *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming* (PDS #02-052-09-001). These resources can be downloaded at <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications> or <http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/resources.htm>. The committee developed *Connecting to the Creed*—a guide for understanding and applying the centennial ecumenical Social Creed (PDS #02-052-09-004). Creative posters and educational materials were developed in the Presbytery of Hudson River, and Korean and Spanish versions were developed. Conferences and presentations on the Social Creed have occurred in Texas, Arizona, New York, and Ohio. We lift up especially the fine discussion series and videotapes of the Pinnacle Presbyterian Church in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon (Phoenix area). The National Council of Churches has also lifted up the Social Creed.

The ACSWP has also participated in the primarily evangelical theological dialogue group, Envision, following its co-sponsorship of Envision 08 at Princeton Seminary and Princeton University. Contact and consultation with a variety of evangelical and ecumenical mission groups occurred in Thailand in connection with work on the issue of human trafficking. Articles by ACSWP staff have been published in the *Presbyterian Outlook*, *Theology Today*, *Presbyterians Today*, the *Mission Yearbook*, *Horizons*, as well as in the publications of entities of the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council.

Since the last General Assembly biennial meeting, ACSWP co-sponsored two events at the Stony Point Center, Stony Point, New York. In the fall of 2008, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program (PPP), the Presbyterian United Nations Office (PUNO), the Presbyterian Peacemaking Fellowship (PPF), the Stony Point Center, and ACSWP sponsored a peacemaking colloquium on “Gun Violence and Gospel Values.” Comments and reflections from this event were recorded and shared with the members of ACSWP’s Gun Violence Work Group. Over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend 2010, ACSWP co-hosted with the Stony Point Center a colloquium on Accra and Belhar Confessions. That event was co-sponsored by the Covenanting for Justice working group of North America, bringing together representatives from most Reformed churches in Canada and the United States along with several representatives from the Caribbean Reformed family.

The ACSWP works collaboratively with the six mission and ministry areas of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), other entities of the GAMC, and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). The ACSWP has liaisons from the Compassion Peace and Justice ministry area, and from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC). When possible, the committee spends time with local church members, relevant presbytery committees, and with ecumenical contacts during its stated meetings.

Last year, ACSWP made available 150 complimentary copies of *Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness* to the participants at the Pathways to Promise: Interfaith Ministries & Mental Illness 2009 Faith-Based

National Summit held in Belleville, Illinois, September 28–October 1, 2009. Mental illness concerns were the major health justice topic addressed at this event. Three hundred complimentary copies of this policy statement were distributed to the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA). And a complimentary copy of this policy resource was distributed to each PC(USA) congregation, presbytery, synod, and theological institution, as well as the institutions in covenant relationship with the PC(USA). The committee assists in organizing an annual gathering of the Theological Educators for Presbyterian Social Witness (TEPSW). This group is composed primarily of Christian ethicists currently or formerly serving in seminaries and other educational institutions related to and/or in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Since the last General Assembly, the committee assisted with two such gatherings. In the fall of 2008, the TEPSW met at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (LPTS), Louisville, Kentucky. The fall 2009 meeting was held at McCormick Theological Seminary (MTS), Chicago, Illinois. Columbia Theological Seminary (CTS), Decatur, Georgia, is the location for the 2010 gathering.

The ACSWP will focus on emerging social witness issues and future priorities at its summer 2010 stated meeting. Other responses by the committee to General Assembly (GA) work may be found in the responses to referrals section of the reports to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

B. *General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations Agency Summary*

1. Purpose

The purpose of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) is to give a high profile to the vision of the ecumenical involvement and work as central to the gospel and key to the life of the church; plan and coordinate, in consultation with the agencies and governing bodies of the church, the involvement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ecumenical relations and work; connect the ecumenical efforts of all governing body levels of the church; provide a common point for all ecumenical efforts connecting us with those outside our church; keep a unity of vision that includes the ecclesiastical, programmatic, ecumenical, and denominational parts of our ministries and commitments; articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our ecumenical commitments; promote awareness of the role of the unity of all humankind in the search for the unity of the church; and promote the unity of the church as an exhibition of the kingdom of God to the world.

The committee is composed of sixteen members, elected by the General Assembly, ecumenical members, the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council, and other ex-officio members.

2. Ministry and Accomplishments (2008)

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations held its fall regular meeting on October 9–11, 2008, at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The meeting was called to order with prayer and brief introductions. The following are highlights of the meeting:

a. Fall 2008 Meeting

The GACER meeting began its work in worship lead by Krystin Granberg.

Worship was followed by an educational presentation by Robina Winbush. She reviewed the history and foundations of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations, including information regarding the mandate for the committee and changes in the committee's mandate throughout the years. As part of this educational session, Krystin Granberg and Carlos Malavé presented a PowerPoint overview of the actions of the 218th General Assembly (2008).

On this first day, the Executive Committee of GACER introduced the plan of action for the following two years.

As is the practice of the GACER, the committee dedicated a section for theological reflection. Robina Winbush introduced the Reverend Aimee Moiso, Santa Clara University Campus Ministries and member of GACER, and Dr. Caudio Carvalhaes, assistant professor of Worship and Preaching at Louisville Theological Seminary. Each of them presented a theological reflection on the Ecumenical Policy Statement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "From Conception to Reception." Following the theological reflections, the committee engaged in conversation with the presenters.

The GACER heard from the recently elected Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Gradye Parsons, regarding what his views are on the life and hope of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Recommendations for Schedule of Work was approved by the committee. The recommendation included a proposal that the committee have one meeting in 2009 in Geneva. The location of this meeting would provide the opportunity for the educational formation of the committee members and also access to the staff of the ecumenical organizations present in Geneva. Because of this decision, the GACER decided to only hold two face-to-face meetings during this two year period,

with the understanding that subcommittees and the executive committee would be committed to work between meetings through conference calls and emails.

b. *Other GACER Related Activities, Reports, and Actions*

(1) The GACER conducted, as required by previous General Assembly actions, a review of the PC(USA) relationship with WARC-CANAAC, which is being presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010). The GACER approved the following members of the review committee: Jerrod Belton Lowry, chair; Ruy Costa; Eileen Lindner; Jeanne Choy Tate; and Catrelia Hunter.

(2) The GACER voted to appoint an investigative committee to look into the allegations made in overtures by the Presbyteries of Peace River and Missouri Valley regarding the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Part of this investigation will be considering what, if any, role WARC should play in addressing these issues. The GACER approved the following members of the investigative committee: Krystin Granberg, chair; Terry Epling; Catherine Kotfila (Alternate Mark Labberton); Jeffery Vamos (Alternate Ryan White); Eugene Turner; Joy Kaufman; and George Wilkes.

(3) The GACER voted to appoint the following persons to serve on the Implementation Committee for the KPCA/PCUSA Covenant Agreement: Samuel Kim, Yu Bang Lee, Paul Kim, Young Lee Hertig, Linda Culberston, and David Choi.

(4) The GACER voted to recommend that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve a dialogue with the Seventh-day Adventists Church, pending a request to staff for a detailed prospectus outlining details of the purpose, timeline, and subjects to be addressed by the dialogue.

(5) The Interfaith subcommittee of GACER discussed the possibilities of having a church consultation on interfaith relations. Staff and GACER members were asked to forward to the subcommittee chair ideas they have on how to conduct this consultation.

(6) The GACER approved the appointment of Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo and Sarah McCaslin to serve on the PC(USA) delegation to the Unifying Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 18–28, 2010.

3. *Ministry and Accomplishments (2009)*

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) was convened on Sunday, May 24, 2009, with dinner at 6:30 p.m. at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland, by its Chairperson George Telford. While at the Ecumenical Institute, the committee met students and faculty. Dr. Ioan Souca, director of the institute, shared information about the history and program of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. Oomman Thomas gave the opening prayer. At the end of the GACER meeting, some of the committee members stayed in Geneva for the celebration of the Calvin 500th Anniversary by the WARC and the Swiss Federation of Churches.

a. *Spring 2009 Meeting*

The GACER gathered for worship at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland, at 8:30 a.m., on Monday, May 25, 2009. Following worship, Theo Gill, a Presbyterian serving in the World Council of Churches, led the committee on a talking tour of the Ecumenical Centre and its history. After the tour, Robina Winbush introduced Dr. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, who brought greetings to the GACER.

During the first morning of the meeting, the committee heard presentations by Dr. Puleng LenkaBula, consultant to the Covenanting for Justice Program of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and lecturer, and Dr. Rogate Mshana, executive secretary for Poverty, Wealth and Ecology Programme of the World Council of Churches. Dr. Mshana spoke regarding issues relating to WARC Covenanting for Justice and the Earth and the Accra Confessions, highlighting some of the ecumenical collaborative initiatives and theological issues that have been involved in the process. Dr. LenkaBula addressed the committee regarding issues of poverty and wealth. She distributed several documents, including a background document on the AGAPE (Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth) Process and the follow-up among churches and the ecumenical family. Following the presentations by Dr. LenkaBula and Dr. Mshana, the committee was led in a discussion by Chris Iosso and Sara Lisherness on how the PC(USA) has been engaged in the process of receiving the “Covenanting for Justice and the Earth.” During lunch, the GACER had the opportunity to meet some of the senior staff of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

The committee was informed that the GACER is up for review as mandated by the General Assembly and that part of the review process requires that GACER do a self-study. Chairperson George Telford appointed a subcommittee to do the self-study as follows: Scott Anderson, chairperson; Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo; Rodney Peterson; Barbara Dua, New Mexico Council of Churches executive director. The subcommittee has begun its work. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Gradye Parsons, explained the process for the self-study.

The GACER heard presentations on the *Call to Be One Church* and the *Nature and Mission of the Church* documents from Dr. John Gibaut, director of Faith and Order for the WCC, and member of the Anglican Church of Canada; and Dr. Odair Pedroso-Mateus, staff of Faith and Order and member of the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil. The GACER will prepare and forward to the WCC a formal response to these documents.

During the second day, the GACER heard a presentation about issues related to violence and globalization around the world from the Reverend Dr. Shanta Premawardhana, director, Office of Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation of the World Council of Churches; and Dr. Rima Barsoum, associate for Christian-Muslim Relations. Dr. Premawardhana shared a document entitled, “Useful Documents on Interfaith Dialogue on the WCC Website,” and a book entitled, *Hermeneutical Explanations in Dialogue: Essays in Honour of Hans Ucko*. Following the presentations, Damayanthi Niles, a member of GACER, responded on behalf of the committee. Niles response was followed by discussions and conversations.

On the third day of meetings, Cliff Kirkpatrick (president of WARC), Setri Nyomi (WARC general secretary), and Peter Borgdorf (president of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC)) addressed the committee and shared information regarding the proposed union of WARC and REC and plans for the upcoming Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids.

The committee had the opportunity to meet young adult interns from some of the ecumenical agencies, among them: Emma Halgren, Australia, intern with WCC Communications and Visitor’s Program; James Macharia, Kenya, intern with Decade to Overcome Violence living letters; Packiaraj Asirvatham, India, intern in Faith, Science & Technology; Mark Taylor, Scotland, intern with WCC Youth Program; Natalie Maxson, Canada, program executive for youth/young adults.

During the meeting the GACER welcomed the Reverend Eleanora Giddings Ivory, past director of the PC(USA) Washington Office; Rev. Giddiness, director of Public Witness for the WCC; and The Reverend Dr. Martin Robra, director of Ecumenism in the 21st Century of the World Council of Churches. They gave a presentation on Advocacy and Relationships as an ecumenical issue.

b. *Other GACER Related Activities, Reports and Actions*

(1) The GACER authorized its moderator to appoint a small task group to engage in a process of conversation with the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). The conversation will address overall GAMC ecumenical participation and commitments. The committee asked for this report to be presented for revision and adoption at its winter 2010 meeting.

(2) The Interfaith subcommittee reported that the consultative process with Jewish leaders was completed, a draft of the study now in process would be completed by December 2009 and expected to be approved at the winter 2010 meeting. Issues and themes were identified on the Study on Christian-Muslim Relations. A small consultation will be held on July 13–16, 2009.

(3) The GACER approved the invitations to three other faith or religious traditions to send representatives to the 219th General Assembly (2010) as observers: The National Council of Synagogues, The Islamic Society of North America, and an American Indian Organization from one of the Nations in Minnesota.

(4) The GACER voted to endorse the colloquium on the “Accra and Belhar Confessions in Conversation,” sponsored by ACSWP and Stony Point as a relevant educational opportunity for understanding our ecumenical life together and to encourage participation of Reformed ecumenical colleagues.

(5) The committee approved a request for staff to produce a draft response to the WARC Covenanting for Justice process for the Grand Rapids Uniting Council.

(6) The GACER will request that every presbytery name an ecumenical liaison. This person will serve as liaison between the presbyteries and the GACER and the Department of Ecumenical and Agency Relations.

(7) The committee approved a recommendation to receive resources and written presentations on the World Council of Churches (WCC) Poverty, Wealth and Ecology Program (PWE), including the Proposed Statement on Eco-Justice and Ecological Debt and the AGAPE Consultation—The Links Between Poverty, Wealth and Ecology: Ecumenical Perspectives in Latin America and the Caribbean. These reports are to be forwarded to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), requesting that ACSWP review these documents in light of General Assembly policy and prepare a report that will be received by the GACER Executive Committee to provide feedback to the WCC (through the PWE reference group and other means). These reports are also to be forwarded to the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) requesting that Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry (CPJ), through its environmental program, hunger program, and other appropriate offices, review these documents, identify ways that the GAMC is addressing these concerns in its life and ministry, then prepare a report that will be received by the General Assembly Mission Council and forwarded to GACER to provide ways of engagement with the WCC.

(8) The GACER received a report on the progress of the Task Group on the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

(9) The GACER received a report that, because of the Office of the General Assembly reductions in budget for 2009/2010, a decision was made to decrease \$96,000 from the National Council of Churches givings. In regards to this, it was voted that there be a consultative process with the GACER Executive Committee and COGA before the OGA staff makes a decision regarding a change in financial commitment to ecumenical bodies.

(10) The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations nominates to each General Assembly churches to be invited to send ecumenical advisory delegates to the subsequent assembly, ten overseas churches and five churches within the United States. The committee voted to nominate five churches within the U.S. and forward these nominations to the 219th General Assembly (2010). The churches approved are: Reformed Church in America, Moravian Church (Northern and Southern Synods), Church of the Brethren, Progressive National Baptist Convention, and the Assemblies of God.

(11) The GACER approved a recommendation to form a task group to engage with the General Assembly Mission Council for the purposes of building relationships between GACER and the General Assembly Mission Council to foster the fulfillment of our Presbyterian ecumenical calling in our mission program and financial commitments.

c. *Bilateral Dialogues and Joint Committees Reports*

(1) The committee received a report that the Agreement with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (KPCA) was approved by both, the PC(USA) and the KPCA.

(2) Robina Winbush, Associate Stated Clerk, gave an overview and update on the Bilateral Agreement with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Catholic Reformed Dialogue had forwarded a *Common Statement on Baptism*. The GACER then forwarded the document to the 218th General Assembly (2008) to be received as an ecumenical agreement. The document was approved by the assembly and forwarded to presbyteries for ratification. Since that time, indication has been received from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops staff that the USCCB could not approve the document. The committee requested from a staff and a committee member to prepare a formal report to the 219th General Assembly (2010). The report was to be approved at the February 2010 GACER meeting.

(3) The GACER engaged in discussion regarding the implications for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on how to engage in a discernment process and what needs to be communicated to partners in Churches Uniting in Christ (CUiC). The committee also discussed a rift in CUiC related to historically black churches, including possible advice and counsel GACER may want to give to the Stated Clerk when he meets with CUiC Heads of Communion.

4. *Ministry and Accomplishments (Winter 2010)*

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) met in Louisville, Kentucky, on February 4–6, 2010, for its winter meeting.

5. *Other GACER Reports, Actions, and Related Activities*

6. *Bilateral Dialogues and Joint Committees Reports*

C. General Assembly Nominating Committee

*God calls plain folk from ordinary places to do extraordinary work with God's people.*¹

The call of Christ is to willing, dedicated discipleship. Our discipleship is a manifestation of the new life we enter through baptism. Discipleship is both a gift and a commitment, an offering and a responsibility” (*Commissioning Service Book of Occasional Services*).

The General Assembly Nominating Committee mandate is charged in the *Book of Order*, G-13.0111, with ensuring “careful nomination of members of such boards, agencies, and committees as the General Assembly shall from time to time designate....”

Through the General Assembly’s nominations process, the church has the benefit of selecting, from the varied gifts and services of Presbyterians, the most qualified persons to serve on General Assembly level entities; persons who can serve the whole church with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee makes nominations to more than thirty entities. It

- presents to the General Assembly for election, nominees for at-large vacancies on General Assembly entities;
- submits to the General Assembly for election, nominees from persons proposed by synods and presbyteries in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee for rotation vacancies or for middle governing body representation on General Assembly entities; and

- transmits to the General Assembly the names of persons from General Assembly entities for their representatives (linkages) to other General Assembly entities.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee works continuously to broaden and deepen the pool of persons interested in and capable of serving General Assembly entities. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is blessed with a wealth of faithful disciples of Christ. The Spirit calls Presbyterians to service at all levels of the church's life—congregations, synods, and presbyteries, and the General Assembly.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) guarantees full access to the participation in the decision-making processes of the church (G-4.0403). This commitment to the ministry of the whole people of God moves Presbyterians to respond to God's call for service—to use their gifts for the life and mission of the church. In cooperation and consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, the General Assembly Nominating Committee gives careful consideration to *Book of Order* mandates that persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as different marital conditions, be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision-making of the church (G-4.0403 and G-13.0108). The GANC follows, whenever possible, *Book of Order* guidelines, G-13.0111, that consideration shall be given to the nomination of equal numbers of ministers, laymen, and laywomen, except where other membership is mandated by the *Book of Order*. The GANC also encourages synods, presbyteries, and other linking entities to keep *Book of Order* mandates in mind as they submit persons for nomination.

1. *Accomplishments in 2008–2010*

The GANC continues to connect with Presbyterians—through meetings of presbytery and synod nominating committee, participation and attendance at national and regional conferences, engagement and correspondence with leaders at all governing body levels of the church—in order to inform Presbyterians of the many and diverse opportunities for service. In addition to face-to-face engagements, individuals, congregations, presbyteries, and synods can find a listing of positions open for election on the General Assembly Nominating Committee's website: www.pcusa.org/nominations. The website provides information on the General Assembly nominations process and descriptions of each entity to which the committee makes nominations. These descriptions are written by each entity and contain information on the purpose of the entity, skill sets and expertise needed, and time requirements for service. They are a useful tool for helping potential candidates determine whether or not their particular gifts and abilities are a match with the identified needs of a specific entity at this particular time.

Instead of printing its standard brochure, during the 2008–2010 season the GANC created an attractive information card that advertised the committee's website. The GANC information card includes the names and contact information for members of the GANC and a cloud of words descriptive of a ministry of service on a General Assembly level entity. This card is available at no cost at most major Presbyterian conferences, upon request to the General Assembly nominations office in Louisville, and disseminated to all middle governing bodies.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee solicits applications for nomination to at-large positions from all governing bodies, other official Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) groups, and individual Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) members. Presbyteries and synods provide the names of persons to be considered for nomination to middle governing body positions on the various committees, boards, and commissions where such membership is mandated.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee encourages those wishing to be considered for service on a General Assembly level committee to apply online via its website. The online application is an easy to use, safe and secure, and a relatively fast way to file. While this is the preferred way to apply, women and men who find that they are not able to use this method are able to obtain either an electronic or paper version of the application form for their use.

Through participation at conferences, conversations and engagement with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, racial ethnic caucuses, affinity groups, individual contact at all middle governing body levels as well as with pastors and elders across the denomination, the General Assembly Nominating Committee strives to increase the number of racial ethnic persons and persons with differing theological perspectives in its pool of applicants.

Most persons serving on General Assembly agencies, committees, or entities are members of a congregation or a presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Several committees include within their membership persons who are not Presbyterian: the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations, the National Committee on the Self-Development of People, and the review committees on General Assembly agencies.

About a year before it meets to make nominations, the GANC publishes on its website and mails to each presbytery and synod a list of vacancies to be filled. Additionally the GANC website provides instructions, committee descriptions, and information about the nominations process.

Persons interested in being considered for service on a General Assembly level committee and persons who wish to suggest persons for consideration may do so by submitting an application for nomination form either online at the GANC's website, electronically via an email version of the application form, or by completing and returning a printed version of the form. As of February 1, 2008, approximately 300 applications were received for almost 130 positions of which only 90 are at-large vacancies. Applications remain active for two General Assembly cycles.

The application process requires that applicants ask three evaluators to complete a reference form regarding the applicant's abilities, gifts, and experience. A reference is also solicited from the governing body for each applicant. The references are treated in confidence and are critical in the discernment process the members of the GANC use. All application forms are shared with each General Assembly Nominating Committee member. Each member of the General Assembly Nominating Committee has access to the confidential appraisal materials for all applicants.

The nominating committee maintains a rotation system by which synods and/or presbyteries nominate persons to serve on the Mission Development Resources Committee, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and the National Committee on the Self-Development of People, as well as a rotation system for presbytery representation on the General Assembly Mission Council, as outlined in the *Organization for Mission*. It is important to remember that nominations for these middle governing body positions are made from proposals received from presbyteries or synods—through their regular nominating process.

In 2009, the majority of presbyteries approved an amendment to the *Book of Order* that resulted in the deletion of G-13.0107. Prior to that time, the GANC was required to consider only a pool of applicants proposed by affected synods when it nominated to the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission. Although synods may continue to submit names of persons for the GANC's consideration, the General Assembly Nominating Committee has opened the process to allow Presbyterians from the church at-large to apply to be considered for the nomination to these entities as long as they are from the affected synod.

Members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee relate actively to middle governing bodies and General Assembly entities throughout the year. Each General Assembly Nominating Committee member serves as a liaison to the nominating committee of the synod in which the member resides. Each member attends at least one synod or synod nominating committee meeting every other year to explain the nominations process.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee invites all General Assembly entities to send a written report biennially concerning the specific needs of the entity regarding nominees presented to the General Assembly. In addition, the General Assembly Nominating Committee's liaison member is available to meet with the entity or be in contact by telephone or mail at the entity's invitation, so that the nominating process may be explained and that the skills and expertise needed by the entity are identified. This information, along with advice and counsel received from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, assists the General Assembly Nominating Committee in its work.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee continues to be concerned about the needs of persons with disabilities, persons with children and/or other dependents, and youth and young adults on entities of the General Assembly. The General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation are committed to working together to discover persons with disabilities, youth, and young adults who are willing to be considered for service on General Assembly committees and agencies. The General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation note that many applicants do not identify themselves as persons with disabilities even when a disability does exist. Thus, the number of persons with disabilities serving the church on committees at the General Assembly level is actually higher than reported. The General Assembly Nominating Committee will continue to seek ways to encourage persons living with disabilities to make this information available.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee shared with the 218th General Assembly (2008) its concern that there was an increase in the number of persons who have resigned from elected service because of a variety of obstacles. Resignations continue to increase as many demands, including pressures of family and work life, affect the ability of members to continue to serve at the General Assembly level.

The *Organization for Mission* provides that terms for most agencies, committees, or entities are four years, with eligibility to serve an additional four-year term. Re-nomination to a second term is not automatic. The GANC uses several factors in determining whether or not to re-nominate a person. Key in this discernment process is an evaluation instrument completed by the agency, committee, or entity on which the member serves, diversity issues, special skills and expertise needed by the agency, committee, or entity to respond to assigned mandates.

In preparation for review by the 219th General Assembly (2010), the General Assembly Nominating Committee's executive committee appointed a work group to engage in a study of the GANC's work and process for the last six years. This work group consisted of current members Janet Schlenker, who served as chair of the work group; James Madson; Mike Reyes; and former members William King and Susan D. Krummel. Valerie Kiriishi Small served as staff. The writing sub-team consisted of Janet Schlenker, Susan D. Krummel, and Valerie Kiriishi Small.

The Self-Study Work Group met May 2009 via conference call; June 2009 via electronic GoToMeeting; August 2009 in Chicago, Illinois; and January 2010 via email correspondence; and once more prior to the General Assembly. The writing group met in November 2009 in Minneapolis, Minnesota; December in Denver, Colorado; and February 2010 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Since the 218th General Assembly (2008), there have been four meetings of the nominating committee: January 2009 in Tucson, Arizona, October 2009 via conference call; February 2010 via conference call; and March 2010 in Seattle, Washington. A joint meeting of members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation was held in November 2010 in San Diego, California. New members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee participated in one of two intensive orientation meetings in Los Angeles, California, in October 2008 and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in November 2008.

2. *Membership*

There are sixteen members on the General Assembly Nominating Committee—one member residing in each of the sixteen synods. The General Assembly, upon the nomination of the General Assembly Moderator, elects the members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee. Members serve a six-year term. The following officers were elected and served in 2008–2010: James Madson, elder, Synod of Mid-America, moderator; Emily McGinley, church member, Synod of Lincoln Trails, vice-moderator; David Bennett, minister, Synod of the Northeast, secretary. The other members of the committee are: Joan Carpenter, elder, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii; Frank Deming, minister, Synod of Mid-Atlantic; Warner Durnell, minister, Synod of Living Waters; Cindy Edwards, church member, Synod of Alaska-Northwest; Carnell Hampton, minister, Synod of the South Atlantic; Roger Howell, elder, Synod of the Covenant; Richard Kampa, elder, Synod of the Southwest; Catherine Purves, minister, Synod of the Trinity; Mike Reyes, elder, Synod of the Pacific; Janet Schlenker, minister, Synod of the Rocky Mountains; Lita Simpson, elder, Synod of the Sun; Elona Street-Stewart, elder, Synod of Lakes and Prairies; and Jose Torres Hernandez, elder, Sinodo Presbiteriano Boriquen en Puerto Rico.

The office of the General Assembly Nominating Committee is located in the Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396. Assistant Stated Clerk Valerie Kiriishi Small, elder, serves as the manager for General Assembly Nominations.

God called Abraham and Sarah to pack their belongings and sojourn to a new land. So Abraham and Sarah packed up and answered God's Call²

Endnotes

1. © 2006 *ideas! for Church Leaders*, Volume six, Issue One, Fall 2006, "Fulfilling Our Promise to Make Faithful Disciples!" The litany is an adaptation from the *Book of Occasional Services* and from the questions found in G-14.0207 of the *Book of Order*, 2005–2007.
2. © 2006 *ideas! for Church Leaders*, Volume six, Issue One, Fall 2006, "Fulfilling Our Promise to Make Faithful Disciples!" The litany is an adaptation from the *Book of Occasional Services* and from the questions found in G-14.0207 of the *Book of Order*, 2005–2007.

D. *Committee on Theological Education Agency Summary*

1. *Assigned Responsibilities*

The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) has the responsibility for developing and maintaining a comprehensive plan for theological education from the perspective of the whole church. The committee seeks to identify, develop, and propose strategies for a denomination-wide approach to theological education. The committee serves as an advocate for theological education, seeking to support the seminaries and to strengthen them for their mission in the world. The Committee on Theological Education can be seen as a two-way communication link between the denomination and its graduate theological institutions. Voting members of the committee include thirteen people elected to represent the church at large and a representative from each of the ten seminaries related directly to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Corresponding members of COTE include: representatives from Auburn Theological Seminary and from the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (both institutions related to the General Assembly through covenant agreements negotiated every six years); a representative of the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation, and representatives of two non-Presbyterian seminaries invited by the committee.

2. *Accomplishments*

a. *Interschool and Seminary/Church Cooperation*

(1) *Joint Committee on Leadership Needs*

In April 2009, a Committee on Theological Education initiative established a Joint Committee on Leadership Needs with the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA). Each group was represented on the joint committee, whose charge was to comprehensively examine the current cultural context of twenty-first century North America and outline strategies for the development of church leaders. The resulting report “Raising Up Leaders for the Mission of God” is an “invitat(ion) to the PCUSA to dream again, to have hope, to be in conversation about the questions this report raises, and partner to empower leaders for the mission of God in the world.” The report was been endorsed by the GAMC and COGA in February 2010 and is available on the internet.

(2) *Cooperative Courses*

The Office of the General Assembly, San Francisco Theological Seminary, and COTE continue to sponsor a class for seminarians entitled “Presbyterianism: Principles and Practices” during General Assembly. More than fifty students from five seminaries registered in 2008. Each January COTE sponsored, in cooperation with Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the General Assembly Mission Council, a January-term course for seminarians entitled “Leaders in the Connectional Church.” More than fifty students from seven seminaries in 2009 and 2010 took the course. With the help of presbyteries and seminaries, the Office of Theological Education has encouraged committees on preparation for ministry to urge candidates under their care to take advantage of these opportunities to learn firsthand about our denominational programs and polity. Course tuition for courses may be paid via the committee’s Presbyterian Seminary Exchange Program.

(3) *A Committee on Theological Education Self-Study*

As part of the now regular review process of the General Assembly, COTE conducted and separately submitted to the 219th General Assembly (2010) a comprehensive review with recommendations for improvements.

(4) *The Award for Excellence in Theological Education*

The Award for Excellence in Theological Education was established by the Committee on Theological Education in 1996 to honor a person biennially who has made an outstanding lifetime contribution to theological education in and for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The award is normally presented during the meeting of the General Assembly. The COTE has selected Barbara G. Wheeler, the director of the Center for the Study of Theological Education at Auburn Theological Seminary and former president of Auburn, to be recognized in 2010. Wheeler’s thirty-year service at Auburn Theological Seminary, the authoring and editing of books and studies including *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools*, numerous Auburn Studies, and generously donating her time, expertise, research, and service to COTE for decades are only a few examples of the excellence in theological education she continues to offer the PC(USA), the ecumenical church, and the entire theological education enterprise.

(5) *Other Cooperative Projects*

The COTE, through Theological Education Fund special project funds, sponsored a grant requests for

- Calling for the Order of the Day, Pedagogies of African American Theologians: Led by Katie Cannon and Marsha Sulligan Haney, this conference brought together more than 200 theologians and church leaders to empower and resource African American congregations, leaders, and theologians in 2008.
- PC(USA) Korean American Theological Initiative: This initiative is led by Paul J. Huh at Columbia Seminary and is in a process that seeks to bring together Korean American church leaders and theologians to develop resources for church and leadership formation including an online journal, curriculum suggestions, a scholars conference, and a grant writing/seeking resource.
- Online Supervised Ministry Project: This project of the Presbyterian and Reformed Theological Field Educators Caucus (PRTFE) seeks to improve online supervisor training for seminary students that could be used by all the participating schools. Susan Fox at Union Presbyterian Seminary directs this project that is in process.

b. *Funding for Seminaries Related to the PC(USA)*

Implementation and interpretation of the Theological Education Fund (1% Plan), which is the sole source of denomination-wide support for the ten PC(USA) seminaries and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, continues to be an important task for COTE and the Office of Theological Education. The Theological Education Fund (TEF) was established by the 198th General Assembly (1986) and was first implemented in 1989. Throughout the twenty-one years of the TEF’s operational life, more than 47 million dollars has been contributed by more than half of the PC(USA) congregations contributing at some time during this history. In 2008, more than 1,790 PC(USA) congregations and middle governing bodies made voluntary contributions to the Theological Education Fund. As a result, \$1,524,914 in TEF monies were distributed to eligible schools in 2009 according to a formula developed and monitored by the COTE Institutional Review Sub-committee on which only elected members not representing seminaries sit. In 2009, more than 1,709 of PC(USA) congregations and

middle governing bodies contributed, and \$1,501,230 will be sent to support our schools in 2010. While the real number of contributing churches declined, we celebrate that 103 churches have given consecutively for all twenty-one years. Also, in 2009 we had eighty-nine newly contributing churches. The TEF helps underwrite quality theological education at our seminaries to provide for the leadership of the wider church.

A Seminary Support Network includes more than 130 enthusiastic volunteers and representatives from presbyteries and synods who advocate on behalf of the seminaries with passion for the message: “Seminaries and Churches Together—For Generations to Come.” Participation at annual network training conferences continues to grow. Fifteen network synod level representatives continue to work on a contract basis to make possible improved regional coordination for the Seminary Support Network. Pastors, clerks of sessions, presbytery resource centers, and designated contact persons in PC(USA) congregations received interpretive materials about our seminaries and requests for support of the Theological Education Fund. Some of the new resources include an e-newsletter focusing on sharing stories about the mission and impact our seminaries are engaging to transform lives, and a joint viewbook that presents, in one resource, an overview of all our Presbyterian seminaries. In the 2009–2010 academic year, the COTE approved a pilot program to add one student representative from each of the twelve PC(USA)-affiliated seminaries to the Seminary Support Network. We are excited about the energy and future direction of this ministry.

In cooperation with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, active promotion of the Theological Schools Endowment Fund has continued to grow at a modest pace. The Theological Schools Endowment Fund provides opportunity for individuals to contribute monies to benefit our Presbyterian seminaries through gifts and bequests. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation manages this fund.

c. Charter Changes in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions

One of the governance functions assigned to COTE by the Report of the Special Committee on Theological Institutions approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986) is the reporting of charter changes by the individual schools to the General Assembly. Four seminaries reported changes in their charter or other constitutional documents since the 218th General Assembly (2008). [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

(1) *Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary*

“Article II

“The corporation is a non-profit corporation, no part of the income of which is distributable to its members, directors, or officers. In the event of the dissolution of the corporation, its assets shall be distributed to the succeeding corporation ~~or to the Synod of the Sun~~ of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or ~~their~~ its successor as the Board of Trustees shall then direct.

“Article IV

“The purpose for which the corporation is organized is ~~to serve as an instrument of service in the Kingdom of God, primarily for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);~~ *for the glory of God and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary is a seminary in the Presbyterian-Reformed tradition whose mission is to educate and equip individuals for the purpose of the Seminary shall be the education of qualified persons for the ordained Christian ministry and other forms of Christian service; and leadership; to employ its resources in the service of the church; to promote and engage in critical theological thought and research; and to be a winsome and exemplary community of God’s people.*

“Article V

“The street address of the registered office is 100 East 27th Street, Austin, Texas, 78705, and the name of its registered agent at such address is ~~Herman A. Harren~~ *Kurt A. Gabbard.*

“Article VI

“The Seminary shall be ~~under the direction and control of the Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);~~ *related to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to the Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through a Board of Trustees. The Trustees of the Seminary shall make a report annually to the Synod of the Sun. The Board shall also report annually to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) whose relation to the Seminary is advisory. The relationship of the Board of Trustees to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is advisory, except that the General Assembly shall confirm the election of the President of the Seminary.*

“Article VII

“The corporation has no members. The governing body of the Seminary shall be a Board of Trustees consisting of thirty-three (30) (33) members, all of whom shall be in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), except that the Board may authorize up to three members or who are members of other Christian communities. Membership on the Board of Trustees shall be arranged in classes of ~~ten~~ *eleven* each, serving terms of three years’ duration, one class being elected annually. ~~Eight~~ *All* members of each class shall be elected by the Synod of the Sun; ~~two members of each class shall be elected by the Board of Trustees itself.~~ The current trustees are:

“Article VIII

“Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation may be enacted at any stated meeting of the Board of Trustees by a vote of three-fourths of the members in attendance, provided notice of such proposed amendments be submitted in writing to each trustee at least two weeks prior to such a meeting. Such amendments ~~must be ratified by the Synod of the Sun, and~~ shall become effective when filed with the Secretary of State as provided by law.”

(2) *Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

At the May 2009 meeting of the board of directors, the Nominations Committee made a recommendation to expand the number of directors to thirty-nine. To accomplish this, the constitution was amended and the board approved this recommendation on November 11, 2009.

Other amendments were made to recognize that new permanent committees were established and certain officers were re-titled as vice presidents. Another amendment eliminated the specified academic year as June 1 to May 31. This does not change the academic year; it simply allows the seminary to adopt a different year in the future, should it desire to do so, without having to amend the constitution to do so. All of these amendments were approved by the board on November 11, 2009.

The above changes had a corresponding effect on the bylaws so they were amended in line with above and approved by the board on November 11, 2009.

(3) *Princeton Theological Seminary*

“There shall be a Board of Trustees (“Board”) *ordinarily* consisting of between ~~twenty five (25) and thirty five (35)~~ *thirty (30) and forty (40)* persons, with the actual number serving at any particular time to be determined by the Board. *All members of the Board shall be members of Christian churches. Approximately one-half of the trustees shall be ordained ministers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and approximately one-half shall be communicant (lay) members of that a Christian Church. All but a maximum of five (5) of those members shall be members of a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation or ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Normally, any trustees who are ordained ministers and not members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be graduates of the Seminary. If, however, a lay member of the Board should change his or her place of residence, creating in the judgment of the Board an undue hardship for him or her to retain participatory membership in a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Board at its discretion may permit that person to retain membership on the Board, provided he or she shall assume and continue affiliation with a congregation of another reformed denomination in correspondence with the General Assembly of said Church; but not more than two (2) persons shall serve simultaneously under this exception. The officers of the Board shall be a chair, a vice chair, a secretary, and such others as the Board may from time to time determine, each of whom shall be a minister or an elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).* The number, names and addresses of the Trustees constituting the current Board are as set forth on Schedule A, attached hereto.”

(4) *San Francisco Theological Seminary*

Bylaws article IIIc.2: “The Board ~~at its annual meeting~~ shall elect persons to hold the office of trustee for a five year term, or due to a vacancy, for the unexpired portion of the term of a trustee.”

d. *Reports from Individual Institutions*

The Committee on Theological Education brings to the assembly a narrative report from each of the ten seminaries related to the PC(USA), Auburn Theological Seminary, the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation.

(1) *Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary*

In July 2009 Austin Seminary received a \$1.3 million challenge grant from philanthropist Robert T. Priddy to benefit The College of Pastoral Leaders; in response the seminary has received a \$250,000 grant from the James A. “Buddy” Davidson Charitable Foundation. The Reverend Dr. K.C. Ptomey, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville, for twenty-seven years, was installed as the new holder of the Louis H. and Katherine S. Zbinden Chair of Pastoral Ministry and

Leadership. In December, following a two-year review processes, Austin Seminary received re-accreditation from both the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). In the spring of 2010, a feasibility study was undertaken regarding a potential fund-raising campaign for the seminary.

(2) *Columbia Theological Seminary*

Stephen Hayner, professor of evangelism and church growth, became Columbia's ninth president, effective July 1, 2009, and the new environmentally friendly student residence hall opened. Faculty members named to endowed professorships include Rodger Nishioka; Christian education; Anna Carter Florence, preaching; and Pamela Cooper White; pastoral theology, care, and counseling. Joseph L. Roberts Jr., pastor emeritus of Atlanta's historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, was called to head the Wade P. Huie Center for Preaching. For outstanding Christian service in ministry, the alumni/ae association presented awards to Joanna Adams, George Telford, and Brad Smith. Alumna Sara Covin Juengst received the Award for Excellence in Theological Education at the 218th General Assembly (2008). To support the S³ program for pastors, now in its seventh year, Columbia received a \$648,863 Lilly grant.

(3) *University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS)*

The Distance Master of Divinity Program at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary continues to grow. Inaugurated in August 2007, the program currently has students from twenty-six presbyteries and four denominations. The largest cohorts are from Florida, Texas, and Colorado. The five-year degree program allows participants to take the majority of classes via the Internet. Two-thirds of the classes are taught online, while the remaining credits are earned in residency at the Dubuque campus. The curriculum and faculty mirror the residential program of the seminary. The UDTS is the only seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to offer a Master of Divinity Distance Education Program accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

(4) *Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary*

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary is grateful to have begun its 157th academic year welcoming the largest incoming class, in our first-degree programs, in nearly a decade. The seminary attributes this significant breakthrough in enrollment to our growing scholarship program, our new vocational identity brand (The Power of Welcome), and generative programs such as the new Black Church Studies Program. Following an extensive self-study period of nearly two years, the seminary was reaffirmed for accreditation, without notation, for a period of ten years by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS), which noted "distinctive strengths" following their site visit. During the remainder of the academic year, the seminary will recognize the numerous contributions of President Dean K. Thompson, who will retire from the presidency in August 2010. During his six-year tenure, Thompson's leadership has resulted in significant growth at Louisville Seminary, including the calling of five new faculty, the development of a more diverse faculty and administration, new scholarships, and the development of 60 percent of the board of trustees. At the same time, he has navigated Louisville Seminary through several painful decisions that resulted from the national economic downturn, while preserving the seminary's core mission of teaching and learning.

(5) *McCormick Theological Seminary*

McCormick responded to the nationwide recession by reaffirming its commitment to providing affordable theological education that is Reformed, ecumenical, urban, and cross-cultural. Innovations in its curriculum include new masters degrees in Urban Ministry and Discipleship Development as well as the Certificate in Executive Leadership. The Lilly-funded Common Ground Project builds on the AADVENT Project by providing resources to Asian American, Latino/a, and African American faith communities. Key additions to the seminary's leadership include the election of Dr. Luis Rivera as dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs, the first Latino/a dean of a PC(USA) seminary. Dr. David Esterline was appointed director of the Institute for Cross-Cultural Theological Education, which ensures cross-cultural skills in all McCormick graduates. Dr. Frank Yamada joined the faculty as associate professor of Hebrew Bible and director of the Center for Asian American Ministry, while Dr. Jeff Japinga was named associate dean for the Doctor of Ministry Program.

(6) *Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary has welcomed two new faculty members. Edwin Chr. van Driel is assistant professor of theology and Audrey Thompson is assistant professor of homiletics. Through the seminary's World Mission Initiative Program, cross-cultural experiences are a significant part of the seminary experience for 75 percent of our M.Div. students. The Summer Youth Institute continues to challenge high school youth to explore theology and consider ministry as a vocation. A total of 392 youth have participated in the program, with approximately 20 percent matriculating to seminary following college graduation. This summer, improvements to the front of the campus will provide accessibility and a welcoming appearance for the community and will be a first step in carrying out a campus master plan.

(7) *Princeton Theological Seminary*

In 2008, Princeton Seminary initiated a new Master of Divinity curriculum that reconceives the original Princeton formula of “piety and learning” as “formational scholarship.” New courses ground theological learning not only in the texts of faith, but in the contexts of faith, contexts that are changing rapidly in the American church and the world. A reduction in required credit hours from ninety to seventy-eight allows for more in-depth study, for the awareness that theological education and spiritual formation are inextricably linked, and for short terms in January and May taught by outstanding practitioners in the church and Princeton faculty, including courses in places like Taize, France, Palestine, and India.

(8) *San Francisco Theological Seminary*

The 2008–09 year was pivotal for SFTS that included unprecedented challenges. The seminary’s board of trustees, created a Resource Allocation Task Force to study the economics of SFTS, which were not in equilibrium. By this, the seminary owned the fact that its annual sources of income were not meeting its annual sources of expenses. The seminary retained outside consultants to help it navigate this process of internal assessment. The study was well under way when the stock market crashed in November 2008. Between November 2008 and February 2009 the seminary’s endowment declined in value from \$60 million to \$40 million. This setback came on top of the financial struggles the seminary was already facing. Now, with less income from its endowment, the seminary was facing annual deficits of \$2 million. The board of trustees recommended a two-year budget decrease of \$1.5 million. It further authorized the business office to study the outcome of selling off campus student and faculty housing and building replacement housing on the seminary’s core campus.

(9) *Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary*

On August 15, 2009, Dr. Mark Lomax concluded his two-year tenure as interim dean of the seminary. Shortly thereafter, the Reverend Paul T. Roberts began his ministry in that position. Rev. Roberts also serves as pastor of Atlanta’s Church of the Master Presbyterian Church. The Reverend Dr. Robert M. Burkins, pastor of Elmwood United Presbyterian Church of East Orange, New Jersey, currently serves as the chair of the board of trustees. The seminary’s 2010 Founders Day was observed in conjunction with the annual alumni conference on March 2–4, 2010.

(10) *Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education (Union Presbyterian Seminary)*

At its May 2009 meeting, the Board of Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education voted to change its name to Union Presbyterian Seminary. The change, accompanied by a new logo, will officially take effect on July 1, 2010. Union Presbyterian has also adopted a new five-year strategic plan (2009–2014). The strategic plan calls for a new curriculum that will offer a program of theological education for the twenty-first century. The work of a Faculty Curriculum Task Force is well underway. Curricular focus has already begun; the seminary has committed its resources to the M.Div., M.A.C.E., dual M.Div/M.A.C.E., Th.M., and Ph.D. degrees. With exciting new programmatic ventures envisioned and a vibrant new capital campaign projected, Union Presbyterian Seminary eagerly anticipates engaging the future God has in store for us.

(11) *Auburn Theological Seminary*

The years 2008–2010 has been a time of great progress for Auburn Theological Seminary. In the past two years the Center for Church Life has worked with more than 200 clergy and lay leaders across sixteen denominations, furthering its mission to help church leaders deepen their understanding of their faith and equipping them to assume more active roles in public life. Our Center for the Study of Theological Education developed a series of resources for financial planning including the DVD, *Are You Mortgaging Your Ministry?*, for seminarians and the published research report, *Great Expectations*, which informs fundraising in theological schools. Our *Face to Face* program now brings seventy Christian, Jewish, and Muslim students across the world together to model peacemaking strategies. In 2009, Auburn celebrated the exemplary ministry of exiting President Barbara Wheeler as she turns to directing Auburn’s Center for the Study of Theological Education full-time and offered a warm welcome to our new leader, President the Reverend Dr. Katharine Henderson.

The Reverend Dr. Katharine Rhodes Henderson is the president of Auburn Theological Seminary, an institution founded in 1818 with a history of commitment to progressive social causes from abolition of slavery to women’s rights. Author of *God’s Troublemakers: How Women of Faith Are Changing the World* (Continuum, 2006), Henderson is an international leader in theological education. She has pioneered programs for excellence in religious leadership of all faiths and progressive moral leadership in the public square.

(12) *Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico*

Since the 218th General Assembly (2008), the seminary was engaged in completing the self-study to present to our two accrediting bodies; the Association of Theological Schools and the Middle States Association. In addition, we completed the

state's license renewal process with the Puerto Rico Council of Higher Education. In 2009 the seminary was successfully reaccredited and licensed for another ten-year period. In the process, the seminary was commended for its faithful use of resources to accomplish its educational mission and for assessing the ways in which this mission is accomplished on behalf of the church and society at large. In 2009 the seminary launched a long-range plan to organize events for the next ten years to promote its vision and celebrate its mission towards its centenary commemoration in 2019.

(13) Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation

The Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation is the successor organization to the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, which closed in 1943. While we have no degree programs, the Foundation provides numerous educational events and scholarship opportunities for Presbyterian seminarians, clergy, commissioned lay pastors, and church leaders. Our scholarships, for example, are offered on a competitive basis to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) inquirers and candidates who are attending any of our ten denominational seminaries. We are continuing to provide high-quality conferences in several states that focus on critical issues for those who lead our churches and other institutional ministries. In addition, we are partnering with the University of Nebraska-Omaha to offer a noncredit distance education course in church administration to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) clergy and commissioned lay pastors in our thirteen-state region.

In 2009, the Foundation contributed significant funds to leadership development programs to benefit the broader church. We donated \$133,000 to the support of a variety of lifelong learning programs for the servants of the church. We also provided \$86,000 for grants and scholarships to seminarians. Starting in 2009, we eliminated our grant repayment program and turned all of our seminary student support into scholarships. We are maintaining that policy in 2010 and increasing our funding to lifelong learning programs.

The Foundation has an actively managed endowment and a committed board of directors. Through their efforts and the generous support of congregations and individual gifts, we hope to fulfill our mission, which is, "to seek, develop, and support excellence in Christian Leadership through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)."

Item 18-01

[The assembly disapproved Item 18-01. See pp. 54, 55.]

On Directing the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Extend Benefits to Same-gender Spouses and Domestic Partners—From the Presbytery of Boston.

The Presbytery of Boston respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to issue the following directive to the Board of Pensions and its directors:

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) directs the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to modify its policies regarding coverage of dependents to ensure that applications for enrollment will be accepted and honored for same-gender spouses and domestic partners of church personnel who are or will be covered by its Benefits Plan and programs. Upon application by a member, the Board of Pensions shall enroll as a dependent a same-gender spouse, a partner joined in civil union, or a domestic partner—and their dependent children—depending upon the state law governing the status of the couple's relationship, and adopting policies and definitions that do not penalize couples according to their state of residence.

Rationale

The 218th General Assembly (2008) voted overwhelmingly (516 to 151) to take the following action:

1. Renew and strengthen the long-standing Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) commitment to equal protection under the law for lesbian and gay persons and the 216th General Assembly (2004)'s affirmation of the right of same-gender persons to civil union and, thereby, to all the benefits, privileges, and responsibilities of civil union.

a. Recognize that married couples enjoy more than 1,000 protections, benefits, and responsibilities that are denied to committed couples in same-gender partnerships and their children.

b. Recognize that equality under the law does not discriminate against some committed couples but sees that same-gender partners also have access to all protections, benefits, and responsibilities of civil union.

c. Request the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Council, and other representatives of the PC(USA) to urge state legislatures and the federal government to apply the principle of equal protection to same-gender couples and their children.¹

In the same vote they determined to “[s]upport congregations, sessions, and ministers of Word and Sacrament who are seeking to extend pastoral care as well as outreach and evangelism to same-gender couples and their nontraditional families who are more and more our neighbors on our streets and our fellow members in our pews...”—and our workers in the church office, we might add (*Minutes*, 2008, p. 259). The benefits and privileges referred to surely must include medical insurance, retirement benefits, and the like.

However, the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) extends benefits only to spouse and dependent children while adopting a narrow interpretation of this coverage of spouses of church personnel (clergy as well as lay personnel):

“Based on current law and Church policy, the Board would not accept an application to enroll a legally married same sex spouse. The Benefits Plan is governed by Pennsylvania law which does not recognize as valid a marriage other than one between a man and a woman. The Board of Pensions, as a corporation related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), also strives to administer the Benefits Plan to comport with the normative values of the church, insofar as legally possible. Pennsylvania's definition of marriage is consistent with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).²

Since 1977, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor denominations have called for protection against social and economic discrimination based upon a person's sexual orientation.

It is hypocritical for the church to exempt ourselves from the principles of equal protection that we are urging government agencies and businesses to adopt; Jesus Christ exhorted his disciples with the metaphor of the speck and the log (Mt. 7:3–5). Many government agencies and private corporations already extend benefits to domestic partners of their employees. The church cannot be less generous than these secular entities and claim to practice what we preach. Members of the Benefits Plan and programs, whether ministers of Word and Sacrament or lay employees, are entitled to equal pay for equal work, including coverage for their dependents.

Because state laws vary widely for same-gender couples, and equity demands that persons not be discriminated against by the PC(USA) based on where they live, one legal definition of an eligible partner will not be sufficient; the intent of this action is to provide coverage for long-term, committed, same-gender couples (and their children) who have availed themselves of the form of recognition of their relationship available to them in their state.

Common documentation requirements allow for an employee to claim eligibility by providing one or more of the following:

- Partnership affidavit (as defined by the Board of Pensions)
- Municipal domestic partnership registration
- State domestic partnership registration
- State civil union license
- State marriage license
- Marriage license issued in other countries

The Board of Pensions, in its feasibility study submitted to the 217th General Assembly (2006) (Section f, Conclusion), indicated that it is feasible to implement this directive with a slight increase in the dues of approximately 1 percent of effective salary, and estimated that it would take about eighteen months to implement (Section g, Implementation Plan).³

Endnotes

1. *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 258, Item 04-13.
2. Statement provided by Board of Pensions representative.
3. *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 86, Board of Pensions Final Response to 2004 Referral: Item 14-15. Commissioners' Resolution. Benefits Feasibility Study, (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 25, 1013).

Concurrence to Item 18-01 from the Presbytery of New Brunswick.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 18-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 18-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 18-01 be approved.

Rationale

In numerous statements over the last two decades, the church has stated its support for civil and legal rights for homosexual persons that are equal to those of heterosexual persons. The 208th General Assembly (1996) urged the Stated Clerk to consider filing friend-of-the-court briefs and supporting legislation that would give civil rights to same-sex partners (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p.122). Moreover, in its policy on families and the church's support for families of many forms, *Transforming Families*, the church stated, "... Despite lack of agreement among Presbyterians regarding same-sex families, children of such couples need the same advocacy, protection, and respect that we encourage for all children" (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p.776). For the church to deny equal benefits to the domestic partners of employees and to their children is clearly inconsistent with church policy.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 18-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 18-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

In order for our church to maintain its integrity, we must do ourselves what we long have encouraged others to do. We cannot continue to deny coverage under the guise that it follows state law in Pennsylvania where our offices are located. This overture speaks for justice, and we must support it and extend benefits to all committed partners and dependent children.

Our Stated Clerk, the Reverend Gradye Parsons, laid out a concise and coherent reasoning for celebrating President Obama's hospital visitation directive for same-gender partners in his statement posted 20 April 2010. His words are apt for considering the need for same-gender benefits as well:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long supported equal access to civil rights for all our sisters and brothers. Indeed, in 1978, the Presbyterian General Assembly wrote "there is no legal, social, or moral justification for denying homosexual persons access to the basic requirements of human social existence." We are all children of God with inherent rights and human dignity.

Presbyterian General Assemblies have urged the passage of laws to prohibit discrimination based on the sexual orientation of a person in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations. Most recently, the 218th General Assembly (2008) 'renewed and strengthened the long-standing Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) commitment to equal protection under the law for lesbian and gay persons ... and their children.'¹

This overture calls for equal provision and protection under the law for lesbian and gay children of God. Since the PC(USA) is committed to this already, it seems approving this overture is the only option.

Endnote

1. Statement from Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, 10 April 2010: <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2010/10340.htm>

BOARD OF PENSIONS COMMENT ON 18-01

Comment on Item 18-01—from the Board of Pensions.

Item 18-01 from the Presbytery of Boston would direct the Board of Pensions (the Board) to extend benefits to the same-gender partners of members of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the Plan) and dependent children of those partners. This overture is similar in intent to Item 18-06 from the Presbytery of New Castle. The Board's comments to the two overtures are also quite similar, differing only in the sections that address the specific language of the overture.

Overview

Introduction

The Board does not take a position on the policy issue of whether to extend benefits to same-gender partners or not, but will follow the normative values of the church in so far as legally possible. The Board believes that these matters must be decided by the church through action of the General Assembly.

With that in mind, the Board seeks to achieve four ends with this comment:

1. to explain the structure of the Benefits Plan, introducing commissioners to its several components,
2. to suggest edits for clarification in the recommendation's language,
3. to make clear to the General Assembly how the Board would interpret the recommendation, implement the changes, and administer the benefits, should the assembly approve the overture, and
4. to inform the General Assembly of the total cost of implementing the overture (an increase of up to 1 percent of Benefits Plan dues) and request approval in advance from the General Assembly for the Board to adopt a 0.4 percent increase in pension dues. (General Assembly approval is not required for the additional dues increases, 0.5 percent in medical dues and 0.1 percent in death and disability dues, that may be required to cover the cost of the additional benefits.)

Benefits Plan Background

The Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was established to provide retirement, disability, death, medical, and optional benefits to members of the Benefits Plan, their eligible dependents, and beneficiaries. The section numbers below refer to sections of the [Benefits Plan](#) itself.

The Medical Plan provides healthcare coverage to the member, his or her spouse, and eligible children (Sec. 13.2). For traditional coverage, the church employer pays 19.5 percent of the employee's effective salary for the coverage. Effective salary includes cash compensation, any housing allowance, and certain fringe benefits. The dues are the same regardless of whether the coverage is for a single person or a family.

The Pension Plan provides:

- a monthly retirement benefit for the member for the duration of his or her life, and
- a survivor's pension benefit to the member's eligible survivors (paid to the eligible survivors surviving in the first of the following classes: an eligible surviving spouse; unmarried dependent children under age of twenty-one; dependent parents; unmarried dependent siblings). To be an eligible spouse, the marriage must have taken place before the member's receipt of his or her first retirement income payment or at least one year prior to the member's death.

The Pension Plan does not offer a single life annuity benefit option and there is no reduction in the retirement income benefits of the member to provide the normal survivor's pension benefit (50 percent of the annual pension credits accrued) to the member's eligible survivors. If there is no eligible survivor, no survivor's pension benefit is paid (Sec. 9.1–9.2).

The church employer pays 11 percent of an employee's effective salary for Pension benefits.

The Death and Disability Plan provides:

- Salary Continuation benefits payable to the member's designated beneficiary(ies). If no designation is on file, it is paid to the eligible survivors (by class: surviving spouse of marriage of at least one year in duration; unmarried dependent children under age of twenty-one or totally disabled dependent children; children regardless of age). In default thereof, the benefits are paid to the estate (Sec. 10.1).

- Lump Sum Death Benefit paid to the member's survivors (in the same classes described for the survivor's pension in 9.2). If a member dies without an eligible survivor, a Lump Sum Death Benefit in an amount equal to 100 percent of the lesser of the member's Death Benefit Basis or \$90,000 shall be paid to the member's estate.

- Children's Education Benefit payable to each of the member's children who are under the age of twenty-five. This benefit is \$9,000 a year for each of the first four years of study beyond high school during which such child is in full-time attendance at an accredited school, college, university, or other institution of higher learning. The maximum aggregate benefit for any one child is \$36,000.

The church employer pays 1 percent of an employee's effective salary for Death and Disability benefits.

If the overture is approved, eligible same-gender partners and their children would be eligible to receive the survivor benefits described above.

Suggested Edits for Clarification

a. The Board recommends changing the word "*directs*" in the first sentence of Item 18-01 to "*urge*", and the word "*shall*" in the second sentence to "*is urged to*". The General Assembly, by creating an independent, incorporated Board of Pensions to be responsible for benefits, vested in that board the responsibility for decisions on matters under its jurisdiction. It would serve neither the Board nor the church to have decisions of the incorporated Board of Pensions subject to appeal to the unincorporated, ecclesiastical General Assembly. The General Assembly has control of the Board by virtue of the requirements that it elects each director of the Board and confirms the election of a new president of the Board.

Should the General Assembly approve language urging the extension of benefits as described in the overture, the Board will implement the changes necessary to offer benefits under the Plan, effective January 1, 2012.

b. The Board recommends that the phrase "*same-gender*" be inserted prior to each occurrence of the words and phrases "*spouse*", "*partner joined in civil union*", and "*domestic partner*". The terms "*spouse*", "*civil union*", and "*domestic partner*" have varying definitions in different states, some states include domestic partners of the opposite sex. In its consultation with the presbyteries proposing and concurring with the overture, it became clear that the intent of the presbyteries was to secure coverage for same-gender couples. The insertion of these words is intended to clarify that benefits are to be extended to same-gender couples, and not to unmarried opposite-gender couples. Benefits are already available to opposite-gender couples through marriage.

c. The Board recommends that the phrase which begins "*depending upon the state law governing...*" be struck and replaced with the following: "*basing their coverage at a minimum on their having fulfilled the requirements of the laws of the state in which they reside to obtain the status of a same-gender couple, and on the Board of Pensions having adopted policies and definitions that recognize the state law differences in the treatment of same-gender couples.*" This replacement would clarify that all couples enrolling for benefits must seek the maximum civil endorsement of their relationship legally permissible in their state and city of residence. Those couples who live in states where same-gender marriage is legal must be married to be eligible for benefits, those in states where civil unions are legal must have a civil union to be eligible for benefits, etc. Couples must get as close to marriage as is permitted in their situation.

The church has spoken out for civil rights including benefits for "committed couples" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 259), but not for couples who have failed to demonstrate a public and lasting commitment to each other. This provision would seek to ensure that a lasting commitment has been made.

Please see the end of this comment for a version of the recommendation that addresses each of these concerns.

Interpretation, Implementation, and Administration

Interpretation:

The Board, in a feasibility study on same-gender domestic partner benefits that was reported to the 217th General Assembly (2006), has defined several terms. Absent contradictory direction from the General Assembly, the Board will define terms as follows:

a. Domestic partners: "... two individuals, over the age of eighteen and not related by blood in any way that would prevent [either of them from] being married to each other if they were of the opposite sex, who are of the same sex, not mar-

ried or part of another domestic partnership, and have agreed to live in a long-term committed relationship with each other” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 87).

b. Long-term Committed Relationship: one in which “... the couple has made an express commitment to each other that is equivalent to the promises made by a couple in a civil marriage ceremony, if such ceremony were permitted by law for a same-sex couple. Such a commitment is demonstrated if the couple is cohabitating (unless employment or a medical reason necessitates a separate living arrangement); has agreed to accept financial responsibility for each other’s living expenses; and is [presenting themselves] to the public as having made such a commitment. In jurisdictions where a civil union, domestic partner registry, or other form of official declaration is available for same-sex couples, the couple has fulfilled the requirements of the Law to obtain such official status” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 87).

The question of whether to enroll same-gender partners of ministers of Word and Sacrament, elders, and deacons in the Plan must be addressed by the General Assembly. The Board also notes that the *Book of Order* at G-6.0106(b) declares that “[t]hose who are called to office in the church [including elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament,] are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness.” With this constitutional mandate in mind, and absent contradictory direction from the General Assembly, the Board would exclude all ministers of the Word and Sacrament from eligibility to enroll a same-gender spouse or same-gender domestic partner.

Implementation:

In its feasibility study, the Board noted that, as this change would necessitate significant revisions to the Board’s administrative processes, computer database structures, and many communication instruments including publications and websites, the timeline for implementation is eighteen months from the date of General Assembly approval. Additionally, the Board will implement a new benefits administration system during 2011. Making these changes effective January 1, 2012, would alleviate the significant costs that would be required to implement these benefits in both the legacy system and the new system.

Should the General Assembly approve language urging the extension of benefits as described in the overture, the Board will implement the changes necessary to offer benefits under the Plan, effective January 1, 2012.

Administration:

Prior to enrollment, the Board will require verification of the relationship, either through a copy of a civil government document or an affidavit. In jurisdictions where civil marriage, civil union, domestic partner registry, or other form of official declaration is available for same-gender couples, this documentation would be required to enroll a same-gender partner. For those in jurisdictions where such official documentation is not available, the Board will require an affidavit documenting the partnership signed by both parties. Policies will be put in place to ensure that the requirements for enrollment are equivalent for same-gender couples and opposite-gender couples.

As with any enrollment of a dependent, the Board will require the signature of an official at the employing organization.

The Board also notes the following challenge for administrative structures of the church in administering these benefits. The benefits that are provided to the domestic partner are taxable; as these benefits would not flow from a federally-recognized marriage, the imputed value of the medical benefits is taxable to the employee. The taxes payable are federal income, FICA for lay persons and SECA for ministers—by both the employee and the employing organization—and, in some cases, state income taxes. Churches and employing organizations will be required to report the financial value of the benefits coverage on the employee’s W-2 forms. The administrative requirements of tracking and reporting these values would present challenges and increased costs for particular churches and employing organizations across the church.

Costs of Implementing the Recommendation

As noted in the rationale of the overture, the implementation of this recommendation would carry with it an increase in Plan dues for all members of 1 percent. As a portion of this increase would be allocated to the Pension Plan, and General Assembly approval is required in advance of any increase in Pension Plan dues prior to taking effect, the Board recommends that the General Assembly consider the dues increase as part of the recommendation, so as to not divorce the action from its costs. The Board estimates that 0.4 percent of the dues increase would be allocated to the Pension Plan, 0.1 percent to the Death and Disability Plan, and 0.5 percent to the Medical Plan.

Conclusion and Recommended Substitute Language

While reiterating that the Board does not take a position on the policy issue of whether to extend benefits to these same-gender partners or not, the Board does encourage the General Assembly to consider language that is as clear and unambiguous as possible. The language recommended by the Board to capture all of the concerns raised in this comment, and structured to serve as a motion to strike and replace, is:

“That the 219th General Assembly (2010):

“1. Urge the Board of Pensions to adopt amendments to the Benefits Plan to extend eligibility for spousal and dependent benefits under the Plan to same-gender spouses and same-gender domestic partners, and their eligible dependents, of members. Upon application by a member, the Board of Pensions is urged to enroll as a dependent a same-gender spouse, a same-gender partner joined in civil union, or a same-gender domestic partner—and their dependent children—basing their coverage at a minimum on their having fulfilled the requirements of the laws of the state in which they reside to obtain the status of a same-gender couple, and on the Board of Pensions having adopted policies and definitions that recognize the state law differences in the treatment of same-gender couples.

“2. Approve an increase in dues for the Benefits Plan of up to 1 percent, effective January 1, 2012, to be allocated among the plans of the Board of Pensions, including but not limited to the Pension Plan, as the Board, in its sole discretion, deems necessary to fund the cost of the additional benefits. Should the Board not implement these benefits for any reason, approval of the increase in dues is rescinded.”

Item 18-02

[The assembly approved Item 18-02. See pp. 54, 55.]

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) direct the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to

1. continue its churchwide gifts program, as well as utilize the Foundation’s subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., for the benefit of churches, church organizations, and individuals who wish to use the foregoing to make gifts as an expression of Christian faith and stewardship;

2. continue promoting appropriate investment in New Covenant Funds, organized with participation by the Foundation in July 1999, which are managed in a way that is consistent with the social-witness principles of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and

3. explore and initiate ways to enhance its expertise and capacity in support of planned and deferred giving (including wills emphasis) and to explore the services of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., and New Covenant Funds, that will allow these programs and entities to be ever more effective contributors toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission for the Glory of God.

Rationale

Each year, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation trustees ask the General Assembly to endorse the Foundation’s work in support of mission and ministry throughout the church. This unbroken series of affirmations allows the Foundation to confidently pursue its ministry among congregations, presbyteries, synods, related organizations, and individual Presbyterians. General Assembly validation of our vital work on behalf of mission and ministry is essential to our effectiveness throughout the church.

A total of \$72.8 million was made available through the Foundation for mission in 2009. Additionally, as a ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation’s efforts to nurture the accumulated resources of Presbyterians to further the mission of the church, call us to grow the resources that support mission giving for the future. New gifts and accounts amounting to almost \$16.8 million, including \$2.2 million in life income plans, and \$14.6 million in current gifts, were received over the course of the year.

These striking results are a testament to the power of giving witnessed by the Foundation as it lives its goal of bringing people and mission together. Because of the generosity of faithful Presbyterians, over the past five years the Foundation has made available more than \$385.9 million for the work and mission of the church.

Item 18-03

[The assembly approved Item 18-03. See pp. 40, 55.]

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) confirm the election of the Reverend Thomas F. Taylor by the Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation for a four-year term as Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Board of Trustees appointed a presidential search committee chaired by Elinor Hite, former Foundation board chair. The membership of the committee included Timothy Clark, Foundation board chair, and Trustees David Davis, Karen Garrett, Paul Lee, Samuel McNairy, Roscoe Overton, and Barbara Sarjeant, as well as former Foundation Board Chairs Lynwood Battle and Steve Martin.

Following an extensive search, the committee identified and recommended the Reverend Dr. Thomas F. Taylor as a candidate for the position of President and Chief Executive Officer of the Presbyterian Foundation.

On November 9, 2009, the Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Foundation unanimously, and with gratitude to God, called and elected the Reverend Dr. Thomas F. Taylor to a four-year term as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Presbyterian Foundation subject to the confirmation of the General Assembly.

The Reverend Dr. Taylor comes to the Presbyterian Foundation from the General Assembly Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), where he served as deputy executive director for Mission. In that role, Taylor oversaw six ministry areas that administer the mission work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s national offices in more than one hundred countries.

The Reverend Dr. Taylor was ordained to the ministry in 1995 and is a member of the Presbytery of San Gabriel. In his capacity as ordained minister, Taylor last served as senior minister at Glenkirk Presbyterian Church in Southern California. Prior to his twelve-year tenure as a pastor, Taylor practiced as a litigation attorney in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Taylor received his undergraduate degree with honors in history from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he also earned his Juris Doctorate in law. Taylor received his Masters of Divinity from Yale University-Divinity School and his Ph.D. from Fuller Theological Seminary in Intercultural Studies, where he continues to teach social justice as adjunct faculty.

Item 18-04

[The assembly approved item 18-04. See pp. 54, 55.]

The Board of Pensions recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) grant permission to the Board of Pensions to evaluate and determine the future use, including any possible disposition, of the cluster of retirement homes in Los Gatos, California, known as El Sombroso Oaks without further review or approval by the General Assembly.

Rationale

The Board of Pensions believes that taking this action is appropriate and will enable the Board of Pensions to best serve retired ministers who depend on the Assistance Program for their well-being.

The Homes Program of the Board of Pensions is more than one hundred years old. When it began, many ministers lived in manses during their active years of service and faced the challenge of finding affordable housing upon retirement. The program offered retirement housing at a moderate cost to ministers with modest incomes and without housing for their retirement years. At the height of the program, the Board of Pensions owned some 375 houses, apartments, and congregate living units in various locations across the country. While this program provided a needed service to retired ministers though the years, the current circumstances of retired ministers have changed significantly. Ministers' retirement incomes have increased due to improvements in the Pension Plan and more ministers now own homes. In addition, the network of Presbyterian-related retirement communities (the Presbyterian Association of Homes and Services for the Aging), which did not exist when the Board of Pensions' Homes Program began, offers similar or greater services to retired ministers than those available through the Board of Pensions' Homes Program.

In recognition of these circumstances, the Board of Pensions initiated the Housing Supplement Program. This program provides financial assistance to retired ministers who have modest incomes so that their housing costs do not exceed a reasonable percent of their retirement income. In contrast to a program of owning houses or apartments, the Housing Supplement Program provides greater flexibility to retired ministers to live where they wish, in the geographic region of their choosing, and either independently in their own home or in a retirement community.

It has been and continues to be the intention of the Board of Pensions to both anticipate the changing housing needs of retirees and ensure the continued care of the current residents of homes owned by the Board of Pensions.

In recognition of these changing needs, the Board of Pensions requested permission from the 200th General Assembly (1988) to change the Homes Program from one based solely on Board of Pensions-owned homes to one based on housing

assistance supplements. The General Assembly approved the strategic direction of the Homes Program and authorized the sale of properties then owned and received thereafter with the proceeds going to the Housing Supplement Program. The General Assembly withheld the sale of two housing communities operated by the Board of Pensions and instructed it to continue its “ownership and management of the clusters at Morganwood (Swarthmore, Pennsylvania) and El Sombroso Oaks (Los Gatos, California) with no further sale of these clusters without General Assembly approval” (*Minutes*, 1988, Part I, p. 97).

Upon recommendation of the Board of Pensions, the 214th General Assembly (2002) approved the sale of the retirement homes at Morganwood (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 19). The proceeds from that sale went to the Housing Supplement Program, enabling the Board of Pensions to support both the residents at Morganwood and the larger community of retirees. Through the Housing Supplement Program, the Board of Pensions provides subsidies to retirees who were residents of Morganwood at the time of the sale and those residents have expressed satisfaction with the new arrangement.

In addition, upon recommendation of the Board of Pensions, the 215th General Assembly (2003) approved an affiliation agreement between Southern California Presbyterian Homes (SCPH) and Westminster Gardens (*Minutes*, 2003, Part I, p. 49). This agreement, which took effect in May 2004, transferred responsibility for day-to-day operations of Westminster Gardens from the Board of Pensions to SCPH. This transfer permitted the two entities to each serve the residents of Westminster Gardens in the way they are most capable; SCPH as owner and manager of the facility, and the Board of Pensions, through its Housing Supplement Program, as a safety net for retirees with housing needs. As with the Morganwood residents, the Board of Pensions provides transitional subsidies to residents of Westminster Gardens who have need of financial assistance through the Housing Supplement Program. The residents of Westminster Gardens have been pleased with the new arrangement.

El Sombroso Oaks, the cluster of homes in Los Gatos, California, is the last remaining cluster of homes owned and operated by the Board of Pensions. The Board of Pensions continues to care for both the residents and the property. However, consistent with its General Assembly-approved strategic direction, it is important for the Board of Pensions to evaluate the property at El Sombroso Oaks and determine the best future use of the property.

Because of the biennial General Assembly schedule (with a two-year period between meetings), the restrictions placed on the Board of Pensions by the 200th General Assembly (1988) make it difficult for the Board of Pensions to address issues related to El Sombroso Oaks in a timely and efficient manner. The current restriction, which requires General Assembly approval for any sale, could create uncertainty for up to twenty-four months after a potential decision to make a change at El Sombroso Oaks, leaving the Board of Pensions in an uncertain predicament and the residents with unnecessary anxiety as to the effect of a decision on their lives.

The information above, including the Board of Pensions’ intent to seek a release of the General Assembly approval requirement, has been shared with the residents of El Sombroso Oaks. The Board of Pensions will continue to share information with the residents about any changes proposed for El Sombroso Oaks.

Therefore, the Board of Pensions requests that the restriction that “no further sale of these clusters without General Assembly approval” be removed to provide more flexibility to the Board of Pensions in evaluating and making decisions regarding the property at El Sombroso Oaks. As with Morganwood and Westminster Gardens, any decisions made by the Board of Pensions will be made in consultation with the residents and with the assurance that the future care of current residents will be a significant consideration in any decision.

Item 18-05

[The assembly approved Item 18-05. See pp. 54, 55.]

Report of the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee.

The Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (RFRC) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) do the following:

1. That the RFRC be reauthorized by the General Assembly.
2. That the RFRC be composed of seven members appointed by the Moderator of the General Assembly, including two representatives designated by the Foundation Board, two representatives designated by the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), and three members appointed by the Moderator who are not involved in either agency and have an understanding of the applicable principles in both Reformed theology and civil law, and that each member’s term of service be six years.
3. That the committee chair be one of the members appointed by the Moderator who are not involved in either agency and that the committee chair serve at the Moderator’s request.

4. That meetings of the RFRC be held electronically (by teleconference or video-conference) whenever possible.
5. That the RFRC meet every six months, or as meetings are needed. The chair will be responsible for scheduling meetings.
6. That the RFRC present a written report to each General Assembly and that the committee chair or another representative of the RFRC be available to respond to questions or concerns of the assembly.
7. That the RFRC use the following process should an issue between the GAMC and the Foundation not be resolved.

Proposed Procedures for the General Assembly

Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (“RFRC”)

I. The RFRC shall meet upon referral of a dispute concerning the “restricted nature of particular funds or other disputes pertaining to use and expenditures of restricted funds” (alternate resolution to Item 08-21, Recommendation A.1., *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 720–21) that is filed in the Office of the Stated Clerk and presented to the chair of the committee, with copies to the committee members and the non-referring agency, in “good order.” Originals of all documents, briefs, and accompanying exhibits shall be filed in the Office of the Stated Clerk.

a. The meeting schedule shall be set by the committee chair and any business of the committee may be conducted telephonically or by videoconference.

II. A matter referred to the RFRC will be considered to be in good order when referred to the committee chair with a certification signed by the Executive Director of the GAMC or the Foundation President, with a copy provided to the non-referring party for that party’s signature, that the process set forth in Paragraph 39.019 of the 1996 Joint Report to the General Assembly (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 618), as modified by Item 08-21 of the 218th General Assembly (2008), has been followed and that the process has not resulted in resolution of the dispute.

a. The RFRC requires that a joint certification be signed by the Executive Director of the GAMC and the Foundation President that the process set forth in Paragraph 30.019 of the 1996 Joint Report to the General Assembly (as modified by Item 08-21 of the 2008 General Assembly) has been followed and that the process has not resulted in resolution of the dispute. The certification requirement is intended to encourage dialogue prior to referral.

b. Within thirty days of the time of referral, the certifying/moving¹ party will file a brief with exhibits regarding the matter in dispute and its rationale as to how the dispute should be decided (that shall be no longer than thirty pages, 12 point type and double-spaced). The brief shall contain a summary of issues, a statement of relief sought, a statement of facts, and an argument. All relevant source documents should also accompany the filing. If all necessary documentation, including exhibits, cannot be provided under these page restrictions, the party may ask the committee chair for approval to exceed the thirty-page limit with respect to exhibits only.

c. Upon receipt of a brief as described in II.(b), the committee chair will notify the non-certifying/moving agency that it has thirty days from notice to file a brief with exhibits regarding the matter in dispute and its rationale as to how the dispute should be decided (that shall be no longer than thirty pages, 12 point type, and double-spaced). This response shall contain a summary of issues, a statement of relief sought, a statement of facts, and an argument. All relevant source documents should also accompany the filing. If all necessary documentation, including exhibits, cannot be provided under these page restrictions, the party may ask the committee chair for approval to exceed the thirty-page limit with respect to exhibits only.

d. Within fifteen days of receipt of the non-moving party’s response, the moving party shall be entitled to file a reply (that is not more than five pages in length, 12 point type, and double-spaced). If all necessary documentation cannot be provided under these page restrictions, the party may ask the committee chair for approval to exceed the five-page limit.

III. Within fifteen days of receipt of the moving party’s reply or decision not to file a reply, the committee chair, in consultation with the RFRC, will determine whether an oral presentation of the issues would be beneficial to the RFRC and may, at the chair’s discretion, schedule oral presentation (that may be made telephonically or by videoconference) before the RFRC. If additional information is believed by the RFRC to be necessary, the chair will request it in writing to both parties and will specify the time within which it is to be provided. Copies of any correspondence will be provided to the Office of the Stated Clerk.

IV. Either after oral arguments, if requested, or after the presentation of briefing papers and any rebuttal, the committee shall meet to consider the matter referred. The matter will be decided by majority vote of the committee.

a. The agencies will be notified in a timely manner in writing of the decision and will be provided a sufficient explanation of the rationale for the decision by the RFRC at the time of notification so that the parties and the General Assembly can understand the decision as well as the basis of the decision. Dissents from the majority ruling will be permitted, provided the dissenter(s) participated in the deliberations. A copy of the decision will be provided to the Office of the Stated Clerk, recorded in the minutes of the RFRC, and be made public as soon as possible following the end of the meeting.

b. The RFRC, as part of its decision, may require that a cy pres or other equivalent action be filed by one or both of the parties in the appropriate court.

c. Once a decision is rendered, either party may pursue a cy pres or declaratory judgment action in civil court; in other words, where issues remain disputed, either or both parties may file a cy pres or other equivalent action in the appropriate court.

V. Nothing in these rules will prevent the parties from resolving the issue(s) between themselves at any point in the process.

VI. When the confidentiality of the subject matter is impeding the open work of the RFRC, its meetings may be closed. Meetings may be closed only after serious consideration and by a majority vote of all members present. Such closure must be limited in time and scope to matters described in 3(a) of the General Assembly Open Meeting Policy. In closed meetings, only voting members and other persons invited by the RFRC are to be present. The reason(s) for closing must be announced before closure and also must be recorded in the minutes.

VII. The parties can communicate about the issue(s) at any time with their two respective appointed committee members. Ex parte communication with the Moderator's appointees regarding the issue(s) is prohibited; communication with the Moderator's appointees regarding administrative or procedural matters is permitted and should ordinarily be directed to the committee chair.

VIII. The RFRC will respect legal confidentiality restrictions on either party.

IX. All costs of the RFRC shall be equally paid by the parties.

X. The RFRC shall establish a quorum at each meeting and a majority for each vote according to the most recent version of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

XI. The RFRC may, at its discretion, employ outside legal counsel.

Endnote

1. If the certification is filed by one agency head, then clearly that agency is the "certifying/moving party." If the certification is signed by both agency heads, then they shall designate one of the agencies as the moving party for purposes of the referral.

Rationale

This report and its recommendations are in response to the following referrals:

2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 08-21. Recommendation B.4. That the RFRC Shall Create a Process to Be Used Should an Issue Not be Resolved—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 24–25, 720–27).

2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 08-21. Recommendation D. That the General Assembly Council and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, with the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee, Jointly Report Their Progress in the Resolution of Restricted Funds Issues to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 24–25, 720–27).

The purpose of the General Assembly Mission Council (the "GAMC"), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and the Presbyterian Foundation (the "Foundation") is to serve our Lord by strengthening the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The GAMC and the Foundation presented to the 218th General Assembly (2008) their disagreement on issues concerning the appropriate expenditure of restricted funds for the mission of the church. The GAMC and the Foundation went to the General Assembly seeking direction and the hope for reconciliation. As part of its response to that request for direction, the General Assembly established the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (RFRC) to create a process to be used should an issue between the GAMC and the Foundation not be resolved.

The General Assembly directed that, in conducting any review requiring their intervention, the RFRC will be guided by the following principles. Pursuant to the 1986 Deliverances, the missional responsibility and the fiduciary responsibility under civil law rests with the General Assembly. Thus, all the agencies of the General Assembly (GA) are bound to follow the

directives and priorities of the GA. The GA vests the responsibility for implementation of program-related mission with the GAMC, and the Foundation pledges to respect that role. The GA vests the responsibility for fiduciary review in the Foundation, and the GAMC pledges to respect that role. Both the Foundation and the GAMC must comply with applicable laws.

The General Assembly further directed that the RFRC create a process to be used should an issue not be resolved in accordance with the amended 1996 agreement (*1996 Joint Report of the General Assembly Council and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Minutes, 1996, Part I, p. 618*). The RFRC must specifically recognize and address the fiduciary responsibilities by which the Foundation and the GAMC are required to operate under civil law, and where issues remain disputed, the Foundation and the GAMC shall file a cy pres or other equivalent action in the appropriate court.

The RFRC recognizes and celebrates that the substantial majority of funds that the Foundation and the GAMC together disburse to beneficiaries for the mission of the church are handled cooperatively, collegially, efficiently, and without disagreement.

Item 18-06

[In response to Item 18-06, the assembly approved an alternate resolution with comment. See pp. 54, 56.]

On Directing the Board of Pensions to Extend Benefits to Same-Gender Spouses and Domestic Partners—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

[Alternate Resolution:

[That the 219th General Assembly (2010):

[1. Urge the Board of Pensions to adopt amendments to the Benefits Plan to extend eligibility for spousal and dependent benefits under the Plan to Benefits Plan members, their same-gender domestic partners, and the children of their same-gender domestic partners, on the same basis as, and equivalent to, benefits made available to Benefits Plan members, their spouses, and the children of their spouses.

[2. Approve an increase in dues for the Benefits Plan of up to 1 percent, effective January 1, 2012, to be allocated among the plans of the Board of Pensions, including but not limited to the Pension Plan, as the Board, in its sole discretion, deems necessary to fund the cost of the additional benefits. Should the Board not implement these benefits for any reason, approval of the increase in dues is rescinded.

[Comment: That the Board of Pensions be highly urged to provide relief of conscience, to be implemented simultaneously with these actions, for those congregations for whom these actions cause a moral dilemma.]

The Presbytery of New Castle respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to issue the following directive to the Board of Pensions and its directors:

The 219th General Assembly (2010) directs the Board of Pensions to make benefits available to church employees, their domestic partners¹, and the children of their domestic partners on the same basis as, and equivalent to, benefits made available to church employees, their spouses, and the children of their spouses.

Rationale

The 218th General Assembly (2008) voted overwhelmingly (516 to 151) to take the following action:

1. Renew and strengthen the long-standing Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) commitment to equal protection under the law for lesbian and gay persons and the 216th General Assembly (2004)'s affirmation of the right of same-gender persons to civil union and, thereby, to all the benefits, privileges, and responsibilities of civil union.

a. Recognize that married couples enjoy more than 1,000 protections, benefits, and responsibilities that are denied to committed couples in same-gender partnerships and their children.

b. Recognize that equality under the law does not discriminate against some committed couples but sees that same-gender partners also have access to all protections, benefits, and responsibilities of civil union.

c. Request the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Council, and other representatives of the PC(USA) to urge state legislatures and the federal government to apply the principle of equal protection to same-gender couples and their children. (*Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 259*)

In the same vote the commissioners pledged to "... [s]upport congregations, sessions, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are seeking to extend pastoral care as well as outreach and evangelism to same-gender couples and their nontraditional families who are more and more our neighbors on our streets and our fellow members in our pews..." (*Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 259*). And they are our workers in the church office. Health insurance and retirement benefits are fundamental

benefits and privileges offered to married couples in the marketplace and within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Consistency with the foregoing action of the General Assembly requires extension of the benefits, privileges, and responsibilities to all domestic partners and the children of each partner.

Since 1977, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor denominations have called for protection against social and economic discrimination based upon a person's sexual orientation.

It is hypocritical for the church to exempt itself and its adherents from the principles of equal protection that we are urging government agencies and businesses to adopt. Jesus Christ exhorted his disciples with the metaphor of the speck and the log (Mt. 7:3–5). Many government agencies and private corporations already extend benefits to domestic partners of their employees. The church cannot be less generous than these secular entities and claim to "... do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with [our] God" (Mic. 6:8b).

The Board of Pensions, in its feasibility study submitted to the 217th General Assembly (2006) (section f, Conclusion, of the report), indicated that it is feasible to implement this directive with an increase in the dues of approximately 1 percent of effective salary, and estimated that it would take about 18 months to implement (section g, Implementation Plan).²

Endnotes

1. The Board of Pensions, in its feasibility study conducted on this question, defined "domestic partners" as "... two individuals, over the age of eighteen and not related by blood in a way that would prevent being married to each other if they were of the opposite sex, who are of the same sex, not married or part of another domestic partnership, and have agreed to live in a long-term committed relationship with each other." "Long-term Committed Relationship" is further defined as one in which "... the couple has made an express commitment to each other that is equivalent to the promises made by a couple in a civil marriage ceremony if such ceremony were permitted by law for a same-sex couple. Such a commitment is demonstrated if the couple is cohabitating (unless employment or a medical reason necessitates a separate living arrangement); has agreed to accept financial responsibility for each other's living expenses; and is presenting itself out to the public as having made such a commitment. In jurisdictions where a civil union, domestic partner registry, or other form of official declaration is available for same-sex couples, the couple has fulfilled the requirements of the Law to obtain such official status" (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 87).

2. See *Board of Pensions Final Response to Referral: 2004 Referral: Item 14-15. Commissioners' Resolution. Benefits Feasibility Study*. (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 25, 1013). The text of the Feasibility Study may be found in the *Minutes*, 2006, Part 1, pp. 86–88.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 18-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 18-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 18-06 be approved.

Rationale

In numerous statements over the last two decades, the church has stated its support for civil and legal rights for homosexual persons that are equal to those of heterosexual persons. The 208th General Assembly (1996) urged the Stated Clerk to consider filing friend-of-the-court briefs and supporting legislation that would give civil rights to same-sex partners (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p.122). Moreover, in its policy on families and the church's support for families of many forms, *Transforming Families*, the church stated, "... Despite lack of agreement among Presbyterians regarding same-sex families, children of such couples need the same advocacy, protection, and respect that we encourage for all children" (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p.776). For the church to deny equal benefits to the domestic partners of employees and to their children is clearly inconsistent with church policy.

BOARD OF PENSIONS COMMENT ON ITEM 18-06

Comment on 18-06—From the Board of Pensions.

Item 18-06 from the Presbytery of New Castle would direct the Board of Pensions (the Board) to extend benefits to the same-gender partners of members of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the Plan) and dependent children of those partners. This overture is similar in intent to Item 18-01 from the Presbytery of Boston. The Board's comments to the two overtures are also quite similar, differing only in the sections that address the specific language of the overture.

*Overview**Introduction*

The Board does not take a position on the policy issue of whether to extend benefits to these same-gender partners or not, but will follow the normative values of the church in so far as legally possible. The Board believes that these matters must be decided by the church through action of the General Assembly.

With that in mind, the Board seeks to achieve four ends with this comment:

1. to explain the structure of the Benefits Plan, introducing commissioners to its several components,
2. to suggest edits for clarification of the recommendation's language,
3. to make clear to the General Assembly how it would interpret the recommendation, implement the changes, and administer the benefits, should the General Assembly approve the overture, and
4. to inform the General Assembly of the total cost of implementing the overture (an increase of up to 1 percent of Benefits Plan dues) and request approval in advance from the General Assembly for the Board to adopt a 0.4 percent increase in pension dues. (General Assembly approval is not required for the additional dues increases, 0.5 percent in medical dues and 0.1 percent in death and disability dues, which may be required to cover the cost of the additional benefits.)

Benefits Plan Background

The Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been established to provide retirement, disability, death, medical, and optional benefits to members of the Benefits Plan, their eligible dependents, and beneficiaries. The section numbers below refer to sections of the [Benefits Plan](#) itself.

The Medical Plan provides healthcare coverage to the member, his or her spouse, and eligible children (Sec. 13.2). For traditional coverage, the church employer pays 19.5 percent of the employee's effective salary for the coverage. Effective salary includes cash compensation, any housing allowance, and certain fringe benefits. The dues are the same regardless of whether the coverage is for a single person or a family.

The Pension Plan provides:

- a monthly retirement benefit for the member for the duration of his or her life and
- a survivor's pension benefit to the member's eligible survivors (paid to the eligible survivors surviving in the first of the following classes: an eligible surviving spouse; unmarried dependent children under age of twenty-one; dependent parents; unmarried dependent siblings). To be an eligible spouse, the marriage must have taken place before the member's receipt of his or her first retirement income payment or at least one year prior to the member's death.

The Pension Plan does not offer a single life annuity benefit option and there is no reduction in the retirement income benefits of the member to provide the normal survivor's pension benefit (50 percent of the annual pension credits accrued) to the member's eligible survivors. If there is no eligible survivor, no survivor's pension benefit is paid (Sec. 9.1–9.2).

The church employer pays 11 percent of an employee's effective salary for Pension benefits.

The Death and Disability Plan provides:

- Salary Continuation benefits payable to the member's designated beneficiary(ies). If no designation is on file, it is paid to the eligible survivors (by class: surviving spouse of marriage of at least one year in duration; unmarried dependent children under age of twenty-one or totally disabled dependent children; children regardless of age). In default thereof, the benefits are paid to the estate (Sec. 10.1).
- a Lump Sum Death Benefit paid to the member's survivors (in the same classes described for the survivor's pension in 9.2). If a member dies without an eligible survivor, a Lump Sum Death Benefit in an amount equal to 100 percent of the lesser of the member's Death Benefit Basis or \$90,000 shall be paid to the member's estate.
- a Children's Education Benefit payable to each of the member's children who are under the age of twenty-five. This benefit is \$9,000 a year for each of the first four years of study beyond high school during which such child is in full-time attendance at an accredited school, college, university, or other institution of higher learning. The maximum aggregate benefit for any one child is \$36,000.

The church employer pays 1 percent of an employee's effective salary for Death and Disability benefits.

If the overture is approved, eligible same-gender partners and their children would be eligible to receive the survivor benefits described above.

Suggested Edits for Clarification

a. The Board recommends changing the word “*directs*” in the first sentence to “*urge*.” The General Assembly, by creating an independent, incorporated Board of Pensions to be responsible for benefits, vested in that board the responsibility for decisions on matters under its jurisdiction. It would serve neither the Board nor the church to have decisions of the incorporated Board of Pensions subject to appeal to the unincorporated, ecclesiastical General Assembly. The General Assembly has control of the Board by virtue of the requirements that it elects each director of the Board and confirms the election of a new president of the Board.

Should the General Assembly approve language urging the extension of benefits as described in the overture, the Board will implement the changes necessary to offer benefits under the Plan, effective January 1, 2012.

b. The Board recommends that the phrase “*church employees*” be struck both places it occurs and replaced with “*Benefits Plan members*.” The Board covers many church employees under the Plan, but not all of them. There are many employees of particular churches and other employing organizations who are covered by other benefits programs or who are not offered benefits. This change would clarify that this recommendation is intended to apply to those already enrolled, or who become eligible for enrollment, in the Plan.

c. The Board recommends that the phrase “*same-gender*” be inserted prior to each occurrence of the phrase “*domestic partner*.” In its consultation with the presbyteries proposing and concurring with the overture, it became clear that the intent of the presbyteries is to secure coverage for same-gender couples. The insertion of these words is intended to clarify that benefits are to be extended to same-gender couples, and not to unmarried opposite-gender couples. Benefits are already available to opposite-gender couples through marriage.

Please see the end of this comment for a version of the recommendation that addresses each of these concerns.

Interpretation, Implementation, and Administration

Interpretation:

The Board, in a feasibility study on same-gender domestic partner benefits that was reported to the 217th General Assembly (2006), has defined several terms. Absent contradictory direction from the General Assembly, the Board will define terms as follows:

a. Domestic partners: “... two individuals, over the age of eighteen and not related by blood in any way that would prevent [either of them from] being married to each other if they were of the opposite sex, who are of the same sex, not married or part of another domestic partnership, and have agreed to live in a long-term committed relationship with each other” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 87).

b. Long-term Committed Relationship: one in which “... the couple has made an express commitment to each other that is equivalent to the promises made by a couple in a civil marriage ceremony, if such ceremony were permitted by law for a same-sex couple. Such a commitment is demonstrated if the couple is cohabitating (unless employment or a medical reason necessitates a separate living arrangement); has agreed to accept financial responsibility for each other’s living expenses; and is [presenting themselves] to the public as having made such a commitment. In jurisdictions where a civil union, domestic partner registry, or other form of official declaration is available for same-sex couples, the couple has fulfilled the requirements of the Law to obtain such official status” (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 87).

The question of whether to enroll same-gender partners of ministers of Word and Sacrament, elders, and deacons must be addressed by the General Assembly. The Board also notes that the *Book of Order* at G-6.0106(b) declares that “[t]hose who are called to office in the church [including elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament,] are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness.” With this constitutional mandate in mind, and absent contradictory direction from the General Assembly, the Board would exclude all ministers of the Word and Sacrament from eligibility to enroll a same-gender spouse or same-gender domestic partner.

Implementation:

In its feasibility study, the Board noted that, as this change would necessitate significant revisions to the Board’s administrative processes, computer database structures, and many communication instruments including publications and websites, the timeline for implementation is eighteen months from the date of General Assembly approval. Additionally, the Board will

implement a new benefits administration system during 2011. Making these changes effective January 1, 2012, would alleviate the significant costs that would be required to implement these benefits in both the legacy system and the new system.

Should the General Assembly approve language urging the extension of benefits as described in the overture, the Board will implement the changes necessary to offer benefits under the Plan, effective January 1, 2012.

Administration:

Prior to enrollment, the Board will require verification of the relationship, either through a copy of a civil government document or an affidavit. In jurisdictions where civil marriage, civil union, domestic partner registry, or other form of official declaration is available for same-gender couples, this documentation would be required to enroll a same-gender partner. For those in jurisdictions where such official documentation is not available, the Board will require an affidavit documenting the partnership signed by both parties. Policies will be put in place to ensure that the requirements for enrollment are equivalent for same-gender couples and opposite-gender couples.

As with any enrollment of a dependent, the Board will require the signature of an official at the employing organization.

The Board also notes the following challenge for administrative structures of the church in administering these benefits. The benefits that are provided to the domestic partner are taxable; as these benefits would not flow from a federally-recognized marriage, the imputed value of the medical benefits is taxable to the employee. The taxes payable are federal income, FICA for lay persons and SECA for ministers—by both the employee and the employing organization—and, in some cases, state income taxes. Churches and employing organizations will be required to report the financial value of the benefits coverage on the employee's W-2 forms. The administrative requirements of tracking and reporting these values would present challenges and increase costs for particular churches and employing organizations across the church.

Costs of Implementing the Recommendation

As noted in the rationale of the overture, the implementation of this recommendation would carry with it an increase in Plan dues for all members of 1 percent. As a portion of this increase would be allocated to the Pension Plan, and General Assembly approval is required in advance of any Pension Plan dues prior to the increase taking effect, the Board recommends that the General Assembly consider the dues increase as part of the recommendation, so as to not divorce the action from its costs. The Board estimates that 0.4 percent of the dues increase would be allocated to the Pension Plan, 0.1 percent to the Death and Disability Plan, and 0.5 percent to the Medical Plan.

Conclusion and Recommended Substitute Language

While reiterating that the Board does not take a position on the policy issue of whether to extend benefits to these same-gender partners or not, the Board does encourage the General Assembly to consider language that is as clear and unambiguous as possible. The language recommended by the Board to capture all of the concerns raised in this comment, and structured to serve as a motion to strike and replace, is:

“That the 219th General Assembly (2010):

“1. Urge the Board of Pensions to adopt amendments to the Benefits Plan to extend eligibility for spousal and dependent benefits under the Plan to Benefits Plan members, their same-gender domestic partners, and the children of their same-gender domestic partners, on the same basis as, and equivalent to, benefits made available to Benefits Plan members, their spouses, and the children of their spouses.

“2. Approve an increase in dues for the Benefits Plan of up to 1 percent, effective January 1, 2012, to be allocated among the plans of the Board of Pensions, including but not limited to the Pension Plan, as the Board, in its sole discretion, deems necessary to fund the cost of the additional benefits. Should the Board not implement these benefits for any reason, approval of the increase in dues is rescinded.”

Item 18-07

[The assembly disapproved Item 18-07. See pp. 54, 56.]

On the Medical Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Medications Requiring Pre-Authorization—From the Presbytery of Sierra Blanca.

The Presbytery of Sierra Blanca overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to require the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Post in a prominent place on the Board of Pensions Web site a complete list of medications requiring pre-authorization under the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in order to facilitate the ability of members to obtain medicines prescribed by their physician.
2. Affirm in a public manner that the requirement of pre-authorization of certain medicines is not an attempt on the part of the Board of Pensions or its agents to deny appropriate medical care or to ration medical care to the members of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
3. Adjust the terms of the Benefits Plan so that in the event a member's physician is unable to come to agreement with the Board of Pension's agents concerning a medication requiring pre-authorization, that the member be allowed to purchase the medication prescribed by his or her physician at the non-formulary rate.

Rationale

With the growing shortage of physicians and the increasing demand for medical care, many physicians are unable to respond quickly to prescription issues that arise when pre-authorization is required. Posting a list of medicines requiring pre-authorization will better enable patients to obtain, in a timely manner, appropriate medical care. The increasing demands upon physicians and the rigidity of the current pre-authorization system often result in a *de facto* denial of medical care to patients who have been prescribed medicines requiring such pre-authorization. In some instances the delay caused by the requirements of pre-authorization can become life threatening. A mechanism needs to be in place to allow for exceptions to be made to the policy in a timely manner.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 18-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 18-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 18-07 be approved with the following changes: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“1. Post in a prominent place on the Board of Pensions Web site a complete list of [formulary] medications requiring pre-authorization under the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in order to facilitate the ability of members to obtain medicines prescribed by their physician.

“2. [~~Affirm in a public manner that the requirement of pre authorization of certain medicines is not an attempt on the part of the Board of Pensions or its agents to deny appropriate medical care or to ration medical care to the members of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)~~] [Add to the Benefits/Prescription drugs Web page an expanded explanation of the program and its formulary; and the short-term, specialty, step-therapy, and pre-authorization medication programs].

“3. Adjust the terms of the Benefits Plan so that in the event [a decision on a medication requiring preauthorization has been submitted but remains in process, that the member be allowed to purchase one prescription of up to fifteen days of medication at the non-formulary rate] [~~a member's physician is unable to come to agreement with the Board of Pensions' agents concerning a medication requiring pre authorization, that the member be allowed to purchase the medication prescribed by his or her physician at the non-formulary rate~~].

Rationale

The Board of Pensions prescription drug Web pages currently post an abbreviated formulary listing the most commonly prescribed medications. Consistent with current practice, a formulary identifies covered medications and thus by their exclusion also identifies all non-covered medications, that is, medications that would require pre-authorization. Medications are subsequently added to the formulary as they are developed and prove efficacious. As new drugs are developed and approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on a daily basis, it is not feasible or possible to attempt to maintain a negative list of medications, that is, a list of medications excluded from the formulary.

While the current Web page description of the drug program is adequate, it is spare and may not address general informational questions Benefits Plan members may have regarding categories of covered drugs. Members are provided a telephone number to inquire about drug plan coverage and specifics relative to their own individual coverage. An expanded explanation of the drug plan and its facets would benefit the Plan members.

It is compassionate and reasonable to allow a single, one-time only, medication purchase of a fifteen day supply of prescribed medication at the non-formulary rate for cases of an as-yet unresolved pre-authorization that have been instituted in a timely manner.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 18-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 18-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Item 18-07 overtures that the 219th General Assembly (2010) require the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to list on its website a complete list of medications requiring preauthorization, affirm publically that pre-authorization of medications is not intended to deny or ration medical care to members of the Benefits Plan, allow members to purchase prescribed medications at the non-formulary rate should the physician be unable to come to an agreement with the Board of Pensions agents concerning a medication requiring pre-authorization.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture with the following revisions: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Sierra Blanca overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to require the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

“1. Post in a prominent place on the Board of Pensions Web site a complete list of [formulary] medications [~~requiring pre-authorization under the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in order to facilitate the ability of members to obtain medicines prescribed by their physician~~] [to replace the current abbreviated list].

“2. [Affirm in a public manner that the requirement of pre-authorization of certain medicines is not an attempt on the part of the Board of Pensions or its agents to deny appropriate medical care or to ration medical care to the members of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)] [Add to the Benefits/Prescription drugs webpage an expanded explanation of the program and its formulary; and the short-term, specialty, step-therapy, and pre-authorization medication programs.].

“3. Adjust the terms of the Benefits Plan so that in the event a [~~member’s physician is unable to come to agreement with the Board of Pension’s agents concerning~~] [decision on] a medication requiring pre-authorization [has been submitted but remains in process], that the member be allowed to purchase [~~the medication prescribed by his or her physician~~] [one prescription of up to 15 days of medication] at the non-formulary rate.”

Rationale

The Board of Pensions prescription drug web pages currently post an abbreviated formulary listing the most commonly prescribed medications. Consistent with current practice, a formulary identifies covered medications and thus by their exclusion also identifies all non-covered medications, that is, medications that would require pre-authorization. Medications are subsequently added to the formulary as they are developed and prove efficacious. As new drugs are developed and approved by the FDA on a daily basis, it is not feasible or possible to attempt to maintain a negative list of medications, that is, a list of medications excluded from the formulary.

While the current webpage description of the drug program is adequate, it is sparse and may not address general informational questions Benefits Plan members may have regarding categories of covered drugs. Members are provided a telephone number to inquire about drug plan coverage and specifics relative to their own individual coverage. An expanded explanation of the drug plan and its facets would benefit the Plan members.

BOP COMMENT ON 18-07

Comment on Item 18-07—from the Board of Pensions.

Item 18-07 from the Presbytery of Sierra Blanca would require the Board of Pensions (the Board) to post information on its Web site about medications requiring pre-authorization, clarify its intent in requiring pre-authorization for certain medications, and adjust the terms of the Medical Plan in a particular way.

The Board of Pensions respectfully advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) to disapprove Item 18-07.

Should the 219th General Assembly (2010) wish to concur with the intent of the overture, the Board recommends changing the word “*require*” in the first sentence to “*urge*”.

The General Assembly, by creating an independent, incorporated Board of Pensions, responsible for benefits, vested in that board the responsibility for decisions on matters under its jurisdiction. It would serve neither the Board nor the church to have decisions of the incorporated Board of Pensions subject to appeal to the unincorporated, ecclesiastical General Assembly. The General Assembly has control of the Board by virtue of the requirements that it elects each director of the Board and confirms the election of a new president of the Board.

Rationale

An integral part of the Board of Pension's Medical Plan, the Prescription Drug Program provides Plan members with coverage for medications prescribed by their physicians. Under this program, provided by Express Scripts (ESI) on behalf of the Board of Pensions, members share the cost of medically necessary drugs in the form of copayments, which vary in accordance with the medication they take and the pharmacy used to fill their prescription.

In accordance with the terms of the Plan, some drugs are subject to prior authorization. This is designed to limit costs for both the member and the Plan, while ensuring that members receive safe and effective medications.

Prior Authorization

The drugs identified for prior authorization are generally those that are very costly, potentially risky, or can be used inappropriately. Some of the more common examples of these drugs are: Epogen, Procrit, Aranesp, Regranex, Tazorac, Forteo, Remicade, Topamax, Zonegran, infertility medications, and growth hormones. When members present prescriptions for these drugs, and others on the prior authorization list, the pharmacist is notified that certain clinical information must be obtained from the prescribing physician before the prescription can be filled. The goal is to ensure patients receive appropriate medications for their diagnoses.

Implementing the prior authorization program saved the Medical Plan more than \$480,000 in 2008 and just under \$550,000 in 2009.

Overture's Specific Recommendations

1. Point one of the overture requests that the Board "post in a prominent place on the Board of Pensions Web site a complete list of medications requiring pre-authorization ..." (Item 18-06).

Detailed information about the Prescription Drug Program is already prominently provided on the Pensions.org Web site. By following the logic of the site, members can move easily from *Benefits and Assistance to Prescription Drugs* to *Program Overview*.

On the *Program Overview* Page, which includes descriptions of the special programs, including Prior Authorization, there is a prominent link to several related publications:

- Guide to Your Healthcare Benefits For Medical Plan Members
- 2010 Drug Formulary

Specialized assistance is also available directly through ESI, where a pharmacist may be reached 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. In addition, the Board of Pensions Member Services Team is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET. Should a member need personal help to resolve a complex prescription drug claim issue, the Board's Member Advocate is available during those same hours.

2. Point two of the overture requests the Board to "affirm in a public manner that the requirement of pre-authorization of certain medicines is not an attempt on the part of the Board of Pensions or its agents to deny appropriate medical care or to ration medical care to the members of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)." (Item 18-07)

The Board's *Statement of Mission, Vision, and Values* reflects the approach that it takes to its service to Plan members:

Mission

Our mission is to provide to qualifying members who serve the community of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pension, healthcare, death and disability benefits as well as financial assistance.

Vision

As guided by Scripture to love and care for one another, the **Vision** of the Board of Pensions is to actively seek and find ways to serve our members in ever improving ways that honor the confidence of our community of faith. (I Corinthians 12)

Shared Values

We Value

- Our common confession that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior
- Our community of faith

- Shared responsibility of the community for members' needs
- The highest ethical standards
- Our fiduciary obligations
- Exemplary stewardship
- Keeping the confidence of our constituencies
- Providing quality service
- Good corporate citizenship
- Respect for all (Board of Pension Statement of Mission, Vision, and Values, www.Pensions.org)

No attempt to deny appropriate medical care or to ration medical care has ever been made by the Board.

3. Point three of the overture would direct the Board to “adjust the terms of the Benefits Plan so that in the event a member’s physician is unable to come to agreement with the Board of Pension’s agents concerning a medication requiring pre-authorization, that the member be allowed to purchase the medication prescribed by his or her physician at the non-formulary rate” (Item 18-07).

The right of members to appeal in the Medical Plan is outlined in Administrative Rule 1201, which is available on the Board’s Web site, Pensions.org. Implementing the change requested by this point of the overture would, in effect, circumvent the appeals process and automatically overturn first-level decisions.

The Board acknowledges that this change would save a few Plan members money in copayments, but reminds the General Assembly that these costs would not go away. Instead the costs would be shifted from individuals to the community. In order to cover these costs, the Board estimates that the annual deductible for each Plan member, and each Plan member’s dependent(s), would have to be increased to cover the additional expenses to the Plan. Depending on usage levels of this provision, these increases could be significant.

Item 18-08

[The assembly approved Item 18-08. See pp. 54, 55.]

Regarding Review and Revision of the Organization for Mission Regarding Responsibilities of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and Its Executive Director, and the Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk.

The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010)

1. Approve and delegate to the appropriate body a review of and possible revisions to the *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* with attention specifically given to the roles and responsibilities of the General Assembly Mission Council and its Executive Director, and the Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk;

2. Until such review and clarification takes place, the Committee on Review of the PC(USA) recommends that the Stated Clerk, as the one agency head who is elected by the General Assembly, be affirmed by the General Assembly and its agencies as the one who speaks with one voice for the General Assembly and, as stipulated in the *Organization for Mission*, “shall promote the harmony and efficiency of the General Assembly and its agencies in cooperation with the General Assembly Mission Council and its Executive Director, with special attention to relationships between General Assembly entities, and with synods, presbyteries, and sessions” (*Manual of the General Assembly, 2010, Organization for Mission, IV.B.2.n., p. 10*). [See Item 18-B, section XIII.D. of the Report of the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), p. 1309.]

Rationale

The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) perceives a lack of clarity, potential confusion, and a possible impediment to effective collaboration in the *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. On the one hand, *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* stipulates in Section V.:

The General Assembly Mission Council shall advise and respond to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for the Ministries of our church. The primary purpose of the General Assembly Mission Council is to lead and coordinate the total mission program. It will cultivate a style of work that emphasizes coordination among ministries; flexible deployment of resources to match changing needs; allocation of funding to reflect stated goals; concluding as well as initiating programs; attention to the needs and gifts of congregations; effective relationships with all governing bodies; and holding the vision described without reverting to old patterns. (*Manual of the General Assembly, 2010, Organization for Mission, V., p. 17*)

The Review Committee of the PC(USA) perceives a lack of clarity in this language, specifically in the use and meaning of “Ministries of our church” and “total mission program.” It is the sense of the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that this language refers specifically to the “Ministries” and “total mission program” particularly delegated to the oversight of the GAMC rather than to the broader and more inclusive mission of the whole church, including all General Assembly agencies. The language seems, nonetheless, ambiguous and confusing.

On the other hand, *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* stipulates in Section IV.B.2.n.: “The Stated Clerk shall promote the harmony and efficiency of the General Assembly and its agencies in cooperation with the General Assembly Mission Council and its Executive Director, with special attention to relationships between General Assembly entities, and with synods, presbyteries, and sessions” (*Manual of the General Assembly*, 2010, *Organization for Mission*, IV.B.2.n., p. 10).

This confusion lends itself potentially to competition, which becomes an impediment to collaboration.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 18-08

Comment on Item 18-08—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC)

The General Assembly Mission Council asks the 219th General Assembly (2010) to consider the GAMC comment on Item 18-B as they deliberate on Item 18-08.

Item 18-09

[The assembly approved Item 18-09. See pp. 54, 55.]

Regarding the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee.

The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve

- 1. continuation of the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (RFRC) for at least two years;**
- 2. continuation and expansion of efforts to strengthen communication and cooperation between the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and the Foundation regarding restricted funds resolution and the reporting of related progress to the RFRC no less than annually; and**
- 3. the suggestion that, should clarification of roles become necessary, the RFRC consider obtaining a legal review from a qualified attorney related neither to the GAMC/PC(USA) or the Foundation regarding the relative responsibilities of the GAMC and the Foundation. [See Item 18-B, Section XIII.F.2. of the Report of the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), p. 1335]**

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: 2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 08-21. Recommendation C. The Need for the RFRC to Continue, the Resolution of Roles and Responsibilities Be Included as Items of Business for the Six Agency Review Committee (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 24–25, 720–21).

The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) met with representatives of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and the Foundation. Additionally, the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consulted with the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (RFRC) through its moderator. The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) observes that the two agencies have distinctive roles regarding the restricted funds in question. The GAMC is the organization that, in many cases, distributes and/or uses restricted funds generated for mission. The GAMC has responsibility, on behalf of the General Assembly, to oversee and implement the General Assembly’s mission priorities and directives. The Foundation, on the other hand, has a fiduciary responsibility to donors to ensure that funds are used as stipulated by the donor of the gift. At best, the two agencies provide something of a check and balance regarding responsible use of the restricted funds. Occasionally, however, the GAMC and the Foundation have disagreed on matters pertaining to use of the funds, i.e., whether or not the uses of funds fit the parameters and requirements in which and with which the gift was made to the Foundation.

The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) emphasizes that every effort must continue to be made to ensure a healthy and collaborative relationship between the GAMC and the Foundation regarding use of restricted funds. Strong and effective communication between the two agencies and the leadership of the agencies is imperative. Our most recent communication from the leaders of the GAMC and the Foundation indicates increased commitment to collaboration and documents encouraging developments, including:

- Regular meetings between the Executive Director of the GAMC and the Interim President and Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation;
- Formation of a Working Group of GAMC members and Foundation trustees and formalization of a covenant to strengthen the working relationship between the two agencies;
- Establishment of mutual access to the respective data bases of the two agencies, thus strengthening communication and reducing opportunities for confusion and conflict;
- Cooperative work between the agencies to better understand restrictions and reporting requirements of federal regulatory organizations and to resolve related differences of interpretation between the agencies, to the end that funds are made available for mission;
- Cooperative work between the agencies to better understand both current restrictions of funds and priority needs for new funds as they are established;
- Monthly reports from the Foundation to the GAMC regarding endowment fund details;
- Increased sharing of ideas and best practices regarding information technology and services;
- Monthly meetings between representatives of the legal departments of the two agencies;
- Expanded software capability that allows staffs of both agencies to input, view, and track information on interagency issues.

Progress is documented in the joint letter submitted by executive leaders of the GAMC and the Foundation, and affirmed by their respective boards, to the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is included in Appendix III of Item 18-B, the report of the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms and encourages these efforts. The committee commends the obvious commitment of the executive leaders of the GAMC and the Foundation to the improvement of communication and working relationships as a model and example for other GAMC and Foundation staff members. Geographic separation of these two agencies makes such commitments all the more important. Face-to-face communication, joint worship, relationship building, and collaboration will benefit other departments and organizational levels of the two agencies.

At the time of the work and report preparation of the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (RFRC) has had an organizational meeting and has met with representatives of both the GAMC and the Foundation. They have not, however, been called upon for resolution of any disputed issue. It is, therefore, too early to make any judgment upon the effectiveness of the RFRC. Theoretically, nonetheless, the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) sees potential need and value of continuing the existence of the RFRC. Should disagreement arise between the GAMC and the Foundation, the existence of a third party to assist and attempt resolution clearly benefits the whole church. Legal intervention, though potentially necessary and helpful, should be avoided if possible.

Item 18-10

[The assembly approved Item 18-10. See pp. 54, 55.]

Regarding Future Reviews of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Six Agencies.

The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve that the review of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies, focusing broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in working collaboratively to implement the General Assembly's mission directives, be integrated into the cycle of individual agency reviews. The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) suggests that such a review committee be appointed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). [See section XIII.G. of Item 18B, the Report of the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).]

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral: *2008 Referral: Item 08-22. Recommendation from the Committee on Review of the General Assembly Council to the 218th General Assembly (2008) to Create a Review Committee to Review the Service of the Whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Six Agencies in Implementing the General Assembly's Mission Directives (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 23, 25, 727-28).*

Part of the rationale stated:

While the separate review of each of the six agencies is a helpful practice and has fostered improvements, this Review Committee observed that no one in the current system is charged with looking at the overall effectiveness of the whole. Coordination among the six agencies is voluntary and not always effective. Such a review should focus broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in implementing the General

Assembly's mission directives and should not duplicate the more detailed work of the individual agency review committees. Particular attention should be given to how or if these agencies work cooperatively and where or if there is duplication of services in the system. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 727)

The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) believes that this review is an important part of the entire review process and should be included in the cycle of the individual agency reviews.

Item 18-11

[The assembly approved Item 18-11. See pp. 54, 55.]

Regarding the Review of Biennial Assemblies.

The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the referral of the following issues to the committee to be appointed by the 219th General Assembly (2010) to review biennial assemblies, recommending that the General Assembly include such review of the way we conduct General Assembly in the scope of this committee's work.

The Committee on Review of the PC(USA) perceives a call and cry for a new way of understanding and being General Assembly, which includes:

1. Increased time given to worship, study, and discernment of who we as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are, who we are called to be, and what we are called to do, all done with the prayer that God's Spirit will unify, renew, energize, and mobilize the church for ministry, mission, and witness. This commitment of time to worship, study, and discernment will better prepare the General Assembly to wrestle with difficult and sometimes controversial, but nonetheless important matters that deserve and demand consideration.

2. More effective management of the amount of time and energy that the General Assembly commits to issues of legislation and policy development, so that increased time and energy may be given to the above focus. Such management may require a greater willingness of the General Assembly to allow prescribed work to be done and actions taken at committee level.

3. Increased attention given by General Assembly to mission prioritization, resulting in a manageable number of identifiable mission directives/priorities that are determined for the whole church, to which General Assembly agencies, middle governing bodies, congregations, and individuals can commit and cooperate. The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recommends that the General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly collaboratively guide and ensure such a process, drawing upon other agencies and resources as appropriate and as directed by the *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* and commended in Item 18-B, Section VI.D. of the Report of the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (p. 1321).

4. Clarification of who communicates, manages, and oversees the collaborative implementation of those mission directives on behalf of the General Assembly, a role and responsibility that the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) sees residing with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly in cooperation with the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council (*Manual of the General Assembly, 2010, Organization for Mission, IV.B.2.n., p. 10*).

5. Consideration of the feasibility and/or desirability of having one voice designated to speak for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and/or some entity designated to hold the church as a whole, particularly the General Assembly agencies, accountable for decisions and commitments made by the General Assembly.

Rationale

The 214th General Assembly (2002) directed that a committee be appointed by the 219th General Assembly (2010) to evaluate biennial General Assemblies. During the course of its work, the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) heard interests and concerns that related to the format and business of the General Assembly. The Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) included these issues in its report, but it believes these items should be considered by the committee that will be appointed by the 219th General Assembly (2010).

[See Item 18-B, Section XIII.H. in the Report of the Committee on Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), p. 1336.]

Item 18-12

[In response to Item 18-12, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 54, 56.]

[Alternate Resolution: The 219th General Assembly (2010) urges the Board of Pensions to develop a plan to ensure that funds from any Relief of Conscience churches do not go to fund abortions through any avenue.]

Commissioner's Resolution. On Discontinuing Payment for Abortion as a Covered Benefit in the Board of Pensions Medical Benefits Plan.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) urges the Board of Pensions to discontinue paying for induced abortion as a covered benefit in its Medical Benefits Plan (*unless a licensed physician documents that it is necessary to preserve the physical life of the mother*).

Rationale

Discontinuing the coverage of abortion in the Board of Pensions (BOP) Medical Benefits Plan (the Plan) would better reflect the current policy on abortion (1992), and it would bring to an end the problem of the Plan both covering abortion and being mandatory. It would end the complicity in the taking of human life by abortion for those Presbyterians who find abortion deeply offensive.

Scripture and the confessions teach us that the value of the unborn comes from God, who created us in His own image.¹ The church is called to cherish and protect human life as beloved by God and belonging to Him.

The Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion acknowledged in its 1992 report² that Presbyterians are deeply divided about abortion. They called the church to hold within its fellowship those of different views. The policy itself reflects these different views. On the one hand, it states that “the strong Christian presumption is that, since all life is precious to God, we are to preserve and protect it;” on the other hand, it states that “the considered decision of a woman to terminate a pregnancy can be morally acceptable” (E.1.1.e.).

The policy also identifies circumstances in which abortion would not be morally acceptable:

- as a method of birth control,
- as a convenience or to ease embarrassment,
- for gender selection,
- to obtain fetal parts (E.1.f.–g).

It also states that if an abortion is the decision, “it is preferable for it to happen earlier rather than later [in pregnancy]” (E.1.h.). Elaborating on that last point, the 204th General Assembly (2006) issued a clear statement against late term abortions: “We affirm that the lives of viable babies—those well enough developed to survive outside the womb if delivered—ought to be preserved and cared for and not aborted.”³

While the General Assembly policy on abortion reflects differing views and finds some abortions morally unacceptable, the Medical Benefits Plan reflects none of these restraints. There are no limitations, no exclusions. The Plan covers all abortions, for any reason, at any stage of pregnancy. An abortion claim does not need to meet the BOP’s usual guidelines for medical necessity. If a proper claim form is filled out and signed by a licensed physician, the abortion procedure is deemed “medically necessary” and the claim is paid.⁴

Membership in the Plan is mandatory for all installed pastors. It is the tithes and offerings of church members that pay the dues for the pastor’s membership in the Plan. Science tells us that from the moment of fertilization, each embryo is a genetically separate, totally unique, and distinctly human life; and many Presbyterians believe that life ought to be nurtured and protected and not aborted. Many Presbyterians face a serious moral dilemma—a true crisis of conscience—upon discovering that their church’s Medical Plan provides unrestricted abortion coverage and uses their own tithes and offerings to do so. Many other Presbyterians still have not discovered this fact.

The General Assembly and the BOP responded to this repeated concern with plans for “relief of conscience” (ROC). The plans approved in 1992 and 1996 were not acceptable because they did not protect the contributions of church members from paying for abortions. As one elder commented: “This is the second time the BOP has proposed a relief of conscience measure which is acceptable mainly to those who do not have a conscientious objection to abortion.”

In 1996, responding to two overtures, the General Assembly acknowledged the “serious and urgent concern of those seeking relief of conscience” and recommended to the BOP that they “pursue open, substantive and responsive dialogue with ROC congregations,” in accordance with the 1992 Policy on Abortion, p.16: “We urge church entities to affirm procedures

by which particular churches may be assured that their mission funds will not be used in violation of conscience on this issue.”

In 1998, the General Assembly approved the BOP’s third try at a Relief of Conscience Plan, and asked them to communicate with churches about it. One letter went out in 1999 and not much else, until the General Assembly directed the BOP in 2008 to include information about the ROC Plan in their annual reports and other publications. The 2009 Annual Report shows 500 Relief of Conscience churches out of 10,751 in the PC(USA). For a program in effect since 1992, those numbers suggest that there are many people in the pews whose tithes and offerings are being used to pay for a Medical Benefits Plan that covers abortion without their knowledge.

No plan for merely separating streams of money can fully satisfy the issue of conscience for those Presbyterians who believe abortion is morally wrong. Their conscience is still offended by being spiritually and covenantally joined to a church body that pays for abortion.

The problem is that the default position has been to pay for abortion. The burden of taking action has been upon those whose conscience is violated. This is contrary to the teaching in Scripture that urges us to voluntarily limit our own freedoms of conscience in order to protect those whose conscience is not free (Rom. 14:20–23).

After twenty-three years of paying for abortion in the Medical Benefits Plan, it is time to change the default to no abortion coverage. No longer would the plan both cover abortion and be mandatory, which has been the problem. The Relief of Conscience program would no longer be needed.

Discontinuing the coverage of abortion would not prevent any woman from obtaining an abortion. Presbyterians who favor coverage of abortion could request that the Board of Pensions set up a voluntary fund to receive donations to assist plan members with abortion-related expenses.

In Summary: Discontinuing the coverage of abortion would better reflect the current policy on abortion, and it would solve the problem of the Plan both covering abortion and being mandatory. It would allow Presbyterians to freely give to the health benefits of their pastor without participating in the taking of human life by abortion that is deeply offensive to them.

Endnotes

1. Gen. 1:27; The Scots Confession, 3.02; The Heidelberg Catechism, 4.006; The Second Helvetic Confession, 5.034; The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.023; The Shorter Catechism, 7.010; The Larger Catechism, 7.127.
2. The Report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion (1992), Section E. Policy Development, pp. 10–11.
3. *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 49–50.
4. Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Guide to Your Healthcare Benefits*, <http://web.pensions.org/Publications/pensions/Home/Forms%20%26%20Publications/Booklets%20%26%20Brochures/med-119.pdf>, 2010, p. 16.

Andrew Nagel, Presbytery of National Capital
Marie A. Bowen, Presbytery of Pittsburgh

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 18-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 18-12—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 18-12 be disapproved.

Rationale

This commissioners’ resolution is based on an incomplete and somewhat distorted representation of the church’s policy on problem pregnancies and abortion, adopted by the 204th General Assembly (1992), *Do Justice, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly (Micah 6:8)*. Furthermore, this resolution would be a substantial alteration of church policy. The church’s policy clearly identifies areas in which Presbyterians have diverse points of view, specifically in our interpretation of Scripture and on the question of when human life begins. It clearly calls for the church to “maintain within its fellowship those who, on the basis of a study of Scripture and prayerful decision, come to diverse conclusions and action” (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, Paragraph 27.089).

However, the policy recognizes that “Problem pregnancies are the result of, and influenced by, so many complicated and insolvable circumstances that we have neither the wisdom nor the authority to address or decide each situation” (Ibid, Paragraph 27.090). Therefore, it strongly affirms “the ability and responsibility of women, guided by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, to make good moral choices in regard to problem pregnancies” (Ibid, Paragraph 27.091). Obviously, the policy would not then expect an insurance provider to adjudicate the specific circumstances of each individual abortion claim.

In order to assure that women facing problem pregnancies can prayerfully consider and access a full range of reproductive options, including the option of abortion, the policy opposes laws that would criminalize abortion. In discussing the role of the state, the policy states: “No law or administrative decision should limit access to abortions” (Ibid, Paragraph 27.131). Furthermore, the policy “Advocate[s] universal access to health care so that pregnant women and their families with few economic resources might feel assured that their own and their children’s health will be protected” (Ibid, Paragraph 27.121).

Clearly, the church’s policy is one that honors the diversity among us by protecting each woman’s ability and responsibility to make good moral decisions about her pregnancy, including the decision to continue it and, when necessary, the decision to end it. Access to insurance coverage is one component supporting a woman’s ability to consider a full range of reproductive options. Denial of such coverage, as low-income women have experienced under Medicaid, causes women who have decided to terminate a pregnancy to postpone the procedure for several weeks as they try to find the money to pay for it. The church’s policy clearly states that when abortion is necessary it should occur earlier rather than later (Ibid, Paragraph 27.096). Access to insurance coverage is key to this timing.

In response to those Presbyterian churches and minister members of presbyteries who are self-paying Benefits Plan members who, in good conscience, find abortion to be deeply offensive, the church has developed a Relief of Conscience Plan (1998) by which the dues paid by Relief of Conscience (ROC) members are separated and carefully tracked by the Board of Pensions so that they are not used to pay for abortion-related procedures. Abortion claims are paid from the non-ROC stream; all other medical claims are then paid from the combined remainder. In addition, a dollar amount equal to the prior years’ abortion claims is set aside to help pay for the Adoption Assistance Grant program. Currently, 500 of the 10,500 Presbyterian churches participate in the ROC.

The commissioners’ resolution states that this separation of dues does not “fully satisfy the issue of conscience for those Presbyterians who believe abortion is morally wrong” as they are “offended by being spiritually and covenantally joined to a church body that pays for abortion.” In other words, their conscience seems to require that the Medical Benefits Plan not cover abortions, that no one’s dues be used to pay for abortions—unless there is documentation that it is necessary to preserve the physical life of the mother, a restriction more severe than the church’s late-term abortion policy (2006) that calls for the protection of a woman’s life and health. They suggest a voluntary fund to which Presbyterians could contribute that the Board of Pensions would use to help pay for abortion-related expenses of members.

This proposal would violate the core principles articulated in the church’s problem pregnancy policies: that in our diversity we support the ability and responsibility of women to make these difficult decisions according to their consciences and we support the necessary social conditions that protect women’s ability to consider and weigh all options—including the option of abortion. The proposal would deny to the vast majority of Board Of Pensions’ members and their families coverage for this choice—regardless of the circumstances—except when they can document the threat to a woman’s physical life.

Rather than seeking unity in spite of our differences, this proposal insists on shaping the Medical Benefits Plan according to one view among the many that can be found within our church family. The ACSWP advises disapproval.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 18-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 18-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) concurs with the Advice and Counsel of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, strongly advising the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 18-12 be disapproved with the following Rationale.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) notes the following issues with Item 18-12.

1. Contrary to the consistent witness of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), this resolution diminishes and ultimately eliminates a woman’s ability to make decisions and utilize her own moral agency to make choices for her life.
2. Access to health care should never be limited by gender. This resolution suggests a plan whose coverage explicitly discriminates based on gender.
3. The plan suggested by this resolution presents an issue of privacy for women seeking to terminate a pregnancy, as they are required to substantiate that there is a threat to their health when seeking an abortion.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 18-12

Comment on Item 18-12—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The General Assembly has discussed and debated the issues relating to problem pregnancies and abortion for many years.¹

The Board of Pensions administers the Benefits Plan consistent with the normative values of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which affirm the right of a woman to make good moral choices in regard to problem pregnancies.² This means that legal medical procedures related to the termination of pregnancy are covered by the Medical Plan, with the admonition that:

Consistent with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s affirmation of the ability and responsibility of a woman to make good moral choices regarding problem pregnancies, the Medical Plan reimburses medical costs for abortion procedures, subject to plan limits. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) further affirms that abortion should not be used as a method of birth control, for gender selection only, or solely to obtain fetal parts for transplantation. See *Minutes*, 204th General Assembly (1992), available upon request from the Board of Pensions.

Churches and employing organizations that object, as a matter of conscience, to the use of their dues for abortion procedure costs may apply for Relief of Conscience. Monies offset from Medical Plan dues of employers that have applied for and received Relief of Conscience are deposited in the Board’s Assistance Program and are used to help provide Adoption Assistance Grants to plan members. For more information regarding this administrative policy and Adoption Assistance Grants, contact the Board of Pensions.³

The Board’s Relief of Conscience process was approved by the General Assembly in 1992, and refined by subsequent General Assemblies since its initial adoption. As of December 31, 2009, there were five hundred churches participating.

The Relief of Conscience process reflects the PC(USA)’s long-standing affirmation of the conscience of those who hold a moral position not supported by a majority of Presbyterians. Consistent with the principles of Presbyterian form of government,⁴ it allows those who hold varying positions to remain in the church.

The Relief of Conscience (ROC) process allows individual churches or employing organizations to object to the possible use of its Medical Plan dues for abortion-related procedures. Upon the approval of the presbytery, the church is placed on the Board’s ROC roll. The Medical Plan dues of ROC organizations are separately accounted for and claims related to abortion procedures are not paid from those funds. Ultimately, a dollar amount proportionate to abortion-related procedures is taken from the ROC dues and transferred to an Assistance Program that provides adoption assistance grants.

Endnotes

1. Since 2001, the General Assembly considered the issue abortion in:
 - 2008: Items 10-01, 10-03 and 10-04
 - 2006: Items 10-01, 10-02, and 10-03
 - 2004: Items 11-01, 11-02, and 11-03
 - 2003: Items 08-01, 08-02, and 08-03
 - 2002: Overtures 02-37 and 02-48
 - 2001: Overtures 01-26, 01-47, 01-48, 01-50, and 01-54
2. “We affirm the ability and responsibility of women, guided by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, in the context of their communities of faith, to make good moral choices in regard to problem pregnancies” (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I. p. 69, 368).
3. *Your Guide to Healthcare Benefits* (2010), p. 23.
4. “Decisions shall be reached in governing bodies by vote, following opportunity for discussion, and a majority shall govern” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0301e.).

Item 18-A

[The Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, & Presbyterian Publishing approved Item 18-A. See pp. 54, 55]

The Board of Pensions recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) receive the following report regarding the amendments to the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Plan”) that the Board of Pensions adopted since the 218th General Assembly (2008).

Rationale

1. *Benefits Plan Amendments*

The process for amending the Plan is established in the plan document (Article XIX). The Board of Pensions (Board) has the sole discretion and authority to adopt amendments. Certain amendments are not effective until approved by the General Assembly; most amendments are effective on the date specified by the Board and need only be reported to the General Assembly.

- Amendments to the Pension Plan (Articles VI, VII, VIII and IX) that are in the nature of a benefit reduction or a Pension Plan dues increase are only effective upon approval of the General Assembly. The Board must provide written notice of its intent to submit such Pension Plan amendments to the General Assembly and the Plan members, local churches and presbyteries at least sixty (60) days prior to the commencement of the General Assembly.

- All other amendments to the Plan adopted by the Board must be reported to the next succeeding General Assembly and to the Members, local churches and presbyteries in a reasonable manner.

Since the 218th General Assembly (2008), the Board has not adopted any amendment to the Pension Plan that requires the approval of General Assembly prior to becoming effective.

Since the 218th General Assembly (2008), the Board granted a disability benefit increase for Plan Year 2009 and adopted certain amendments to the Pension, Medical, and Retirement Savings Plans. A summary of the amendments to the Plan is provided below. The effective dates of the amendments are noted. The verbatim text of the Plan amendments is available from the Corporate Secretary of the Board of Pensions.

A letter advising the Benefits Plan members, local churches and presbyteries of this report and the amendments was mailed on April 2, 2010. The letter and a complete copy of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2010) are available on the website of the Board at www.pensions.org or by calling 1-800-PRES-PLAN (1-800-773-7752).

2. *Pension Plan Amendments*

a. *Experience Apportionment Grants*

The Pension Plan provides in Sec. 7.3 that the Board may determine, in its sole discretion, that sufficient Pension Plan assets have accumulated, due to favorable investment and actuarial experience, over and above those required for actuarial reserves, general contingency reserves and other special reserves, to grant an experience apportionment. Due to the decline in the value of the Pension Portfolio, which is due to the economic recession and losses in the financial markets in 2008 and 2009, the Board of Pensions determined that there were not sufficient assets in hand at the end of Plan Years 2008 and 2009 as a result of cumulative favorable investment and actuarial experience to grant an experience apportionment in either year.

b. *Other Pension Plan Amendments*

Direct Rollovers: Sec. 8.12 of the Pension Plan was added to specify the types of plans into which a member or other beneficiary who is entitled to a lump sum distribution from the plan may direct the distribution be transferred. This provision was added to comply with applicable law. Lump sum distributions from the Pension Plan are only available for small benefit cash-outs and pension settlements. This amendment was effective as of January 1, 2009.

3. *Death and Disability Plan Amendments*

a. *Disability Benefit Increases*

The Death and Disability Plan provides in Sec. 11.3(h) that the Board may determine, in its sole discretion, that sufficient Death and Disability Plan assets have accumulated, due to favorable investment and actuarial experience, over and above those required for actuarial reserves, general contingency reserves, and other special reserves, to grant a disability benefit increase.

Due to the decline in the value of the Death and Disability Plan reserves, which is due to the economic recession and losses in the financial markets in late 2008 and 2009, the Board of Pensions determined that there were not sufficient assets in hand at the end of Plan Year 2008 as a result of cumulative favorable investment and actuarial experience to grant a disability benefit increase.

At its March 2010 meeting, the board of directors determined that the Death and Disability Plan fund had sufficient Death and Disability Plan fund assets and reserves in hand at the conclusion of Plan Year 2009 to grant a disability benefit increase. The Board approved a 3 percent (3 %) increase in disability benefits for those receiving such benefits on December 31, 2009, beginning July 1, 2010.

b. *Other Death and Disability Plan Amendments*

Minimum Salary Continuation Benefit: Sec. 10.1 was amended to increase the minimum Salary Continuation Benefit for retired and terminated vested members from \$6,000 to \$8,000. This amendment was effective as of January 1, 2009.

4. *Medical Plan Amendments*

Since the 218th General Assembly (2008), the Board revised and restated the Medical Plan provisions in an effort to simplify the plan design and respond to changes in benefits, vendors, and federal and other laws. Many of the changes were editorial in nature and did not involve the substance of the Medical Plan benefits. The substantive amendments were:

a. *Habilitative Services:* Secs. 13.1(j)(16), (20), (21) and 13.9 were amended to add a new benefit program for children with certain developmental disabilities (autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, Intellectual Disability, and Spina Bifida). The program includes a separate medical necessity definition and describes the specific types

of covered services (e.g., applied behavior analysis and specialized therapies) that will be covered by the program. These amendments were effective as of January 1, 2010.

b. *Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity*: Secs. 13.1(l), 13.7(f), 13.9(a)(6) and (7) were amended to restructure the coverage of mental health and substance abuse benefits to assure full parity with medical/surgical benefits under the Medical Plan in compliance with The Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, which became effective as of October 2009. These amendments were effective as of January 1, 2010.

c. *Waiver of Coverage for Spouses and Eligible Dependents*: Secs. 13.2(a) was amended to authorize the Board of Pensions to permit a member with traditional program coverage to waive coverage under the Medical Plan for a spouse or eligible family member with comparable employer-provided or military services group health coverage. There is no reduction in the dues paid by the church or employing organization if a waiver is granted. Reenrollment is permitted upon loss of the comparable coverage (within 63 days of loss of coverage) or as of January 1st of any enrollment period. This amendment was effective as of October 1, 2009.

d. *Benefit Reimbursement Improvements*: Secs. 13.4, 13.5, 13.6, 13.9(b)(20) and (24), 14.3(b) and (c) were amended to simplify the office visit copayments, network/non-network deductibles, copayments and out-of-pocket maximum provisions for the medical, surgical, mental health, substance abuse, and prescription drug benefits under the Medical Plan, to raise the lifetime maximum reimbursement limit to \$3,500,000, and to delete the exclusion for elective inpatient admissions on weekends. These amendments were effective as of January 1, 2010.

e. *HIPAA Amendments*: Sec. 13.16 was amended to update the Plan's provisions relating to the use and disclosure of Plan members' and their beneficiaries' protected health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA"), as amended in February 2009 by the Health Information Technology and Clinical Health Act ("HITECH"). This amendment was effective as of February 17, 2010.

5. *Supplemental Death Benefits*

Article XVI and Sec. 16.1 thereof were amended to change the name of the program from "Optional Death Benefits" to "Supplemental Death Benefits" and to give the Board of Pensions discretion to designate amounts of coverage for which members could subscribe for themselves, their spouse, and eligible children. Following this amendment, the Board of Pensions authorized an increase in the member's maximum benefit level from \$200,000 to \$300,000. These amendments were effective as of January 1, 2009.

6. *Retirement Savings Plan*

Under the authority granted in Article XVII of the Benefits Plan, the Board of Pensions administers an optional defined contribution known as the Retirement Savings Plan ("Savings Plan"). The Savings Plan documents were amended by the Board to comply with the final U.S. Treasury Department regulations under Section 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code.

In addition to amending and restating the Savings Plan to comply with the final regulations, the following amendments were adopted to reflect plan design changes as well as to comply with changes in federal law.

a. *Eligible Employees*: The definition of "Eligible Employee" was amended, effective as of September 1, 2008, to eliminate the twenty-hour service requirement for participants. Employing organizations may still elect to impose hour requirements for employer contributions to the Savings Plan.

b. *Lost Payees*: The Savings Plan was amended, effective as of June 27, 2009, to reflect that any person entitled to a benefit or payment under the Savings Plan who cannot be located within two years after becoming entitled to such benefit or payment forfeits the entire balance of his or her account. The Savings Plan previously provided that a benefit could only be forfeited after six years. This change was made to reduce the length of time that the Board must search for a participant or other person before forfeiting his or her benefit and to avoid the possible application of states' unclaimed property and escheat laws.

c. *Required Minimum Distribution Relief*: The Savings Plan was amended effective as of January 1, 2009, to provide required minimum distribution relief to participants for the 2009 calendar year, as permitted under the Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008.

d. *Foreign Missionary Participants*: Roth contribution provisions for foreign missionaries were removed from the Savings Plan so as to avoid additional fees and administrative procedures. No Savings Plan participants made Roth contributions to the Savings Plan prior to the adoption of this amendment. These amendments were effective as of January 1, 2009.

e. *QCCO and Non-QCCO Plan Documents*: The Board amended and restated the Savings Plan, effective as of January 1, 2009, and adopted two separate Plan documents: one applicable to churches and qualified church-controlled organizations ("QCCOs") and the other for non-QCCOs because non-QCCOs are subject to additional regulatory requirements.

This bifurcated plan structure is designed to prevent a non-QCCO's possible failure to comply with the nondiscrimination requirements of the final regulations from disqualifying the entire Savings Plan. Accordingly, each non-QCCO adopts the non-QCCO plan document as a single employer plan for its employees only and is responsible for conducting the applicable nondiscrimination tests and assuring compliance with the Code requirements for non-QCCOs. Complete copies of the amended and restated Savings Plan for churches and QCCOs and non-QCCOs, as well as the verbatim text of the amendments listed above, are available from the Board's website or upon request from the corporate secretary.

7. *Administrative Provisions*

a. *Allocation of Reserves in Welfare Plans*: Secs. 18.1 and 19.6 were amended to give the Board of Pensions the discretion to set dues for the Death and Disability Plan and allocate excess assets among the Death and Disability, Medical Plan (including Medicare Supplement) and optional plans. These amendments were effective as of October 1, 2008.

b. *Unclaimed Benefits*: The benefit forfeiture provisions in Sec. 18.4 of the Plan and the Savings Plan were amended to permit forfeiture of benefits due to lost payees to plan reserves within two years. This amendment was effective as of June 27, 2009.

c. *Recoupment of Benefit Overpayments and Limitations of Liability*: Secs. 18.10 and 18.11 of the Plan were amended to authorize more expressly the Board's right to recoup benefit overpayments and to limit the liability of the Board where the Board or its agents acted in good faith and based upon information available to the Board or its agent at that time. These amendments were effective as of October 1, 2009.

Item 18-B

[The Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, Foundation, & Presbyterian Publishing approved Item 18-B. See pp. 54, 55.]

Report of the General Assembly Review Committee of the Whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

I. Committee Formation and Membership

The 218th General Assembly (2008) elected a Review Committee of the Whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (referred to henceforth as the Review Committee and PC(USA), respectively). Members elected by the 218th General Assembly (2008) (GA) included: Clemente H. Anzaldúa; Leslie Day-Ebert (resigned for personal reasons during the course of the review); Elinor K. Hite; Jose R. Irizarry; Yubang (Joshua) Lee; John G. McFayden (moderator); Irvin S. Moxley; Sandra L. Peirce; Kevin L. Porter; Alvin N. Puryear; Earledean Robbins; Allison K. Seed; Thomas C. Sheffield; and Judith Wellington. Staff assigned to support the work of the committee: Frank Maloney, Executive Vice President, Board of Pensions and Kay Moore, Office of the General Assembly.

The Review Committee represented the rich diversity of the PC(USA) with five elders and nine pastors; six women and eight men; four African Americans, one Asian American, one Native American, two Latino/Hispanic Americans; and six Caucasians. The Review Committee also reflected a rich breadth and depth of experience, composed of members who had worked closely with each of the six agencies. Additional biographical information and experience appears in Appendix I.

II. Committee Charge

Actions referred to the Review Committee:

- Item 08-21: The 218th General Assembly (2008) directed that the need for the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (RFRC) and resolution of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Presbyterian Foundation and the GAC be included as items of business for the Six Agency Review Committee to handle (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p.720).
- Item 08-22: In response to a recommendation from the Committee on Review of the General Assembly Council, the assembly created a "review committee to review the service of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies in implementing the General Assembly's mission directives" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 727).

Articulating a rationale for Item 08-22, the Review Committee of the General Assembly Council observed:

While the separate review of each of the six agencies is a helpful practice and has fostered improvements, this Review Committee observed that no one in the current system is charged with looking at the overall effectiveness of the whole. Coordination among the six agencies is voluntary and not always effective. Such a review should focus broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in implementing the General Assembly's mission directives and should not duplicate the more detailed work of the individual agency reviews committees. Particular attention should be given to how or if these agencies work cooperatively and where or if there is duplication of services in the system. This review committee observed that some agencies are not working well together, but also that there are some beneficial cooperative efforts. These happen on a voluntary ba-

sis with no recommendation that this occur regularly throughout the system. This review committee also heard some people questioning the rationale for the separation of the GAC and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 727–28)

III. Committee Process

The Review Committee process consisted of five committee meetings at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, Kentucky, supplemented by additional meetings, conference calls, and preparation as follows:

- November 12–13, 2008: orientation to charge and organization for the task.
- February 9–11, 2009: meetings with and presentations by executive and elected leaders of all six agencies—Board of Pensions (BOP), General Assembly Mission Council (so identified by action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) and referred to in this report as the GAMC), Office of the General Assembly (OGA), Presbyterian Foundation (Foundation), Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP), and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC); met with Perry Chang of Research Services to design a survey for gathering broad input related to the review.
- March–May, 2009: survey conducted and results compiled by Research Services.
- April 21, 2009: Review Committee representatives meet with synod executives in Kansas City, Missouri.
- June 15–17, 2009: follow-up meetings and interviews with executive and elected leaders of all six GA agencies; met with Perry Chang and Gail Quets of Research Services to harvest and interpret survey results; met jointly with representatives of the GAMC and the Foundation to discuss progress on resolution of restricted funds issues; developed an outline and timeline for preparation of the Review Committee’s report.
- Summer 2009: report development.
- June 26, 2009: conference call between Review Committee representatives and representatives of Association of Executive Presbyters.
- September 29, 2009: conference call to discuss report development and recommendations.
- October 13–14, 2009: meeting for review of draft report.
- November 18, 2009: conference call to review revised draft report.
- November 2009: distribution of draft report to agency leaders for review and comment.
- January 6, 2010: conference call for final review of the report and recommendations.

IV. Limitations of the Review

The Review Committee was charged to review the service of the whole PC(USA), with particular attention given to its six agencies and issues of collaboration and duplication between agencies. The rationale for referral of Item 08-22 to the Review Committee also notes relations with other governing bodies in implementing mission directives of the GA.

The Review Committee received no specific parameters regarding the period of time being reviewed. Based on the precedent of agency reviews being conducted every six years, the Review Committee looked primarily at the period of time from 2004 through our meetings with agency leaders in February and June of 2009 and the writing of our report in the fall of 2009.

The Review Committee focused on working relationships among the six agencies, but also conducted conversations with representatives of middle governing bodies, specifically with synod executives and members of the Association of Executive Presbyters. Further input was gathered through a survey that included a broad range of constituencies identified in the survey summary included in this report. While impossible to realistically include the “whole church” in the review, the process allowed wide and diverse input from the “whole church.”

Of further note: there is reference in the rationale of 08-22 to “mission directives” of the GA. There is no formal or consolidated specification of mission directives of the GA. The Review Committee assumes this comment refers to the broad range of directives that come from the assemblies. The Review Committee focused broadly on relations between the GA agencies themselves, and relations between the agencies and middle governing bodies (MGBs). We did not attempt to track the gamut of unspecified mission directives from the GA.

V. Ecclesiology

The Church is the body of Christ; Christ is the head (1Corinthians 12; *Book of Order*, G-1.0100). The PC(USA) seeks to be a visible manifestation of Christ’s Church in the world by the way it orders itself and responds to God’s call to ministry

and mission in the world. When the church orders its relationships in ways that maintain the body's good health, it makes a faithful witness to the world. Therefore, the PC(USA) is called to be faithful by ordering the body so that each part, graced with its own unique and particular gifts, contributes to the well-being of the whole body. Sustaining the order and health of the body is not just a means toward institutional preservation; it is our Christian witness to a fragmented world.

The church embodies its faith through its own wholeness and thus provides a visible sign of what the human race will be if it responds to God's gracious love in community. The church exists not simply so that each member of the body can perform a differentiated mission, but as a "provisional demonstration of what God intends for all of humanity" (*Book of Order*, G-3.0200). In The Confession of 1967, we affirm:

The church thus orders its life as an institution with a constitution, government, officers, finances, and administrative rules. These are instruments of mission, not ends in themselves. Different orders have served the gospel and none can claim exclusive validity. A presbyterian polity recognizes the responsibility of all members for ministry and maintains the organic relation of all congregations in the church. It seeks to protect the church from exploitation by ecclesiastical or secular power and ambition. Every church order must be open to such reformation as may be required to make it a more effective instrument of the mission of reconciliation. (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.40)

The development of a caring community may be the most important and essential task of those who do ministry on behalf of the PC(USA). It may be possible to address challenges and disagreements within the church without breaking the community if, beyond self-interest, self-concern, and independent projects, we are willing to live first and above all in the call to maintain the health and integrity of the whole body. The sacramental breaking of the bread and sharing of the cup bind us to Jesus Christ, who went beyond self-interest and surrendered his life to reconcile all creation with God. Following him, the leadership of the church has a sacramental responsibility to experience and extend reconciliation, starting with the mending of severed relations among those who share this responsibility.

This report is an invitation to consider and celebrate the gifts, accomplishments, and opportunities bestowed upon the agencies the PC(USA) has charged to carry out specific functions of Christ's body. It is an invitation to avoid the sin of alienation by practicing reconciliation within a context of care, love, and mutual respect. As the church is reformed, the agencies of the PC(USA) must practice a sacramental ecclesiology, through which God's reconciling purposes become the church's gift and witness to the world.

VI. Standards for the Review

The Review Committee was not provided standards for review, such as those that exist for the individual agency reviews. In discussing and discerning its charge, the Review Committee identified the following standards that shaped and informed the review of the six PC(USA) agencies:

- A. The mission of each agency is aligned with the goals and values of the overall mission of the PC(USA) as set by GA directives.
- B. The agencies have leaders at key positions who set the vision, direction, and culture of collaboration as a strategic priority.
- C. The agencies press beyond communication and consultation to genuine collaboration and, where appropriate and/or directed by GA, agree to shared agendas and work together toward fulfillment of shared goals. Individual agencies avoid unilateral decisions, made without consultation and collaboration, which affect all agencies and the whole church.
- D. Each agency maintains open and regular communication with, and provides timely and appropriate access to information to, other agencies and PC(USA) constituencies, including MGBs.
- E. The agencies are aware of agreed processes for problem-solving and non-adversarial dispute resolution within the structure of the PC(USA).
- F. Each agency has conducted a thorough evaluation of the potential gains and risks associated with collaborative endeavors.
- G. Agencies show clear evidence that they collaborate in a spirit of mutual appreciation, trust, and respect with shared understandings of the nature of their collaboration.
- H. Agencies seek pragmatic solutions to their respective operational challenges by relying on the assets, resources, and strengths of other agencies.
- I. Agencies deliver inclusive communication resources (printed and electronic) that meet accessibility standards. Accessibility standards include, but are not limited to: awareness of audience's level of familiarity with content of communication; facilitation of the reader/listener/observer's easy navigation through information; appealing and attention-grabbing resources; and comprehensive information that provides clues for follow-up and referral (i.e. links to other agencies).

VII. Survey Summary

In October 2008, the Review Committee contracted with Research Services to conduct a survey of eleven constituencies of the PC(USA):

- Leaders of the PC(USA)'s six national agencies;
- Randomly sampled commissioners who attended GAs in 2004 and 2006;
- Synod and presbytery executives, stated clerks, and moderators;
- Leaders of randomly sampled congregations;
- Leaders of randomly sampled racial-ethnic congregations, new church developments, ministries, missions, outreaches, chapels, and Bible studies;
- Seminary administrators, faculty members, and trustees of twelve PC(USA)-related seminaries;
- Members of the eleven GA permanent, advocacy, and advisory committees;
- Presbyterian Men national and regional leaders;
- Presbyterian Women national and regional leaders;
- Randomly sampled Presbyterian youth and young adults;
- Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators (APCE) members or recipients of the APCE newsletter.

Response rates from these eleven groups ranged from a high of 60 percent for national agency leaders to a low of 11 percent for Christian educators.

Analyses of the survey responses indicate:

- Persons in the various PC(USA) constituencies are more familiar with the BOP, GAMC, OGA, PPC than they are with the Foundation and PILP.
- Levels of awareness of, participation in, and satisfaction with ministries that at least two PC(USA) national agencies jointly sponsor or support vary widely.
- Presented with the possible duplication of services between and confusion about the identities of the GAMC and the OGA, Presbyterians dislike the status quo but do not agree on what to do about it: whether to merge the two agencies, eliminate duplication of services, or educate Presbyterians about the agencies' different functions.
- Presbyterians exhibit ambivalence about confronting duplication of services among national agencies and other PC(USA)-related organizations. Few Presbyterians were able to identify examples of duplication of services beyond the five listed on the survey. Few Presbyterians identified the elimination of the duplication of services as a high priority.
- Relatively few Presbyterians believe that clearly defining for non-Presbyterians what it means to be Presbyterian is important.
- Presbyterians are not in agreement about whether or not agencies should offer competing resources and services. However, it is clear that Presbyterians want agencies to offer services to congregations and individual Presbyterians. Very few want to leave these activities only to congregations, presbyteries, and non-PC(USA) organizations.
- Although Presbyterians believe that the six national agencies do some things well, relatively few believe that the agencies do the following well: maintain the trust of Presbyterians around the country, revitalize and strengthen the ministry of and mission of the PC(USA) as a whole, and strengthen ministry at the congregational level.
- Among respondents who suggested changes to improve the PC(USA), relatively more favor: focusing on diversity, focusing on evangelism, focusing on mission, focusing on youth or young adults, communicating more effectively, improving the Web site, cutting expenses and decentralizing the denomination, promoting leadership development among laypeople, and resourcing congregations.

Detailed survey results are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/committeereview/>.

VIII. Joint Agency Submission to the Review Committee

The agencies jointly submitted a report to the Review Committee that self-identifies their respective charges, identifies collaborative work of the agencies, and suggests future opportunities for collaboration and increased effectiveness. The Review Committee found the report helpful and encouraging. It is included as Appendix II.

IX. Review Committee Summary Reports Regarding General Assembly Agencies

[The Review Committee notes that these summary statements (in alphabetical order of the agencies' names) are not exhaustive, reflecting input from the agencies and the Review Committee's observations at a particular point in the review process, culminating in our interviews with agency leaders in February and June of 2009. The work and collaborative efforts of the agencies are dynamic and continuing, so the General Assembly committee that receives this report will want to request updates from the agencies.]

A. *Board of Pensions (BOP)*

The Board of Pensions (BOP) is the legal entity responsible for the benefits and assistance programs for PC(USA) clergy, lay employees, and their families. Its core mission, delegated by the GA, is to design and administer benefits plans and assistance programs, and receive, invest, and disburse funds to support them. An important underlying principle of the Benefits Plan's design, which includes pension, healthcare, death and disability plans, is its "community nature"—the commitment of the PC(USA) as a community to share the cost of benefits for all Plan members and their families. Dues are assessed based on the member's effective salary, subject to minimum and maximum amounts that vary by type of benefit, generating dedicated funds from which the needs of all participants are met.

The Board of Pensions annually collects in excess of \$200 million in dues, pays out almost \$500 million in benefits, and in 2007 granted more than 1,000 assistance payments totaling approximately \$5.8 million. The healthcare and death and disability plans are self-insured by the Board of Pensions, and thus sensitive to similar risks and economics as an insurance company. The pension plan is heavily funded from long-term investment gains. The healthcare plan is pay as you go. The assistance programs are funded by one-half of the Christmas Joy Offering, and by other gifts, legacies, and contributions. No dues money is expended on assistance programs.

The Board of Pensions is accountable to the GA in that the GA elects directors of the BOP and confirms the appointment of the BOP's president-CEO with authority to reject such appointment. The directors of the BOP, not the GA, oversee the management of the BOP. The BOP and its directors and officers, as trustees of the Benefits Plan, are subject to a fiduciary duty of care, which is owed to the Plan members and their beneficiaries. They make decisions solely and exclusively for the benefit of the members of the Benefits Plan and their families and do so with high legal standards of care and prudence. This fiduciary responsibility distinguishes the BOP from some other agencies related to the GA. In considering the BOP's effectiveness in implementing the GA's mission directives, we note that the focused nature of the BOP's mandate limits opportunities for collaboration in such implementation. However, we also note that the BOP has been creative in seeking avenues, within its mission, to support the broader goals and needs of the church. Because the essence of the BOP's core mission is to support clergy and church employees, it has sought to do so by programs geared toward supporting and strengthening clergy and church leaders. These programs include:

Seminary Debt Assistance Program—Aid to newly ordained ministers serving small churches through grants to help repay educational debt.

Middle Governing Body Grants—Matching grants to MGBs to provide training in practical skills for ministers, (such as congregational and staff leadership, budgeting, financial management, strategic planning, and conflict resolution) which are not typically part of a seminary's curriculum.

Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants—A three-year pilot program, administered in cooperation with MGBs, allowing small church pastors to seek stipends of up to \$3,000 toward sabbaticals.

Support for First Call Programs—Assistance with financial and educational resources for pilot programs that prepare pastors for first calls; offered in cooperation with the GAMC and several synods and presbyteries.

Presbyterian CREDO—A program that provides opportunities for clergy to examine significant areas of their lives and discern prayerfully the future direction of their vocations as they respond to God's call in a lifelong process of spiritual practice and transformation. An eight-day conference, CREDO helps ministers examine spiritual, vocational, financial, and health aspects of their ministries, directly addresses issues of clergy burnout and stress, and offers a means of coping with certain professional challenges. It is based on a core belief in the saving power of the Gospel as expressed in the baptismal covenant. In 2010 there will be six conferences.

Annual Regional Benefits Consultations—Gatherings that provide opportunities for engagement among a substantial cross section of MGB staff and key elected leaders. These consultations serve as a forum to test new ideas and foster ongoing

conversation about the mission and effectiveness of the BOP. For several years, the Stated Clerk, the Executive Director of the GAMC, the President of the BOP, and the Executive Vice President of the BOP have presided at breakout groups to allow participants from MGBs to address questions and comments to the agency executives. Beginning in 2010, all agency heads will be invited to participate in these breakout groups. Each year since 2004, the BOP and the Office of Vocation (of GAMC and OGA) have worked together to prepare workshops addressing topics relevant to strengthening our clergy, and the BOP has produced booklets that capture the essence of these thought-provoking discussions. Nearly 20,000 copies of each booklet have been distributed throughout the PC(USA). Topics have included: *Supporting Mid-Career Pastors* (2005); *Conversations on Candidacy* (2006); *Transitions in Ministry* (2007); and *Building Congregations* (2008).

Pastor Advisory Council—Fourteen heads of staff of large congregations from across the PC(USA), representing 30,000 congregants from ten synods, advise the BOP management.

Regional Representatives—Eight Regional Representatives, based across the country, who work closely with churches and MGB personnel to provide information about the BOP and encourage financial support for the Assistance Program. They also serve, along with other staff, as liaisons to various national Presbyterian organizations.

Executive Presbyter Forums—About a dozen executive presbyters, selected on a rotating basis, who counsel the BOP about proposed or needed initiatives.

Improved Communication with Members—Technological advances employed to improve the BOP website, including “Benefits Connect,” a secure, online site that permits members to access personal and benefits information.

Other Collaborations—The BOP has representation on, and fully participates in, the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Committee. The GAMC and the OGA participate in staff advisory committees for the BOP’s CREDO, Seminary Debt Assistance, and MGB Grant programs. The BOP also collaborates with these agencies on the Presbyteries Pastoral Care Network, the Healthy Ministry Conference (a biennial CPM/COM/Seminary Conference), and a joint research project on CPMs and COMs and depression among candidates and ministers. The BOP further collaborates with the other agencies in sponsoring the National Pastors Sabbath.

The BOP has participated in discussions among representatives of the six agencies to explore opportunities to enhance collaboration in the areas of church relations, communications and marketing, and funds development. The Review Committee affirms the importance of these areas for collaboration, but notes with disappointment that the six-agency discussions have not continued in 2009 and that discussions have not resulted in actual change or the desired results.

Challenges—the BOP recognizes several challenges and is seeking creative responses:

- Increasing legislation and regulation of benefit plans and not-for-profit organizations can affect the design and cost of benefits and plan administration.
- Managing the risks and economics of the healthcare plan in the current healthcare economic environment.
- Being attentive to possible future problems stemming from the increase in age of new entrants into the ministry, which results in shorter careers and issues regarding adequacy of current pension replacement ratios.
- The issue of clergy compensation and its effect on the level of benefits provided.
- Increasing fund development revenues in order to maintain and increase funding for current assistance programs and to fund needed new programs.
- Recruitment of nominees to its board of directors with requisite skills to oversee its complex regulatory, benefits design, investment, and financial operations.

B. *General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC)*

Purpose—The primary purpose of the GAMC is to lead and coordinate the total mission program of the PC(USA) (*Manual of the General Assembly*, 2010, *Organization for Mission*, V., p. 17). The 218th General Assembly (2008) recommended (and the presbyteries subsequently approved) inserting “Mission” to the General Assembly Council’s name as a way of highlighting this primary purpose (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 617).

History and Operations—The two denominations that merged in 1983 to form the PC(USA) had legacies of being “intentional in revising mission policy and program in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit and a changing world context,” however their agency structures were not necessarily compatible (*Manual of the General Assembly*, 2010, *Organization for Mission*, I. History of the Structure for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), p. 1). The GAC held its first meeting on June 15, 1983. As it sought to continue being faithful in its call to mission, the uniting GA (1983) launched a period of discernment that led to a “Life and Mission Statement” for the PC(USA), adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985) (*Mi-*

notes, 1985, Part I, pp. 48, 240). The “Life and Mission Statement” informed the *Structural Design for Mission* [approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986) (*Minutes*, 1986, Part I, pp. 69, 362)], which prescribed the PC(USA)’s organization for mission from 1986–1993.

In subsequent years, the church’s discernment of its vision of mission, and that vision informing the form and function of the GAMC continued. As a result, the GAMC sees its mission as:

- “... advis[ing] and respond[ing] to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for the Ministries of our church” (*Manual of the General Assembly*, 2010, *Organization for Mission*, V., p. 17).
- “... offer[ing] the world a visible witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With congregations, governing bodies, and other mission partners [GAMC] serve[s] the church in mission” (*Mission Work Plan Vision Statement 2009–2012*, *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 705).
- fulfilling its responsibilities as explicated in the *Book of Order* (G-13.0201), namely:
 - a. to cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church;
 - b. to provide resources to support equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for members of racial ethnic groups, for women, for various age groups, for persons regardless of marital condition (married, single, widowed, or divorced), and for persons with disabilities;
 - c. to develop and propose, for General Assembly approval, the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the General Assembly Mission Council, doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval an accompanying budget that will implement the mission work plan of the General Assembly Mission Council;
 - d. to act in those specific matters assigned to the General Assembly Mission Council by the General Assembly or this Constitution, acting always according to previously enacted General Assembly policies, reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions;
 - e. to perform such additional responsibilities and duties as may be assigned by the General Assembly. (*Book of Order 2009-2011*)

The GAMC advises and responds to the GA on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for the ministries of the church (“Joint Agency Submission to the Special Review Committee on the Service of the Whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), October 2008”). These ministries are clustered into six “ministry areas”: (1) Compassion, Peace, and Justice; (2) Evangelism and Church Growth; (3) Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women; (4) Theology Worship and Education; (5) Vocation, jointly with the OGA; and (6) World Mission. Whereas the staff of the GAMC is aligned along these ministry area lines, the elected GAMC committees are configured around five “goal areas”: (a) Evangelism; (b) Discipleship; (c) Justice; (d) Vocation; and (e) Stewardship. This organization is intended to lessen opportunities for what is often referred to as “silo effect.” When staff reported to committees aligned in the same structure, information sharing, collaboration, and synergy were less likely. Under the current design, a committee focused on a particular goal area (e.g., Justice) can work to see how that goal could be more effectively accomplished across several relevant ministry areas (Compassion, Peace, and Justice and Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries).

Every two years, the GAMC presents a Mission Work Plan to the GA with strategic goals to give direction to the ministries and more specific operational goals to implement these directives. The GAMC also prepares a budget accounting for how the directives will be funded. At the same time, the GAMC receives scores of referrals from the GA that need to be accommodated into the General Assembly Council’s ongoing work. This often requires an adjustment to the Work Plan to reallocate human and financial resources.

The office of Middle Governing Bodies (MGBs) is a joint office of the GAMC and the OGA, serving to connect those offices to synods and presbyteries and to address the myriad connections that those agencies have with MGBs in the course of their service to the church. In addition, the GAMC shares support and other services with other agencies (such as communications and funds development, human resources, information technology, finance, legal, and audit).

Accomplishments and Collaboration—In addition to the change in the General Assembly Council’s organizational structure to minimize “silo effect” and the inclusion of “Mission” to its name, the GAMC has undertaken other measures to increase communication and focus both within the agency and across the denomination:

- In its role of nurturing the ongoing process of discernment of vision (as it relates to the structures and practices by which the church carries out mission in our current context), the GAMC was instrumental in developing two GA actions that set the framework for the mission of the entire PC(USA):
 - *Growing Christ’s Church Deep and Wide*: Approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), this document articulates the PC(USA)’s commitment to growth—not just in numbers, but foundationally growth in evangelism, discipleship, servanthood, and diversity (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1238).
 - *An Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God’s Mission*: This covenant, signed by individuals representing a broad range of Presbyterian-related mission organizations at a January 2008 gathering,

- proclaims the biblical values that inform our understanding of mission and how we are to live those values out;
- commits the signers to work cooperatively in their various approaches to mission;
- calls the church to prayer and specific tasks to incarnate the spirit of the covenant; and
- invites others to join in this new collaborative model of mission.

- Areas of collaboration with other agencies include:

- GAMC and PPC: The Office of Theology and Worship participates on the Presbyterian Hymnal Project, with support from Research Services. The GAMC staff members serve as advisors for elsewhere the ThoughtfulChristianforYouth.com.

- GAMC and PILP: The PILP administers the Church Loan Program (CLP) on behalf of GAMC, and PILP serves as a resource for the mission grants program in connection with the Mission Development Resources Committee, which oversees the program.

- GAMC and BOP: The Office of Vocation (GAMC/OGA) and the BOP have identified various programs for the support and nurture of ministers of Word and Sacrament conducted by national agencies, with the intention of coordinating assistance for clergy across the range of career stages.

- GAMC and OGA: The Big Tent Conference, which for the first time brought together ten PC(USA) conferences in June 2009, was a joint effort planned and implemented by the GAMC and the OGA. The GAMC resources the Stated Clerk on social witness and other policy statements. In addition to the other shared and support staff already mentioned, an ecumenical staff team coordinates both the ecclesiastical aspects of our ecumenical engagements (which are the responsibility of the OGA) and our mission engagements through the GAMC.

- GAMC and Presbyterian Foundation: Significant funding for GA mission comes from endowments held, and gifts made, through the Foundation. Accordingly, the staffs of these two agencies work together on a nearly daily basis to assure that funds are available for GA mission and are expended in accordance with applicable laws and donor restrictions.

Opportunities—The GAMC is exploring opportunities for greater collaboration as follows:

- Several GAMC offices are participating in the planning of PPC’s product offering, PresbyterianLeader.com.
- With the OGA, the GAMC is in conversation with their counterparts in other denominations to discuss opportunities for further collaboration with them.
- The GAMC and the Foundation are exploring further collaboration in funds development.

A fuller enumeration of these and other examples of collaboration (existing and proposed) can be found in the Joint Agency Submission to the Special Review Committee (Appendix II).

Challenges—The GAMC entities such as Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) are in the forefront of vital mission initiatives across the world. Nonetheless, the Review Committee’s survey reflects a surprising lack of knowledge across the church’s MGBs, seminary leaders, ministers, and GA commissioners regarding the structures and programs of the church. This challenge calls for more effective communication and interpretation strategies.

The current economic environment and trends toward designated giving have contributed to a sense of increased competition for financial resources to fund mission. In addition to the efforts already described that the GAMC has undertaken to engage other mission entities in covenant and collaboration, the agency is addressing the challenge of interpreting to the church the history as well as the new story of Presbyterians in mission.

With limited financial resources comes the need to prioritize and focus on things the GAMC does well. This may require painful choices, but the GAMC recognizes the importance of two-way communication with all parts of the church in discerning these priorities and fostering relationships with all parts of the church in order for meaningful honest communication to exist.

The GAMC and the Foundation have experienced levels of disagreement regarding use of endowment-generated funds designated for PC(USA) mission support. Challenges and opportunities for increased collaboration are addressed elsewhere in this report.

C. *Office of the General Assembly (OGA)*

Call and Structure—Bringing the church together is at the heart of the OGA’s work. In carrying out this call, the OGA experiences consistent and constant tensions. First, there is a sense of being both invisible and essential. The OGA is an essential part of who we are as a church. It is the servant of our governance. It is the agency that nurtures and supports our unique way of making decisions at the biennial GAs and within every congregation. It is the support for the network of rela-

tionships with and among MGBs. It is the caretaker of our history and heritage. It is the agency that nurtures those who are preparing for and seeking to do ministry. It is the agency that serves, cares for, and ministers to present and future leaders of the church.

This call is carried out first through the work of the Stated Clerk, who is the continuing ecclesial officer of the GA and chief executive officer of the OGA. The Stated Clerk preserves and defends the Constitution and supports the decisions, actions, and program of the GA. The Stated Clerk also gives advisory opinions concerning the meaning of the Constitution and the meaning of the actions of the GA. The Stated Clerk is assisted by other staff, consisting of eight department directors, all of them Associate Stated Clerks. The departments are Constitutional Services; Ecumenical and Agency Relations; History; Communication, Development, and Technology; GA Meeting Service; and Office of the Stated Clerk, which includes MGB Relations and the Department of Vocation, both shared with the GAMC.

Clearly this is essential and critical work for the health, ministry, and mission of the church. Ironically, however, the Review Committee has discovered that the OGA is one of the “invisible” agencies of the church. In the Review Committee’s survey, the OGA ranked, even with GA commissioners, as being only “generally” or “somewhat” familiar.

The OGA staff, including the Stated Clerk, spends much time consulting with the church. It is reported, for example, that Church Leadership Connection staff consult regularly with ministers, presbytery staff, and committee leadership regarding leadership searches. Additionally, OGA conducts listening sessions throughout the church in an effort to be in touch with and responsive to Presbyterians. In spite of all that activity and commitment to relationship, the OGA remains relatively unknown.

A second tension with which the OGA lives is between “efficiency and effectiveness.” Increasingly the church asks for greater efficiency, even questioning the validity of GA itself. However, the call that the OGA seeks to carry out is not to be merely efficient. Rather it is to be effective. Specifically, it is to assure that church governance and discipline are orderly and fairly implemented, ensuring that each voice in the church is given adequate and appropriate hearing.

Collaboration—The OGA leaders indicate that there are informal mechanisms for collaboration with other agencies. For example, regular gatherings between the executives and chairs of the boards of each agency have provided support and encouragement for collaborative work. More obvious collaboration is seen in major initiatives like the Big Tent Conference in 2009, which brought together what had been ten separate conferences, and the National Pastors Sabbath.

Given the “invisibility” issue noted, many in the church have difficulty identifying how and where the OGA (and other agencies, as well) have or have not collaborated. There is, however, a clear, yet undefined, desire to eliminate duplication of services. Part of that desire may arise from a confusion of names and activities. For example, both the OGA and the GAMC collect statistics, but the function and purpose of their respective statistical research vary. The OGA only collects statistics and reports them to the church. The GAMC collects statistics and also analyzes the results. The Review Committee detected, both in feedback received and in survey results, that people across the PC(USA) express both a desire for eliminating duplication and a desire for choices in resources, a paradoxical state that could lead easily to duplication.

Challenges—One continuing challenge for the OGA is the need for consistent and increased education. The high priority identified by survey respondents for communication and the relatively low level of knowledge held across the church about the OGA and its work and responsibilities shape the need and direction for this challenge. Current methods of communication seem to be ineffective in increasing knowledge of the OGA. Discovering new, creative, and substantial methods is needed.

The second challenge has more to do with the whole church and less to do with the OGA specifically. Since the OGA is responsible for measuring the overall health of the church, there is a challenge of finding new and creative means to determine “how we are doing” as a church. Numbers only tell part of the story. Stories and narrative reports come closer to the truth of what the church is and how it is doing. For example, each year at the GA, because of how the church voices concerns and works with one another, a vendor or employee from outside church literally reports being converted to Christ and feeling called into the PC(USA). The whole church is challenged to explore how such stories can move from being “marketing methods” toward becoming clear measures of the meaning and progress of the church.

A third set of challenges relates to the meetings of GA. When GA meets, its agenda is determined primarily by work referred to it by past assemblies and overtures from presbyteries. As the national representative gathering of the whole church, the GA could be the most important element in determining the church’s vision and the one that shapes future direction. This shift presents many challenges to the OGA and, in fact, to the whole church. How can GA continue to be responsive to the needs, questions, and issues that arise from the church and avoid perpetuating a “top down” model of church leadership and, at the same time, also become a visionary body that speaks to the church? If that is a correct direction for the GA, what role should the OGA play in guiding the church in that direction and “designing a process of discerning and designating mission priorities”? Further, if vision and mission priorities could be set by GA for the whole church, how is ownership by the whole church formed and who, as noted previously, would be the “keeper of the vision”? How can commissioners become more significant interpreters of that vision and the work of the whole church and how can the OGA support them?

D. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Foundation)*

History and Operations—The Foundation is a corporate entity that is a fiduciary for the GA, provides investment services, holds title on behalf of the church regarding the investment assets of the church, provides a deferred giving and wills emphasis program, and assures that there is strict adherence to the wishes and restrictions of donors and others who have entrusted funds to its care. In essence, its work and mission for the whole church is to “... cultivate, attract, and manage financial resources of individuals and institutions to serve Christ’s mission” (http://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/about_us/3/mission_statement.aspx). Its tag line is Bringing People & Mission Together.

In 1953, GA directed the Foundation to “carry out a church-wide educational and interpretive program ... and to solicit deferred gifts and bequests for the immediate and future benefit of the Church.” That mandate has been reaffirmed by subsequent GAs through 2008. To support this mandate, the Foundation produces a full program of resources available free of charge to congregations so that they may promote the importance of remembering the church as part of Christian estate planning. Millions of dollars are left to churches and the PC(USA) as a result of these efforts. The Foundation serves as fiduciary for more than 7,000 endowment funds and receives gifts in other forms that benefit the mission and ministry of the PC(USA).

In approximately one-third of the assets where the Foundation is a fiduciary corporation, the GAMC either has an interest as beneficiary or serves as the Foundation’s agent for administration and disbursement of funds made available. In 2008, the Foundation made available to the GAMC more than 23 million dollars. The partnership between the GAMC and the Foundation ensures the proper investment of funds, that donor designations are followed, that government regulations are met, and that funding is provided for the mission of the church. This segregation of duties between the Foundation and the GAMC provides independence and integrity to the process of distributing moneys that donors have entrusted to the church for its mission. The Foundation also serves as the fiduciary to the Church Loan Program and for the Jarvie Commonwealth Service Committee (which successfully serves the elderly in the New York City area).

Opportunities—In conversations with representatives of the other agencies, the following were key shared insights:

- the Foundation is held in high regard among some church individuals, but is not widely known;
- the Foundation is known for its integrity and wide-reaching mission impact;
- the Foundation sees itself as a funds development arm for mission, not as a mission arm of the church;
- there is tension between the Foundation and the GAMC regarding funds “ownership”;
- the whole church would benefit from more unified funds development efforts.

Accomplishments and Agency Collaboration—Since our initial meetings, there have been notable accomplishments in collaboration between the Foundation and the GAMC, including regular meetings of the agency heads, the respective legal/operational teams, and establishment of the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee. The RFRC will serve as an important and constructive safety valve. The Foundation believes that both agencies will cooperate dramatically where questions regarding funds restrictions can be resolved short of involving the RFRC. These matters are addressed further elsewhere in this report.

More than 1.7 million dollars in foreign funds have been released in July 2009 alone and the GAMC has completed the downloading of its payment chains into a computer program. The Foundation was also instrumental in creating a two-day meeting at the Foundation offices for the heads of the Foundation, the GAMC, the OGA, and the BOP, resulting in a decision to convene the field forces of these four agencies, plus invitations to the other two agencies, for a 2010 event in Louisville to educate and inform roughly eighty field representatives on the missions, funding needs, and initiatives of all six agencies.

The Foundation also offers, free of charge, the Mission & Ministry Profiles, which provide the PC(USA) and related entities with the opportunity to share information about the organization’s goals and mission initiatives. Profiles are on the Foundation’s website (<http://presbyterianfoundation.org>). As of September 2008, more than 190 mission and ministry organizations had posted a profile.

Challenges—The above summary represents some of the opportunities and challenges faced by the Foundation and current accomplishments taken toward increased collaboration and productivity. An analysis of structure and reporting relationships would indicate that there are opportunities for greater clarity and efficiencies between the agencies while maintaining the integrity of each. The current checks and balances afforded by the denomination’s governance structure are healthy. Clearly, both the Foundation and the GAMC are now working collaboratively and cooperatively to exercise wise and useful judgments within the checks and balances of the Constitution and deliverances. It is paramount that the collaborative efforts continue.

Centralized funds development efforts may also prove beneficial if such can be approached absent turf and personalized agendas. There are also synergies to be gained in sharing of specified investment arenas.

There are many dedicated Presbyterians who want to make gifts to the church. There are many good and generous donors who want to see results. Clarifying the missions, working relationships, and interactions of the six entities will enable that to happen to a greater capacity.

E. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP)*

History and Operations—The purpose of the PILP is to offer low-cost loans to congregations and middle governing bodies (MGBs) to enable them to purchase, renovate, and expand worship and mission space, and to promote the growth of the church. The PILP was funded initially with a \$4 million grant that was withdrawn from the \$50 million fund. The \$50 million fund is a Church Loan endowment fund. By 1998 PILP was fully operational.

There are two primary sources for the loans made through PILP: Endowment Funds and Investor Funds. Having one entity—PILP—administering both the Endowment and Investor funded loans simplifies the process for the borrowing congregations and MGBs.

The Endowment Funds are gifts to the denomination from Presbyterians. For more than 165 years these gifts have provided congregations with low-cost loans. The Foundation is the fiduciary of these endowment funds, and the PC(USA) acts as the Foundation's agent for disbursement and administration of the loan funds. The PC(USA), A Corporation has engaged PILP as PC(USA), A Corporation's agent to disburse and administer the loans issued from these funds. The loan policies for the use of these funds are set by the Mission Development Resources Committee of the GAMC. The PILP, in turn, has an operating agreement with the PC(USA) to administer these loan policies and to manage the loan portfolio of the CLP.

A second source of loan funds is Investor Funds. The PILP's investors are the other GA agencies, congregations, governing bodies, and individuals. These investors purchase Term Notes or Denominational Account Receipts, with the expectation that the principal will be repaid with interest. The sales of Term Notes are regulated by State Securities Administrators and the General Offering Circular must be approved in each state. Since its founding, PILP has received more than \$137 million in investments from GA agencies, individuals, congregations, and governing bodies. The current balance of investments net of redemptions is more than \$75 million.

Congregations and MGBs are obligated to repay their loans, usually in monthly payments of principal and interest. The repaid interest on loans made from Investor Funds is PILP's source of income to pay interest to its investors, to cover its operating costs, and to build additional capital for future loans. The PILP does not draw on mission funds of the PC(USA).

The PILP's governing body is a fifteen-person board of directors that is elected by the GAMC and confirmed by the GA. Candidates for the board of directors are nominated by the GAMC, the Foundation, synods, presbyteries, the GA Nominating Committee, and the PILP Board. The highly diverse board is composed of clergy, bankers, accountants, financial advisors, and other persons with required and needed expertise.

The PILP's staff includes two ordained ministers, three elders, and one trustee, all of whom are involved in the mission of local congregations and their presbyteries. Staff members are skilled in funds development, marketing services, credit operations and analysis, and loan operations.

Accomplishments and Agency Collaboration—By most measures, PILP has been successful in achieving its mission of providing low-cost loans to congregations and MGBs to expand mission space and to promote the growth of the church. Moreover, PILP has accomplished its mission, in part, through collaboration with other entities of the PC(USA).

Accomplishments—As indicated above, PILP administers loans made from both the Endowment Funds and the Investor Funds. The PILP assumed responsibility for the former in 2000. This administrative consolidation of the two programs created a more efficient process for the GA and for borrowers. Congregations and MGBs now have one application, one set of documents, one closing and mortgage, and one loan payment, all through one contact point. All loans are on one system for uniform reporting.

From July 2000 through June 2009, the Coordinated Loan Program (endowment funds and investor funds) disbursed more than \$201-million in loans. The current balance of outstanding loans is more than \$168 million. This figure does not include \$11-million in pending construction loans or \$9.6-million in commitments pending closing.

Operationally, in 2008 the program experienced its eighth consecutive year in which revenues exceeded expenses.

Collaboration—As indicated above, through an operating agreement, the PC(USA), A Corporation has engaged PILP as its agent to administer the Church Loan Program. The PILP is compensated from the endowment funds of the Church Loan Program via fees that the PC(USA), A Corporation assesses these funds. Through a customer service agreement, PILP purchases legal, accounting, information technology, and human resource services from the GAMC.

Several of PILP's larger investors are governing bodies and agencies of the GA. The PILP began selling Term Notes in 1996. The GAC and the Foundation gave a commitment to invest a total of \$10-million in the same year. In 2000, the Foun-

dition increased its commitment to invest by an additional \$5-million. Subsequently, the PPC and the OGA have become PILP investors.

The program collaborates with synods that have investment and loan programs. The PILP does not seek funds from individual investors from the Synods of Alaska/Northwest and Mid-America since both have pre-existing programs for individuals. Likewise, investments are not sought from congregations and presbyteries in the Synods of Alaska/Northwest, Mid-America, and Pacific since all three have pre-existing investment programs for congregations and presbyteries. In working to better define its mission and eliminate duplication, the Synod of Lincoln Trails decided to close down its investment and loan program. In 2005, PILP began the process of transferring the mission of the Synod of Lincoln Trails Capital Improvement Program to PILP's Coordinated Loan Program. The Synod of Mid-America has been a participant in several PILP loans.

The PILP participates in national and local programs to help build the church in ways beyond loans per se. It was one of the sponsoring agencies of the National Pastors' Sabbath in 2009; it is a part of an interagency task force to develop a national strategy and network for recruiting racial ethnic and female candidates for management positions in the agencies; and it conducts workshops on project feasibility for presbyteries.

The PILP gathers data from congregations through the Annual Statistical Reports and shares these data as well as inquiries with Church Financial Campaign Services (CFCS).

Opportunities—As shown in the survey commissioned by the Review Committee, PILP was one of the least recognized agencies of the church. For an entity that depends on investors for a significant portion of its revenues, this is not a positive sign.

There are several reasons why many Presbyterians probably do not know about PILP. These include: (1) congregations undertake building projects about once every twenty years and most pastors provide leadership for no more than one or two building projects during their active ministry; (2) awareness of GA resources available for assisting with building and financing capital projects is not urgent until a project presents itself; and (3) PILP is a relatively young entity having been operational for only twelve years.

Fortunately, the PILP management team recognizes this problem and strives to be the first resource that comes to mind when congregations develop building plans and when presbyteries seek to help congregations with these plans. Among PILP's initiatives in this regard are: to provide initial consultations with congregational leadership; to increase awareness in participating presbyteries and synods through presentations, visits, etc.; to maintain its relationship with CFCS; to increase the circulation of the PILP newsletter; to participate in national events for church development leaders; and to expand direct mail and e-mail communications with governing bodies.

As PILP becomes better known and its capital base grows accordingly, it will have the opportunity to further reduce the margin between the cost of funds and lending rates, thereby enabling PILP to be even more effective in providing low-cost loans.

Challenges—Despite the many accomplishments of PILP since 1995 and its future potential, it does have challenges that could impact its future. Currently identified challenges include:

- PILP will need additional capital to grow as rapidly as the demand for new loans.
- The Foundation and PC(USA) must resolve their differences regarding the endowments of the Church Loan Program.
- Financial challenges in MGBs may result in a diminished capacity to guarantee loans and maintain investments in PILP.

F. *Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)*

Mission and Organization—By action of the 205th General Assembly (1993), PPC was constituted to “serve the needs of the PC(USA) for educational and theological materials and for promoting the mission of the PC(USA) by publishing theological books for a wide audience” (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 455). The PPC's mission statement, revised in 2003, declares that “building on the Reformed tradition, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation seeks to glorify God by contributing to the spiritual and intellectual vitality of Christ's church. To that end, PPC publishes resources that advance religious scholarship, stimulate conversation about moral values, and inspire faithful living.” The current mission statement surrenders the original language that pointed specifically to PPC's pivotal service to “Presbyterian congregations” (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, 42.001, pp. 44, 619).

The PPC publishes resources under six imprints, each targeting a particular audience. These imprints are *WJK Press*, which publishes academic books with broader ecumenical appeal; *Geneva Press*, which publishes Presbyterian resources for leaders and congregations; *These Days*, which provides daily devotions in printed format; *Theology Today*, a scholarly journal published in partnership with Princeton Theological Seminary; *The Thoughtful Christian* (TTC), a series of multi-themed online studies for adults and youth; and *The Presbyterian leader.com*, a web-based resource for training Presbyterian leaders.

Online resources currently produced by PPC provide materials in response to the increasing instructional needs of congregations, thus enhancing the curricular material produced by the Office of Congregational Ministries (OCM) of the GAMC. In 1996 the PPC, by action of the GA, transferred publication of curricular material for congregational education (PREM) to GAMC. Given the challenges of curricular publishing and distribution confronting the GAMC, there have been conversations about either placing the curricular publishing venture of the PC(USA) in the hands of PPC or arranging a collaborative model of production between GAMC-OCM and PPC. At this point, both parties acknowledge that keeping curricular production separate is beneficial for the mission and purpose of both organizations, especially as PPC understands its own editorial autonomy.

While production of educational material in “curricular format” by PPC can be seen as a duplication of or competition with curricular publishing from the GAMC, it has been generally recognized that: the format in which the studies are provided are unique to PPC and are not replicated anywhere in the PC(USA) system; there is an ample audience for varied curricular material; and that such initiatives are in accordance with both GA mandate and PPC’s mission.

The Review Committee’s survey demonstrates that PPC products are well-known among target audiences, but less known in other audiences. Those who were surveyed at academic institutions, for example, knew well the WJK products, but were less aware of TTC. The most immediate users of PPC resources were aware of PPC and its work—seminary faculty, Christian educators, and congregations. General Assembly commissioners were generally aware of PPC due to the display of resources at GA meetings. Leaders of national agencies, synods, and presbyteries are less knowledgeable about PPC’s work.

The PPC is financially self-sustaining in an era when other religious publishing agencies are experiencing decline. Over the past seven years, PPC has achieved an average annual surplus of more than \$500,000 on publishing operations, allowing PPC to contribute to mission projects of the PC(USA). The PPC will fund \$2.5 million in development expenses for the next Presbyterian hymnal.

Additionally, PPC will continue to support its own benevolence programs, including: Books without Borders, which provides books to seminary libraries in developing countries; Disaster Relief, which helps reestablish collections of congregational or seminary libraries lost to natural disasters; Equipping the Saints, which provides pastoral resources for new clergy; the Robert Bohl Racial Ethnic Internship, which encourages gifted racial-ethnic seminary students to enter religious publishing; and the Price Gwynn III Church Leadership Series. These benevolence programs are realized through partnerships with various offices of the OGA and the GAMC.

Corporate Partnerships—As a self-sustaining agency and an ecumenically recognized religious publisher, PPC has established partnerships outside the six PC(USA) agencies to promote and enhance its mission. Currently, PPC publishes a twelve-volume lectionary commentary entitled *Feasting the Word* in collaboration with Columbia Theological Seminary. It also publishes the academic journal *Theology Today* in partnership with Princeton Theological Seminary. The Review Committee encourages PPC to explore similar collaborations with other PC(USA) seminaries, thus benefitting from the wealth of scholarship present at our theological institutions.

The PPC partners with recognized and emerging authors to provide the theological diversity needed for the interfaith, interdenominational, and scholarly comprehensiveness required to maintain the prominence and credibility of its titles. This collaboration has been helpful in developing the wide spectrum of adult studies represented in the TTC imprint. Through TTC, PPC has achieved ecumenical endorsement and promotion from the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the Episcopal Church.

The PPC has partnered with Cokesbury, the publishing arm of the United Methodist Church, to provide warehousing, customer marketing, and distribution. This partnership has raised issues among some Presbyterian customers who prefer to receive product information and purchase directly from PPC. While PPC is clear about the business rationale of this partnership, the average Presbyterian may find it difficult to recognize where to acquire Presbyterian resources. Responding to this concern, PPC reestablished a bookstore and product information section within their offices at the PC(USA) Center. The partnership with Cokesbury, however, has proved mutually beneficial. Cokesbury conducts book displays at Presbyterian events, is PPC’s largest buyer, and pays commission on sales to Presbyterians.

Interagency Collaboration—The PPC provides both counsel and support to PC(USA) agencies developing resources for church nurture and development. In collaboration with the GAMC, PPC has published the *Book of Worship* in Spanish and is currently considering publishing similar resources in Spanish and Korean. In collaboration with the GAMC (Office of Youth Ministry), PPC is planning to develop a new Youth and Parents of Teens Studies to be part of TTC e-curriculum. In conjunction with the OGA, PPC produced the official Bible Study Pack for the 218th General Assembly (2008) and recently launched an online resource, *The Presbyterian Leader*, with resources for elders, deacons, and other church officers. *The Presbyterian Leader* will include an online worship planner for worship leaders. There are also plans to distribute Westminster John Knox and Geneva study books (i.e. *The Bible from Scratch*, *The Bible for Everyone*, *Presbyterian Questions and Answers*) as curriculum options through the Congregational Ministries Publishing of the GAMC.

The most significant collaboration underway is publication of the next Presbyterian hymnal, authorized by the GA (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 11, 1142), in partnership with the Office of Theology and Worship and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians. Cost for development and distribution of the new hymnal will be borne by PPC, which has allocated \$2.5 million to this venture.

Other initiatives of interagency engagement include PPC's presence at PC(USA) events like the Big Tent, APCE, and the National Pastors' Sabbath.

Some agencies, like the GAMC, are required to invest funds with the Foundation. Other agencies, like PPC, have historically chosen to do so in a spirit of partnership. The PPC, however, has experienced concerns about the investment performance and fee structure of the Foundation (a concern expressed to the Review Committee by others, including MGB representatives). In a spirit of partnership and collaboration, PPC and the Foundation discussed these concerns. As of the time the Review Committee is preparing this report, however, PPC no longer invests funds with the Foundation. The Review Committee is aware, as of the time this report is being finalized, that the Foundation has gone through several major transitions and has made substantive adjustments to its strategic plan. The GA committee that receives this report will want to hear of such developments in an update from the Foundation.

According to the Review Committee's survey, PPC is a little-known PC(USA) agency. Survey respondents were largely unaware of PPC's collaboration with other agencies. Given the high priority assigned by respondents to ecumenical commitment, PPC is missing an important opportunity to communicate its unique ecumenical connections to assist other GA agencies in their ecumenical endeavors.

An area identified as a top priority by those surveyed and indeed a mandate of GA for all its agencies is the PC(USA) commitment to diversity. The PPC acknowledges that its materials and publications need to be more diverse. Toward that end, the Review Committee encourages PPC to engage a viability study about publications for a more diverse market in terms of theological perspective, race, and ethnicity.

The PPC should communicate more effectively with the whole church their mission work and their collaborations with the GAMC and the OGA to produce materials for forming Presbyterian identity and informing mission. To this end, PPC should make better use of its web page as a communication platform and not just a marketing "catalogue." The PPC web page could provide information about its history and relationship to the PC(USA), as well as its mission.

X. Conversations with Middle Governing Body Representatives

In addition to the survey contracted by the Review Committee (summarized in Section VII of this report and available online at <http://www.pcusa.org/committeereview/>, two venues provided opportunity for input regarding the Review Committee's assigned task from MGB leaders:

- On April 21, 2009, two representatives of the Review Committee met with synod executives.
- A group of Review Committee members hosted a telephone conference call with representatives of the Association of Executive Presbyters on June 26, 2009.

Both conversations provided opportunity to discuss the collaborative efforts of the six agencies, the accomplishments and failings of individual agencies, and ways the agencies specifically interact with MGBs. Insights from these conversations have been incorporated in the report and recommendations.

XI. GAMC, Presbyterian Foundation, and Restricted Funds Resolution Committee

Regarding the referral of Item 08-21, the Review Committee met with representatives of the GAMC and the Foundation. Additionally, the Review Committee consulted with the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (RFRC) through its moderator. We observe that the two agencies have distinctive roles regarding the restricted funds in question. The GAMC is the organization that, in many cases, distributes and/or uses restricted funds generated for mission. The GAMC has responsibility, on behalf of the GA, to oversee and implement the GA's mission priorities and directives. The Foundation, on the other hand, has a fiduciary responsibility to donors to ensure that funds are used as stipulated by the donor of the gift. At best, the two agencies provide something of a check and balance regarding responsible use of the restricted funds. Occasionally, however, the GAMC and the Foundation have disagreed on matters pertaining to use of the funds, i.e., whether or not the uses of funds fit the parameters and requirements in which and with which the gift was made to the Foundation.

The Review Committee emphasizes that every effort must continue to be made to ensure a healthy and collaborative relationship between the GAMC and the Foundation regarding use of restricted funds. Strong and effective communication between the two agencies and the leadership of the agencies is imperative. Our most recent communication from the leaders of the GAMC and the Foundation indicates increased commitment to collaboration and documents encouraging developments, including:

- Regular meetings between the Executive Director of the GAMC and the Interim President and Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation;
- Formation of a Working Group of GAMC members and Foundation trustees and formalization of a covenant to strengthen the working relationship between the two agencies;

- Establishment of mutual access to the respective data bases of the two agencies, thus strengthening communication and reducing opportunities for confusion and conflict;
- Cooperative work between the agencies to better understand restrictions and reporting requirements of federal regulatory organizations and to resolve related differences of interpretation between the agencies, to the end that funds are made available for mission;
- Cooperative work between the agencies to better understand both current restrictions of funds and priority needs for new funds as they are established;
- Monthly reports from the Foundation to the GAMC regarding endowment fund details;
- Increased sharing of ideas and best practices regarding information technology and services;
- Monthly meetings between representatives of the legal departments of the two agencies;
- Expanded software capability that allows staffs of both agencies to input, view, and track information on interagency issues.

Progress is documented in the joint letter submitted by executive leaders of the GAMC and the Foundation, and affirmed by their respective boards, to the Review Committee. It is included in Appendix III of this report. The Review Committee affirms and encourages these efforts. The committee commends the obvious commitment of the executive leaders of the GAMC and the Foundation to the improvement of communication and working relationships as a model and example for other GAMC and Foundation staff members. Geographic separation of these two agencies makes such commitments all the more important. Face-to-face communication, joint worship, relationship building, and collaboration will benefit other departments and organizational levels of the two agencies.

At the time of the Review Committee's work and report preparation, the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (RFRC) has had an organizational meeting and has met with representatives of both the GAMC and the Foundation. They have not, however, been called upon for resolution of any disputed issue. It is, therefore, too early to make any judgment upon the effectiveness of the RFRC. Theoretically, nonetheless, the Review Committee sees potential need and value of continuing the existence of the RFRC. Should disagreement arise between the GAMC and the Foundation, the existence of a third party to assist and attempt resolution clearly benefits the whole church. Legal intervention, though potentially necessary and helpful, should be avoided if possible.

To that end, the Review Committee will include in its recommendations and observations: the continuation of the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee; continuation and expansion of efforts to strengthen communication and cooperation between the GAMC and the Foundation regarding restricted funds resolution and the reporting of related progress to the RFRC no less than annually; and the suggestion that, should additional clarification of the respective roles of the GAMC and the Foundation become necessary, the RFRC consider obtaining a legal review from a qualified attorney related neither to the GAMC/PC(USA) or the Foundation regarding the relative responsibilities of the GAMC and the Foundation. [See Item 18-09 of the 219th General Assembly (2010).]

XII. The Desire for One Voice to Speak for the Church

The rationale for Item 08-22, the 218th General Assembly (2008)'s action to establish this Review Committee, focuses on coordination among the six agencies of the PC(USA), noting that such coordination is "voluntary and not always effective." In conversations with participants in the review process (agency representatives, middle governing body representatives, and survey participants), as well as in its own discussions, the Review Committee perceives a need and an expressed desire for someone or some entity to promote and ensure the collaboration of all agencies, as appropriate, as well as middle governing bodies and sessions, toward realization of the General Assembly's mission priorities. Many people speak of the desire to have "one voice" that speaks for the PC(USA).

Furthermore, the Review Committee has heard and affirms a strongly expressed desire to have a "comprehensive mission priority" for the PC(USA). Such mission prioritization must come from the General Assembly itself. The Review Committee thinks that a person or entity must be unambiguously identified with the responsibility for promoting and ensuring the collaboration of the whole church, including as appropriate the six agencies of the PC(USA), toward the realization of the mission priorities of the church.

The Review Committee perceives a lack of clarity, potential confusion, and a possible impediment to effective collaboration in the *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. On the one hand, *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* stipulates in Section V.:

The General Assembly Council shall advise and respond to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for the Ministries of our church. The primary purpose of the General Assembly Council is to lead and coordinate the total mission program. It

will cultivate a style of work that emphasizes: coordination among ministries; flexible deployment of resources to match changing needs; allocation of funding to reflect stated goals; concluding as well as initiating programs; attention to the needs and gifts of congregations; effective relationships with all governing bodies; and holding the vision described without reverting to old patterns. (*Manual of the General Assembly, 2010, Organization for Mission*, p. 17).

The Review Committee perceives a lack of clarity in this language, specifically in the use and meaning of “Ministries of our church” and “total mission program.” It is the Review Committee’s sense that this language refers specifically to the “Ministries” and “total mission program” particularly delegated to the oversight of the GAMC rather than to the broader and more inclusive mission of the whole church, including all GA agencies. The language seems, nonetheless, ambiguous and confusing.

On the other hand, *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* stipulates in Section IV.B.2.n.: “The Stated Clerk shall promote the harmony and efficiency of the General Assembly and its agencies in cooperation with the General Assembly Mission Council and its Executive Director, with special attention to relationships between General Assembly entities, and with synods, presbyteries, and sessions” (*Manual of the General Assembly, 2010, Organization for Mission*, p. 10).

In summary, the Review Committee perceives confusion and potential conflict regarding the respective roles of

- the General Assembly Mission Council and its Executive Director; and
- The Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk.

The confusion perceived by the Review Committee relates quite possibly to the 218th General Assembly (2008)’s Item 08-22, the rationale of which indicated that prior agency reviews received questions regarding “the rationale for the separation of the GAC and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).” The confusion lends itself potentially to competition, which becomes an impediment to collaboration.

XIII. Conclusions, Observations, and Recommendations

The Review Committee sees a desperate need for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—through the General Assembly and its agencies, as well as other governing bodies—to enthusiastically claim its identity and clearly define its mission. It is not our task as a committee to do this. It is the task of the whole church, a task of discernment, grounded in worship, study of Scripture, and prayer. This is a task that never ends, for which the General Assembly can and must provide leadership. Once we claim that identity and our particular mission, however timeless or time-bound they may be, we need to clearly, creatively, and expansively communicate them to the whole church so that all can joyfully and effectively work together toward accomplishing the work of God’s kingdom entrusted particularly to us, here and now.

It is our hope that such unity rooted in our identity in Christ and such a clear call to mission shaped and sustained by the Spirit will glorify God, renew the PC(USA), and attract others to be a part of what God is doing in and among us. To such ends, we humbly make the recommendations that follow this prayer by George MacLeod, founder of the Iona Community, cited in *Christ of the Celts: The Healing of Creation* by J. Philip Newell (Paulist Press, 1997, p. 92):

*Give us grace in our changing day
To stand by the temple that is the present church,
The noisome temple
The sometimes scandalized temple that is the present church,
Listening sometime to what again seems mumbo jumbo
Make it our custom to go
Till the new outline of your Body for our day
Becomes visible in our midst.*

A. There is good and sufficient reason to keep the six agencies as separate but interrelated entities. Based on data gathered through conversations with agency leaders, a survey, conversations with middle governing body leaders, and its own deliberations, the Review Committee perceives neither a compelling case nor an obvious will or desire for serious structural reorganization of General Assembly agencies. The Review Committee’s conclusion is not intended to preempt or prohibit such considerations if and when they are deemed needed and appropriate, but the review does not lead us to such a recommendation at this time. That being noted, the Review Committee sees ways in which interagency collaboration can be improved, cases where there is a perception of redundancy that calls for better communication of the respective agencies’ peculiar and distinctive roles, and situations that may call for further delineation of responsibilities.

B. There have been and continue to be good faith efforts for constant, cordial, cooperative, and collaborative ministry for the glory of God, the strengthening of the church’s ministry and mission, and the good of God’s creation. The Review Committee affirms these, and encourages both their continuation and continued development so that all agencies and governing bodies covenant together to cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church.

C. The Review Committee recommends that collaboration with other agencies and MGBs be included specifically as a standard or criterion for the periodic reviews of each General Assembly agency and of each agency head.

D. The Review Committee recommends a review of and possible revisions to the *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* with attention specifically given to the roles and responsibilities of the General Assembly Mission Council and its Executive Director and the Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk. Until such review and clarification takes place, the Review Committee recommends that the Stated Clerk, as the one agency head who is elected by the General Assembly, be affirmed by the General Assembly and its agencies as the one who speaks with one voice for the General Assembly and, as stipulated in the *Organization for Mission*, “shall promote the harmony and efficiency of the General Assembly and its agencies in cooperation with the General Assembly Mission Council and its Executive Director, with special attention to relationships between General Assembly entities, and with synods, presbyteries, and sessions” (*Manual of the General Assembly*, 2010, *Organization for Mission*, IV.B.2.n., p. 10). [See Item 18-08 of the 219th General Assembly (2010).]

E. The Review Committee perceives significant levels of confusion between consultation and collaboration. While good communication and sharing of ideas are valued, they are not in and of themselves enough. Beyond such consultation, commitment to shared priorities and united efforts to accomplish shared mission objectives are at the heart of collaboration. The Review Committee recommends that the Office of the General Assembly include in the agenda of each General Assembly a joint report from the six General Assembly agencies that documents their collaborative accomplishments.

F. Prime areas for new, continued, or increased cooperation and collaboration include:

1. Presbyterian Foundation/General Assembly Mission Council collaboration as documented in the report and in the Clay/Valentine letter included in Appendix III. The Review Committee affirms the progress noted in this letter and emphasizes the importance of continuing such efforts and progress through current and future leadership transitions.

2. To support and facilitate such collaboration between the Presbyterian Foundation and the General Assembly Mission Council, and to help resolve differences when needed, the Review Committee responds to Referral 08-21 with the recommendation that the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee continue to function for at least another two years. [See Item 18-09 of the 219th General Assembly (2010).] The Review Committee sees encouraging signs of progress in negotiating the complex relationship between the GAMC and the Foundation, but nonetheless suggests that, should clarification of roles become necessary, the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee consider obtaining a legal review from a qualified attorney related neither to the General Assembly Mission Council/Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or the Foundation regarding the relative responsibilities of the General Assembly Mission Council and the Foundation.

3. Commitments and efforts of the Foundation and the General Assembly Mission Council, through the appointed workgroup, for improved cooperation and collaboration between the two agencies. The Review Committee recognizes that this workgroup has particular and peculiar issues to address, and affirms the focus and intentions of the agencies and the workgroup. The Foundation/GAMC workgroup could be a model upon which all agencies create a workgroup that focuses on collaboration, or that commitment might be formally recognized as an objective of the current gatherings of chief executives and elected chairs from the six agencies. In one way or another, the Review Committee recommends the formal recognition that collaboration among agencies is a priority, for which all agencies hold themselves accountable.

4. The Review Committee received indications of dissatisfaction with the Foundation’s investment returns and fee structure, as well as concerns about the Foundation’s perceived emphasis on mutual funds. Apart from these management issues, there appears to be a more fundamental concern about how the Foundation views its funds development mission, or the limitations of that mission. The Foundation seems to view its role primarily as an investment advisor; whereas certain other agencies require or expect a more traditional fund-raising approach. The lack of a centralized approach to funds development among the agencies may be confusing and discouraging to potential donors. The Review Committee recommends that these issues be explored with the objective of achieving a more coordinated, collaborative, and cohesive approach to funds development.

5. As noted in Appendix III, there will be a convening of field staff of all agencies in January 2010, in Louisville. As the Review Committee prepares this report, it is with hope that the January convention will have a broad and inclusive agenda, focused on the recognition that all of the General Assembly agencies are in it together—the positive and conscious realization that what each agency does is for the benefit of the whole church. The Review Committee notes with concern the manner in which the General Assembly Mission Council recently deployed regionally-based development associates to expand funding for General Assembly mission. While applauding the motivation of funding mission, the Review Committee recommends that the GAMC affirm a clear commitment to, and together with other agencies take affirmative steps toward, collaboration that goes beyond communication between agencies and includes collaborative planning and funds development. This manner of collaboration is identified as important by all six agencies in their joint report (Appendix II), by middle governing body representatives, and by the General Assembly in its charge to the Review Committee.

6. The Review Committee recommends a meeting or meetings of agency heads and chairs to further focus on collaboration. This meeting should include an educational component on what collaboration really means and involves, as well as a critical assessment regarding obstacles to and opportunities for collaboration. The meeting or meetings should specifically

address collaboration regarding funds development, communications, and church relations, all of which are identified as priority opportunities for collaboration in the report jointly submitted to the Review Committee (Appendix II). Agencies should consider use of a consultant to lead the meeting(s).

7. The need for more effective branding of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its agencies—who they are; what they do; how they collaborate; and a sense of common identity and shared mission commitments among the agencies.

G. The Review Committee recommends that a review of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies, focusing broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in working collaboratively to implement the General Assembly's mission directives, be integrated into the cycle of individual agency reviews. The Review Committee suggests that such a review committee be appointed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). [See Item 18-10 of the 219th General Assembly (2010).]

H. The Review Committee perceives a call and cry for a new way of understanding and being General Assembly, which includes:

1. Increased time given to worship, study, and discernment of who we as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are, who we are called to be, and what we are called to do, all done with the prayer that God's Spirit will unify, renew, energize, and mobilize the church for ministry, mission, and witness. This commitment of time to worship, study, and discernment will better prepare the General Assembly to wrestle with difficult and sometimes controversial, but nonetheless important matters that deserve and demand consideration.

2. More effective management of the amount of time and energy that the General Assembly commits to issues of legislation and policy development, so that increased time and energy may be given to the above focus. Such management may require a greater willingness of the General Assembly to allow prescribed work to be done and actions taken at committee level.

3. Increased attention given by General Assembly to mission prioritization, resulting in a manageable number of identifiable mission directives/priorities that are determined for the whole church, to which General Assembly agencies, middle governing bodies, congregations, and individuals can commit and cooperate. The Review Committee recommends that the General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly collaboratively guide and ensure such a process, drawing upon other agencies and resources as appropriate and as directed by *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* and commended in VI.D.

4. Clarification of who communicates, manages, and oversees the collaborative implementation of those mission directives on behalf of the General Assembly, a role and responsibility that the Review Committee sees residing with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly in cooperation with the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council (note the citation from *Organization for Mission* in prior item XIII.D. above).

5. Consideration of the feasibility and/or desirability of having one voice designated to speak for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and/or some entity designated to hold the church as a whole, particularly the General Assembly agencies, accountable for decisions and commitments made by the General Assembly.

6. The Review Committee recommends referral of these issues to the committee to be appointed by the 219th General Assembly (2010) to review biennial assemblies, recommending that the General Assembly include such review of the way we conduct General Assembly in the scope of this committee's work. [See Item 18-11 of the 219th General Assembly (2010).]

Appendix I. Committee Membership: Backgrounds and Experience

- Clemente H. Anzaldúa: elder; member of El Divino Salvador Presbyterian Church, Corpus Christi, Tex.; presbytery moderator; member, presbytery nominations committee; New Design Task Force to reorganize the presbytery; commissioner to GA in 1996 and chairperson of the Urban and National Issues committee; member of General Assembly Nominating Committee; retired quality assurance specialist in civil service.

- Leslie Day-Ebert: elder; member of Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Santa Ana, Calif.; director of Client Services for family owned and operated business; overture advocate to 208th General Assembly (1996); commissioner to three GAs (1998, 2006, 2008); moderator of presbytery evangelism committee; member of presbytery council.

- Elinor K. Hite: elder; member of Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Ill.; Human Resources executive and specialist; member of Jarvie Foundation Advisory Committee; member and chairperson, Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation; member and chairperson, search committee for president/CEO of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, McCormick Theological Seminary, board of trustees; adjunct faculty teaching organization psychology, Adler Graduate School.

- Jose R. Irizarry: clergy; Presbytery of Suroeste, Puerto Rico; vice-president and academic dean, Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico; previously dean of Doctoral Programs at McCormick Theological Seminary, professor at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago

and the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley; president, Religious Education Association of US and Canada; PC(USA) curriculum consultant; served as member of board of directors, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

- Yubang (Joshua) Lee: clergy; Eastern Korean Presbytery; general secretary, National Korean Presbyterian Council; research scientist and professor.
- John G. McFayden (moderator): clergy; Presbytery of Chicago; pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights, Ill.; presbytery moderator; General Assembly Council, chairperson of Congregational Ministry Division and Stewardship Committee; member, Committee on Theological Education; chairperson, Special Offerings Review Task Force; member, review committee of Office of General Assembly; commissioner to General Assemblies, 1993 and 2006.
- Irvin S. Moxley: clergy, retired; Presbytery of Scioto Valley; parish pastor, Covenant Parish; presbytery moderator; member, presbytery council; commissioner to four General Assemblies; chairperson, Advisory Committee on Discipleship and Worship; chairperson, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy; staff of Office of Stated Clerk to commissioner committees; synod staff, including associate and acting synod executive; member, board of trustees, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.
- Sandra L. Peirce: clergy, retired; Sacramento Presbytery; parish associate, El Dorado County Federated Church, Placerville, Calif.; prior service includes Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; Stated Clerk Review and Nomination Committee; General Assembly Council; Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations; Shape and Form Task Force; PC(USA) delegation—National Council of Churches of Christ; moderator, Synod of the Pacific; moderator, Sacramento Presbytery.
- Kevin L. Porter: clergy; Philadelphia Presbytery; director of Adult Education and Community Life, First Presbyterian Church, Germantown, Pa.; consultant with Dialogue Center, an interdenominational ministry that assists churches and not-for-profits; prior service includes interim pastoral work, hospice chaplaincy, corporate experience with Prudential Insurance Company.
- Alvin N. Puryear: elder; prior denominational service includes membership on program agency, Central Treasury Corporation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Corporation; professor of business management; management consultant; executive work in human resource management, finances, and information technology; member of multiple boards of directors, including Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ Trust Company, American Capital Ltd, CIBT Travel Solutions, and American Capital Agency Corporation; trustee of several schools, colleges, and universities; trustee, Union Theological Seminary & Presbyterian School of Christian Education.
- Earle Robbins: elder; member, St. John's Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, Calif.; retired judge with the National Labor Relations Board; PC(USA) service includes chairperson, presbytery committee on ministry; chairperson, board of directors, Board of Pensions; member, Board of Trustees of San Francisco Theological Seminary.
- Allison K. Seed: clergy; Heartland Presbytery; pastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Independence, Mo.; prior service as a hospital chaplain and a campus minister; moderator of presbytery and chairperson of presbytery council; member, presbytery permanent judicial commission; vice chairperson, synod permanent judicial commission; chairperson, synod vocations committee; member, GAC Special Offerings Review Task Force; member, Advocacy Committee on Women's Concerns; member and chairperson, General Assembly Council; chairperson, National Ministries Division; commissioner to General Assembly 1999.
- Thomas C. Sheffield: clergy; Denver Presbytery; pastor to the presbytery; prior service includes pastor, Presbyterian Church in Morristown, N.J.
- Judith Wellington: clergy; associate pastor, La Mesa Presbyterian Church, Albuquerque, N.Mex.; prior service includes associate presbyter for Native American Ministries in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon; work with San Francisco Theological Seminary and Cook School in Tempe, Ariz.; elementary school teacher on the Gila Reservation in Arizona and at St. Francis Indian School in South Dakota; and member of the Synod of the Southwest's Ministry Review Task Force.

Appendix II. Joint Agency Submission to the Special Review Committee on the
Service of the Whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ("PC(USA)")
October 2008

Context

The 218th General Assembly (2008) formed a "Special Review Committee on the Service of the Whole of the PC(USA)" (the "Review Committee").

The assembly approved the recommendation of the Committee on Review of the General Assembly Council "that the 218th General Assembly (2008) create a review committee to review the service of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies in implementing the General Assembly's mission directives. This review committee should be nominated according to procedures articulated in the *Organization for Mission* at section IV.D.1. 'Committees of the Assembly.' ... This report shall be made to the 219th General Assembly (2010)" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 727).

The comment of the Review Committee of the General Assembly Council noted that

While the separate review of each of the six agencies is a helpful practice and has fostered improvements, this Review Committee observed that no one in the current system is charged with looking at the overall effectiveness of the whole. Coordination among the six agencies is voluntary and not always effective. Such a review should focus broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in implementing the General Assembly's mission directives and should not duplicate the more detailed work of the individual agency review committees. Particular attention should be given to how or if these agencies work cooperatively and where or if there is duplication of services in the system. This review committee observed that some agencies are not working well together, but also that there are some beneficial cooperative efforts. These happen on a voluntary basis with no recommendation that this occur regularly throughout the system. This review committee also heard some people questioning the rationale of the separation of the GAC and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 727–28)

The General Assembly also took action directing the Six Agency Review Committee to consider as items of business “[t]he need for the [Restricted Funds Resolution Committee] (RFRC) to continue, the resolution of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Foundation and the GAC, as well as the manner in which they are carried out ...” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 721).

This submission is intended to provide to the Review Committee some background on the mission of each of the respective agencies, the services provided by them, and areas of cooperation and collaboration among the six agencies. We have summarized the collaborative efforts undertaken by the six agencies since 2001, collaborative efforts currently underway, and efforts planned for the immediate future.

While each agency has its respective roles and responsibilities, the agencies recognize their mutual role to further the interests of the denomination at the national level. Each of the agencies reports to the General Assembly and is to follow its direction limited only by the constitution of the PC(USA) and applicable secular laws and regulations.

Finally, this submission suggests several areas of opportunity both for service improvement to our various constituencies as well as further opportunities for synergy and cooperation among the respective agencies.

Additional Background Documentation Available

Exhibit I, found below, lists other background information which is available to the committee upon request.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp”).

While not considered one of the six agencies, A Corp is the principal legal corporation of the PC(USA). It receives, holds, and transfers property and facilitates the management of the church’s corporate affairs. All voting members of the GAC serve as members of the board of directors of A Corp. The officers of A Corp include a president, an executive vice-president, and a chief financial officer (“treasurer”), one or more vice-presidents, a secretary, a controller, and an associate treasurer. The president is elected by the board of directors for a term of four years subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. Ordinarily, the offices of the president and the treasurer are held by the Executive Director of the GAC and the Deputy for Shared Support Services, respectively. Responsibility for managing the activities of this corporation is assigned to the Deputy for Shared Support Services and other Shared Support Services staff who are elected officers of the corporation under the direction of the president.

The OGA is part of A Corp. All income beyond per capita received by the OGA from sales, bequests, gifts, or from any other source, is transmitted to the treasurer of A Corp.

Mission of Each Agency¹

Office of the General Assembly (“OGA”). The Stated Clerk is the continuing ecclesial officer of the General Assembly, and chief executive officer of the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). As an officer of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk preserves and defends the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and supports the decisions, actions, and programs of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk gives advisory opinions concerning the meaning of the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the meaning of the actions of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk conducts the general correspondence of the PC(USA). All items of correspondence directed to the PC(USA) or to the General Assembly are routed to the Stated Clerk.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (“COGA”) is composed of fifteen persons. This committee is empowered to carry out the General Assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk and the OGA; to assure the accountability of the Stated Clerk to the General Assembly during the interim between sessions of the assembly; and to provide linkage with the GAC.

The Stated Clerk is assisted by other staff, consisting of eight department directors, all of them Associate Stated Clerks: Departments of Constitutional Services; Ecumenical and Agency Relations; History; Communication, Development, and Technology; GA Meeting Services; Department of the Stated Clerk (which includes both Middle Governing Body Relations and the Department of Vocation, which are functions that are shared with the GAC).

The responsibilities of the Stated Clerk and the OGA are crafted to support the well-being of the whole church. They include the planning and execution of the General Assembly; providing advice and training to middle governing body officers and to congregations (sessions and elders); publishing and distributing the minutes of the General Assembly, the GAC, the Foundation, and the COGA; the search for fair and inclusive representation; protection of the rights of all; enabling mechanisms for dispute resolution and church discipline; care for congregations and pastors; promotion of the balanced presentation of ideas, preparation and retention of accurate records and management of the facilities of the Presbyterian Historical Society; membership on or relationship to appropriate committees, commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly; representing the PC(USA) in ecumenical structures in which the denomination participates; preparation and examination of ministers of Word and Sacrament and Christian educators; and preparation of a biennial budget (Per Capita) in consultation with COGA and the GAC.

The OGA has staffing and budgeting responsibility for eight GA permanent committees and/commissions: Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Permanent Judicial Commission, Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Historical Society, General Assembly Committee on Representation, Advisory Committee on the Constitution, Advisory Committee on Litigation, General Assembly Nominating Committee, Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates. The Stated Clerk also has responsibility for any commissions and special committees named by the General Assembly.

General Assembly Mission Council² (“GAMC”). The primary purpose of the General Assembly Mission Council is to lead and coordinate the total mission program of the PC(USA)³. The GAMC advises and responds to the General Assembly on priorities, programs and strategies for addressing matters of concern for the ministries of the church. Responsibilities of the GAMC according to the *Book of Order*, G-13.0201 include the following:

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- a. to cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church;
- b. to provide resources to support equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for members of racial ethnic groups, for women, for various age groups, for persons regardless of marital condition (married, single, widowed, or divorced), and for persons with disabilities;
- c. to develop and propose, for General Assembly approval, the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the General Assembly Mission Council; doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval an accompanying budget that will implement the mission work plan of the General Assembly Mission Council;
- d. to act in those specific matters assigned to the General Assembly Mission Council by the General Assembly or this Constitution, acting always according to previously enacted General Assembly policies, reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions;
- e. to perform such additional responsibilities and duties as may be assigned by the General Assembly.

Every General Assembly, the GAMC receives scores of referrals to be acted upon and reported to subsequent General Assemblies.

The GAMC carries out its ministries through offices of: Theology Worship and Education; Evangelism and Church Growth; Compassion, Peace, and Justice; World Mission; Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women; and Vocation (the latter being a joint office of GAMC and OGA). The office of Middle Governing Bodies ("MGB's") is also a joint office of the GAMC and OGA and serves to connect those GA offices to synods and presbyteries, in addition to the myriad connections that those agencies have with MGB's in the course of their service to the church. These are supported by Communications and Funds Development, Shared Services such as human resources, information technology and finance, and Legal and Audit. In addition, the GAMC provides staff support for three General Assembly committees: Advocacy Committee for Women. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Two of the PC(USA)'s conference centers, Ghost Ranch and Stony Point, are part of the GAMC. The GAMC provides certain administrative and support functions such as information technology and building services for other agencies in the Presbyterian Center.

Approximately 3 percent of the funding of the GAC comes from per capita; the remainder from basic mission support (15 percent), church-wide special offerings such as One Great Hour of Sharing (15 percent); other specific appeals such as Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (25 percent); bequests, annuities and endowments (25 percent), sales of resources and conferences (11 percent), Presbyterian Women and other sources (6 percent). A summary of funding sources and uses is attached as Exhibit III (attached as review-committee-of-ga-ganities-exhibit-II-and-III.pdf).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (the "Foundation"). The Foundation is a legally responsible fiduciary corporation for the PC(USA) and engages in a church-wide program for the development and administration of current and deferred gifts to the PC(USA) and many of its related institutions. The Foundation has a wholly owned subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., and is the sponsor of a family of socially responsible mutual funds, the New Covenant Funds.

The Foundation reports directly to the General Assembly and is to follow its direction to the extent that such direction is lawful.

The primary responsibilities of the Foundation assigned to it by the General Assembly are:

- To receive and hold the restricted and unrestricted monies given to the PC(USA).
- Subject to the directions of the denomination's Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee and consistent with its fiduciary responsibilities, to prudently invest the funds entrusted to it.
- To follow the wishes and restrictions of donors and others who have entrusted funds to its care.
- To utilize A Corp. as its agent for the purpose of disbursing unrestricted income or unrestricted principal of invested funds (and restricted income or restricted principal to the extent specifically authorized by the Foundation's board of trustees).
- To conduct church-wide wills emphasis and planned giving programs through its staff of development officers.

Board of Pensions ("BOP"). The BOP is the legally responsible corporate body established under a civil charter for the purpose of administering the pension and benefits program of the PC(USA). It is required by its bylaws, a Pension Plan Trust Agreement, and other Benefits Plan documents to administer these programs for the sole and exclusive benefit of its participants and members.

The responsibilities assigned to the Board of Pensions by the General Assembly are:

- The design and administration of a comprehensive program of retirement, death, disability, medical, and optional benefits for ministers, missionaries, and other church workers.
- The design and administration of a program of financial assistance to help meet needs that are beyond the scope of the pension and benefits program.
- The establishment and operation of a retirement housing program for eligible retirees and their spouses.
- The receipt, investment, and disbursement of the funds required to support these plans and programs for the sole and exclusive benefit of members and beneficiaries of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other beneficiaries of the assistance and retirement housing programs.

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation ("PPC"). The PPC's heritage dates back more than 170 years. It maintains a commitment to publishing resources that "advance religious scholarship, stimulate conversation about moral values, and inspire faithful living." The PPC is

the official denominational publisher of the PC(USA). It is financially self-sustaining. It publishes materials both for the PC(USA) and a broad ecumenical audience around the world. The PPC’s materials represent a diverse range of religious, social, and cultural points of view directed to four distinct audience groups: church leaders, congregations, scholars, and students. The PPC maintains a backlist of more than 1,700 titles and publishes more than eighty books and one hundred resources each year under its three imprints: Westminster John Knox Press, Geneva Press, and www.theThoughtfulChristian.com.

The PPC is governed by its board of directors, which reports to the General Assembly. The corporation’s president and publisher is an ex-officio member of the board.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc. (PILP). The PILP is a Pennsylvania Corporation that is governed by a board of directors who are elected by the GAMC from nominations by the GAMC, the Foundation, middle governing bodies, and at-large nominees. The PILP offers unsecured, interest-bearing investments in all fifty states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. In general, any individual and any organization related to the PC(USA) may invest in PILP. Money generated by investments is used to fund capital project loans to congregations, governing bodies, and related entities for construction, refurbishing or purchase of church facilities. The PILP administers the Endowed Church Loan Program under an operating agreement with A Corp. The PILP reports to the General Assembly.

Table of Board of Director Interlocks. Common funding, shared mission roles, and traditions carried on from prior organization models have resulted in an identified need for some board of director interlocks among the agencies. Not all agencies require an interlock. These arrangements are working satisfactorily to date. Existing interlocking arrangements are detailed on the following chart.

Board Representation

ED=Executive Director; EL=Elected; Chr=Chair; St. Clk=Stated Clerk

Agencies	Representation					
	Corresponding – non voting (C)		Voting - (V)			
	OGA	GAC	FDN	BoP	PILP	PPC
OGA		ViceChr.(C) St. Clk.(C)	St.Clk.(V)			St.Clk.(C)
GAC	1 El. (V) E.D. (C)		1 El (V) E.D. (V)	1 El. (V)	2 El. (V)	1 El. (V) E.D. (C)
FDN		1 El. (C) CEO (C)			2 El. (V)	
BOP		Chr. (C) CEO (C)				
PILP		Chr. (C) CEO (C)				
PPC		Chr. (C) CEO (C)				

Examples of Agency Work in Support of Other Agencies and the PC(USA).

In the mid-1990s, the Reverend John Buchanan, then Moderator of the General Assembly, was instrumental in establishment of an informal table of agency heads and board chairs (the “Chairs and Executives”). The purpose was twofold: to provide a forum for agency leadership to resolve interagency conflicts and to discern ways to work in concert and advance the common interests of the PC(USA). Since then, an important long-term collaborative effort has been initiated at this table to assure strong leadership in future years.

Building Church Leadership for the Future. In 2003, at a Chairs and Executives meeting, upon the suggestion of the Stated Clerk, the group agreed that it would be appropriate as a denominational initiative to consider developing a broad outline of the steps our agencies might consider to initiate conversations and actions to help build church leadership for the future. This began and continues as an aspiration for the benefit of the whole denomination. At its October 2003 directors meeting,⁴ the Board of Pensions (“BOP”) held a special, one-day session devoted to the topic. Our goal was to look at current events, our own strengths and weaknesses and within this context define the role of the Board of Pensions, in collaboration with other GA agencies, in pursuing this initiative. At present, this initiative is focused on strengthening our clergy.

To this end, BOP formed a task force of clergy (comprised of both directors and staff) to review the myriad materials available on attraction and retention of persons to the pastoral ministry⁵. One of the working assumptions of the task force was that there is a relationship between quality clergy and church membership. Another was that it is better to identify action steps for building leadership, than to point fingers or blame uncontrollable influences. In other words, there are plenty of excuses not to act, but it is better to take action than not. One conclusion stood out clearly: every agency, every middle governing body, every session, and every Presbyterian has a role, if not a duty, to help build future church leaders.

Each year since 2004, BOP and the Office of Vocation (of the GAC and the OGA) have worked together to prepare workshops held during BOP Regional Benefits Consultations discussing topics relevant to strengthening our clergy. A booklet summarizing the discussions and promoting the ideas generated has been published each year, and nearly 20,000 copies of each such booklet have been distributed throughout the church. Topics have included: *Supporting Mid-Career Pastors* (2005); *Conversations on Candidacy* (2006); *Transitions in Ministry* (2007); and *Building Congregations* (2008).

At a follow-up meeting of the Chairs and Executives in 2006, representatives of several Presbyterian seminaries joined the discussion. It became clear that one of the problems confronting pastors (especially pastors of smaller churches) was the lack of practical skills training

in certain areas such as time management, financial management, conflict resolution, project management, stress reduction, and other related areas. This gap resulted in notable increases in stress among the clergy and an increase in stress-related disabilities among clergy. Stress was noted as a significant factor in decisions by pastors to leave the parish ministry. The BOP expects to expand its member education programs through online “e-learning” modules available through its website. The GAC already provides e-learning through its website. The BOP (in consultation with middle governing bodies, staff of the General Assembly Council, and the Office of the General Assembly) subsequently adopted a new assistance program to provide matching grants to groups of presbyteries that raise funds for practical skills training for pastors. The BOP also initiated a new benefit program, “Presbyterian CREDO”: an eight-day conference for clergy to reflect on their financial, physical, vocational, and spiritual health.

Since 2001, the GAC, the OGA, and the BOP have worked together (and in collaboration with middle governing bodies, seminaries and other church leaders) to survey active pastors to discern areas where the agencies could improve pastors’ lives. It is difficult to find funding for new development programs for clergy through middle governing bodies or within existing agency budgets. It is, however, consistent with the role of BOP assistance programs to help support individual church workers in their vocation. Consequently, with income generated by a generous bequest to BOP Assistance Funds, BOP has been able to fund several new pilot programs in support of clergy professional development.

In addition, there have been several other efforts, both individually and jointly in connection with this initiative. For instance, BOP and GAC provide funding for Clergy Colleague Groups, which are local forums for pastors to get together informally to discuss matters of mutual concern.

The GAC works in partnership with each of the other agencies in numerous and various ways. For example, the GAC and OGA provide staff resources and support for the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations and have an ecumenical staff team composed of staff of both agencies to coordinate the ecclesiastical aspects which are OGA responsibility, and the mission engagement, faith and order, and other mission aspects that are GAC responsibility. The GAC frequently provides support to the Stated Clerk on policy and issues such as international and justice matters. Other agencies are often participants in GAC organized conferences, some of which have been mentioned in other parts of this document. The GAC and the Foundation work together to assure that restricted funds of the church are used in compliance with laws and donor designations. The PILP administers church loan programs on behalf of the GAC, and they jointly support the GA’s Mission Development Resources Committee, which provides mission program grants for congregation development. The Executive Director and the Stated Clerk frequently join in meeting with various entities and groups in the church. For example, over the past two years, they have participated jointly in consultations with PC(USA) seminaries in an initiative to strengthen relationships and synergies between the General Assembly and our seminaries. They, along with the Moderator, also often join in messages to the whole church. Other examples are mentioned elsewhere in this document.

Examples of Shared Projects by the Foundation. The Foundation has sponsored numerous stewardship conferences, Presbyterian Women gatherings, the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Conference, and others. In addition, the Foundation staff has provided content and speakers at conferences throughout the denomination.

The Foundation has consistently reached out to partner with agencies, middle governing bodies, local congregations, and Presbyterian-related organizations to develop and increase funding for mission. Some examples are its Wills Emphasis program first created in 1953; its Mission & Ministry Profiles program to elevate the awareness among all Presbyterian’s interested in learning more about the denomination; and the Youth Mission Initiative (“ymiLIVE”) to bring together generations of Presbyterians to connect and engage with others throughout the PC(USA) and to promote awareness of the Foundation and its mission.

Examples of Shared projects by PPC. Staff of PPC, OGA, and GAC are discussing ways the agencies can work together to develop the www.ThePresbyterianLeader.com website.

The PPC works in partnership with other parts of the General Assembly. Most notably, PPC is partnering with the GAC’s Office of Theology and Worship and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians to develop the denomination’s next hymnal and to publish twelve volumes in the *Foundations of Christian Faith* series, which was adopted as the adult component of the denomination’s *We Believe* curriculum in 2003–2005.

Although PPC receives no mission dollars from the PC(USA), it contributes toward the overall mission of the denomination through its benevolence programs. Its “Equipping the Saints” program provides complimentary “care” packages to newly ordained Presbyterian ministers. The PPC works in partnership with the OGA and the GAC to provide packages of free resources to new church developments and to churches that have suffered the effects of natural disasters through its In the Beginning and Disaster Relief programs. In cooperation with the GAC’s World Mission program, PPC provides publications to twenty-five international seminaries in second and third-world countries.

In 2008, PPC partnered with the GAC’s Office of Youth Ministries to develop studies for youth that are available on www.TheThoughtfulChristian.com. The studies allow youth and their leaders to discuss a range of topics including confirmation, faith formation, peer pressure, bullying, consumerism, and environmental justice. The Office of Youth Ministries has recently consulted with PPC on the development of studies for parents, which will be added to the site in January 2009.

Other Focused Collaboration Efforts by All Agencies

Joint Agency Annual Report. Each year since 2001 the agencies have published a joint annual report to the church highlighting the major developments of the past year and briefly outlining the responsibilities of each agency to inform those that may not know our role or understand our respective missions.⁶ The agencies also collaborate on orientation of General Assembly commissioners on the work of the agencies using the Joint Agency Annual Report as a primary resource.

Joint Sponsorship of Conferences and Gatherings. The National Pastor's Sabbath was planned, sponsored, and developed jointly by all six agencies. The National Pastor's Sabbath has been seen among pastors and governing bodies as a shining example of shared ministry, unity of vision, and common endeavor accomplishing valuable goals in ministry to pastors for the good of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Annual Agency Staff Offsite Meetings. In 2007 and 2008, the agencies held offsite meetings to develop agreement on collaboration initiatives in several areas: Funds Development, Church Relations, Communications, and Marketing. Several dozen staff attended. The results of the offsite meetings raised several opportunities for improved collaboration. In 2008, the focus was on defining deliverables from the collaborative groups. The result of these meetings will be for the agencies to work more closely together in the context of bettering the whole denomination. This will require that each agency, as part of its annual business or mission plan, agree on definitive objectives and assignment of responsibility for completion of certain tasks necessary for completion of the objectives. With clear direction supported by agency heads, it is reasonable to expect visible progress in the ensuing years.

Denominational Funds Development. For several years, working through the Chairs and Executives Table, the agencies have recognized the need for an organized funds development model for the denomination. Currently, the Presbyterian Historical Society, the Foundation, the GAC, and the BOP have some in-house capability, principally for single agency funds development, however that alone is insufficient for the purposes of the denomination, which is suffering from revenue shortfalls at every level⁷.

While the agencies share common systems and have developed protocols for interagency cooperation in funds development, the agencies all recognize that this effort will fail at the outset if it is not planned well and supported by a large consensus of interested parties. Currently, agency discussions about possible alternative courses of action are in the formative stages.

Church Relations and Communications. For several years, the Stated Clerk, the Executive Director of the GAC, and the President of the Board of Pensions have presided at breakout groups at the BOP Regional Benefits Consultations. These twelve breakout sessions allow about forty participants from middle governing bodies at each session to address any question or comment to the agency executives that is on the minds of the participants. This has proven to be a valuable communications initiative, and has had a positive impact on church relations. For 2009 and succeeding years, all agency heads have been invited to participate in these breakout groups.

Five of the six agencies include a church relations specialist. While the specific responsibilities vary from agency to agency, together the assigned staff have developed a number of activities in common, regular meetings for shared communication, some specific activities to assist interagency communication, especially at the level of staff leadership, and common appearance within and interpretation to the church at large.

Vision for Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide. In 2008, at the initiative of the General Assembly Mission Council, the 218th General Assembly (2008) approved a vision statement for growth and evangelism in the PC(USA). This vision statement, among other things, foresees fostering church growth in four areas: evangelism, discipleship, servanthood, and diversity. There is clearly a role for each agency to contribute to the aspirations expressed in this resolution. The Chairs and Executives table has discussed the importance of polishing and ways to promote the "Presbyterian Brand" in order to increase the credibility of the denomination as it carries out this important vision.

Mission Responsibility Through Investment ("MRTI"). For many years, both staff and Directors of the GAC, the Foundation, PILP, and BOP have worked with the denomination's MRTI Committee to further socially responsible investment of the substantial assets of the PC(USA) and related entities. Issues such as divestment of securities of companies engaged in arms production, alcohol, and gambling, among others, as well as active proxy voting and shareholder resolution campaigns have worked to coordinate our social justice norms with our active investment policies⁸.

Establishment of a Youth Committee at the General Assembly. In order to keep the voice of Presbyterian Youth alive and heard throughout the denomination, the 218th General Assembly (2008) incorporated a Youth Committee into the roster of working committees of the assembly. Encouraging and listening to those who are youth today, will help build a strong foundation for church leadership for the future.

Support for Clergy. The Office of Vocation has worked collaboratively with BOP staff to support ministers of Word and Sacrament in a number of ways. They have initiated the "Ministry Staff Team," which includes GAC, OGA, and BOP staff. During a 2008 cross-agency gathering, they reviewed the programmatic initiatives made by the agencies to support ministers through and throughout the important transitions in their lives.

The GAC, BOP, and OGA participate in staff advisory committees for BOP's CREDO program, Seminary Debt Assistance, and Middle Governing Body Grant programs. Joint research project on CPMs and COMs, and depression among candidates and ministers is underway. These agencies also collaborate on the Presbyteries' Pastoral Care Network and the Healthy Ministry Conference (a biennial CPM/COM/Seminary Conference).

There are numerous other examples of agencies working together such as the National Elders Conference (GAC, OGA, PPC), the committee to develop a new Presbyterian hymnal (PPC, GAC), new church initiatives (GAC, PILP), the Church Transformation Conference (GAC, PILP, OGA), and the COM/CPM conference (BOP, GAC, OGA).

Future Opportunities for Collaboration and Effective Service

Immigration Matters. The nascent but growing trend toward establishment of immigrant congregations in the United States is yet another opportunity for Presbyterians to grow Christ's church. While funding, degree of immigrant affiliation with the PC(USA), and unaccustomed cultural norms are apparent hurdles to be leapt, our experiences and grand traditions with foreign missionaries as well as domestic evangelism during the 19th century in rural America should be carefully examined to see whether some successes of the past can be adapted to today and tomorrow.

Church Development. This subject is important in two strategic respects: growing existing churches and developing new churches. It is integral to many of the initiatives and aspirations described elsewhere in this submission. Among the issues for the agencies are defining and reaching consensus on their roles and expectations given the roles and expectations for the various other levels of mission (local congregations and middle governing bodies). Efforts related to church development are highly related to our leadership, ministry delivery, and funds development initiatives.

Defining and Developing New Ways of Delivering Ministry. As the number of small congregations increases or as congregational demographics change, we must be sensitive to new ways of delivering ministry. We must consider the increasing number of commissioned lay pastors and other alternative ways to lead worship. We must think of developing new programs to include these lay leaders in the life of the denomination, to train them, and to provide resources in support of changing ministry and demographics.

Conferences: Large and Small. Connection through personal engagement has long been a valuable and foundational principle of the PC(USA). The church has long since agreed that forums in addition to the General Assembly are important to gain understanding and consensus on furthering our mission and mutual interests. Examples of conferences and tables established by the agencies include regular meetings of the agency heads and separate meetings of the agency chief operating officers, various groups assembled by the Board of Pensions⁹ to which other agency representatives are invited, the biennial National Pastors Conference, the Big Tent Event, various meetings organized by either the General Assembly Council or the Office of the General Assembly. Ever-increasing travel costs may dictate future consideration of alternatives to in person gatherings.

Web Based Services. Currently, the [www.PC\(USA\).org](http://www.PC(USA).org) website covers only the GAC, OGA, and PILP. The GAC has launched a project to overhaul that enormous and complex website. As part of that project, all six agencies will join in a common main page or entry site. The BOP, the Foundation, and the PPC will maintain their own websites, but a user will be able to click through from [www.PC\(USA\).org](http://www.PC(USA).org) to reach those. In this way, the agencies will provide a common face to the church and others seeking information and connection with the PC(USA).

Conflict Resolution and Avoidance. The Chairs and Executives table group continues to this day, and its discussions have had positive and tangible results, including such items as governance, a joint agency annual report, focus on building church leadership for the future, a National Pastors Conference in off-years of the General Assembly, ways to improve middle governing body relations, Funds Development Protocols, and proactively avoiding possible areas of future conflict. This table, taken with regular periodic meetings of the agency heads and the interim work of the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee, should continue to serve as a way to avoid or help resolve conflict.

Other Governance Considerations. If properly empowered (either formally or by consensus), the Chairs and Executives table represents a real opportunity for effective joint planning, decision making, and allocation of resources among agencies without the disruption and cost of prolonged agency reorganization initiatives. There are many effective models of multilayered organizations and associations that use a smaller operating committee format to provide coordinated and effective leadership.

Legal Issues and Traditions to Keep in Mind

Foundation Perspective: In 1799, the GA decided to separate the trustee functions from the commissioner functions and create the Foundation. Since that time, the Foundation has been charged by the denomination to act as a fiduciary and has had the responsibility to ensure that endowment funds are administered properly and in accordance with donors' restrictions. The Foundation's basic duties have evolved since its creation through the reorganizations of 1923, 1958, 1972, and 1986.

The 198th General Assembly (1986) implemented a "Deliverance Implementing a Design for the Corporate Structure of Certain Agencies of the General Assembly" (the "Deliverance"). The Deliverance created the Foundation (the "Fiduciary Corporation") and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (the "Central Treasury Corporation" or "CTC") by virtue of a division of the Foundation and established the responsibilities of each entity relative to restricted funds.

The Deliverance clearly established the Foundation's two primary functions (in addition to gift development) as overseer of medium and long-term denominational investments and as overseer of the disbursement of restricted funds entrusted to its care. As noted elsewhere in this submission, A Corp. has the responsibility to receive, hold, and maintain non-fiduciary property of the denomination, act as the disbursing agent for the Foundation of unrestricted GAC funds, and certain restricted funds.

The Foundation also has a fiduciary responsibility under civil law to act solely in the best interest of the beneficiaries of its various trusts and quasi trusts.

Board of Pensions Perspective: The Board of Pensions has remained a separate corporate entity through the numerous restructurings and mergers of the denomination. Unlike the other agencies, whose missions are to serve the denomination, the Board of Pensions owes its primary duty to the Plan members and their beneficiaries¹⁰. The Board of Pensions holds the assets of the Pension Plan for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Plan members. As a separate corporate entity, the duty to comply with the laws and regulations applicable to pension, medical, disability, death benefits, and related programs is the sole responsibility of the Board of Pensions¹¹. Also, as structured, the risks and liabilities of administering benefit plans are limited to the Board of Pensions and do not extend to the commissioners of the General Assembly or other General Assembly agencies. The Board of Pensions is also subject to numerous trust and accounting standards relative to valuation of the assets, including alternative investments, held in its investment portfolio.

GAC and A Corp Perspectives: The General Assembly Mission Council ("GAMC") held its first meeting on June 15, 1983. It has the responsibilities listed in the *Book of Order* at G-13.0201, which are:

- a. to cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church;
- b. to provide resources to support equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for members of racial ethnic groups, for women, for various age groups, for persons regardless of marital condition (married, single widowed, or divorced), and for persons with disabilities;

- c. to develop and propose, for General Assembly approval, the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the General Assembly Mission Council, doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval an accompanying budget that will implement the mission work plan of the General Assembly Mission Council;
- d. to act in those specific matters assigned to the General Assembly Mission Council by the General Assembly or this Constitution, acting always according to previously enacted General Assembly policies, reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions;
- e. to perform such additional responsibilities and duties as may be assigned by the General Assembly.

The GAMC is authorized to act for the General Assembly (on specific matters assigned by the General Assembly) between meetings of the General Assembly in a manner consistent with previously enacted General Assembly policies. The primary purpose of the GAMC is to lead and coordinate the total mission program.

All voting members of the GAMC are members of the board of directors of A Corp. The GAC of the reunited church was directed to develop and present to the General Assembly a design for the work of the corporate agencies (except an agency for pensions) of the General Assemblies of the reuniting churches. The 198th General Assembly (1986) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), on recommendation of the GAC, enacted a deliverance that directed The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, A Corporation, to divide, effective at the close of business on December 31, 1986, into two corporations: one which was to be a central treasury corporation and the other a fiduciary corporation. Both corporations continued as surviving corporations of the original corporation, with history from the origin of the dividing corporation. The articles of incorporation of both entities include fiduciary purposes and powers that are virtually identical. The dividing corporation was initially known as the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and was incorporated March 28, 1799, by act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. By decree of court recorded September 23, 1958, the Trustees of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of North America merged with and into it, and the name was changed to the United Presbyterian Foundation. The 185th General Assembly (1973) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America directed the name be changed to the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, A Corporation, and such change was filed May 31, 1973. It was divided as discussed above into two surviving corporations effective close of business on December 31, 1986, those two surviving corporations being A Corp and the Foundation both with history and origin to March 28, 1799. A Corp is the sole member (nonvoting) of the Foundation.

The purposes for which A Corp is incorporated are listed in its articles of incorporation. Those purposes include, but are not limited to, that it is the principal corporation which the General Assembly has caused to be formed to receive, hold, and transfer property and to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs. The functions of A Corp are set forth in the 1986 Deliverance, and are subject to any inconsistent provision of the Articles of Agreement or the Form of Government of the PC(USA), and subject to the lawful directions from time to time of the General Assembly or the GAMC or of any officer or agency thereof thereunto duly authorized. Section 5 of the 1986 Deliverance authorizes the GAMC to interpret with binding effect any provision of the 1986 Deliverance except Sections 3(d)(2) and 3(d)(3).

Even with this structure in place, reasonable questions regarding restricted fund use arise between the Foundation and the GAMC. In 1996, the joint report presented to the General Assembly set out new understandings, agreements, and processes with respect to each entity's role related to the General Assembly's restricted funds. While the substantial majority of funds which they together disburse are handled cooperatively, collegially, and efficiently and without disagreement, as time passed, the entities found themselves in disagreement on several issues related to restricted funds. The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved a new process and created a Restricted Funds Resolution Committee to be used should an issue not be resolved in accordance with the 1996 joint report.

OGA Perspective: The OGA is incorporated under the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Corporation when secular legal status is necessary. The OGA, through its service to the Stated Clerk, provides ecclesiastical advice, counsel, and support to the other entities and the other governing bodies. It staffs and resources the permanent judicial commissions of the church. The OGA provides staff support to the Advisory Committee on Litigation regarding amicus briefs and first amendment matters in making the General Assembly's prophetic witness to the world. The OGA works closely with the General Assembly Mission Counsel's office (GAMC) in defending secular lawsuits and in giving advice and assistance to middle governing bodies facing lawsuits. Most recently it has begun to provide advice to presbyteries and entities on immigration matters.

PILP Perspective: The program sells securities to individual Presbyterians, congregations, middle governing bodies, and General Assembly entities. Sales of securities to individuals and congregations are regulated by the State Securities Administrators. The Offering Circular must be registered in each state. The North American Securities Administrators Association provides a Statement of Policies, which are used by most states. The program sells participations in some of our loans to banks and synod loan programs. This creates a legal responsibility to the participants.

PPC Perspective: The PPC has a publishing heritage that dates back more than 170 years. It was formed by the merger between Westminster Press, the denominational press of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and John Knox Press, the denominational press of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, after reunion and the relocation of the denomination's mission and program offices to Louisville, Kentucky. The PPC was established as the official denominational publisher of the PC(USA) in 1994. At that time it was organized as a constituent corporation of the PC(USA) under the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The PPC is a nonprofit corporation with 501(c)(3) status under the Internal Revenue Code and is ultimately directed by the General Assembly of the PC(USA). It is completely financially self-sustaining and depends solely on the sale of its books and resources for its existence. Although PPC publishes items specifically for Presbyterians, a substantial portion of its publishing program is aimed at reaching the wider ecumenical audience.

In 1997, PPC signed a division-of-labor agreement with the former Congregational Ministries' Curriculum Publishing program area, which resulted in the GAC assuming the responsibility for publishing the official curriculum of the PC(USA).

Summary and Conclusions

- The GAC Review Committee posed two questions: first, whether there is inappropriate duplication of services in the system, and second, whether the rationale separating the GAC and the OGA is appropriate. This submission has addressed areas where the agencies

have worked together in the best interests of the denomination. While certain agencies share internal resources, especially in Louisville, agency collaboration has evolved from a very practical observation that we simply cannot afford to duplicate our services to the church. As to the second question, this submission has outlined the roles and responsibilities of the OGA and GAMC in some detail. Their roles, when examined closely, are clearly distinct—simply stated, the role of the former is ecclesiastical, judicial, ambassadorial, and political (in the sense of “polity”); the role of the latter is to be the mission arm of the church, both at home and abroad.

- Program funding at every level of the church is an issue of strategic importance. It is clear that the church needs a continuing national funds development function to assist in funding national and international mission, clergy development, and other appropriate programs at the local, regional, and national levels.

- It is of strategic importance that the denomination, at all levels, work together to build church leadership for the future.

- The denomination needs to do a better job of telling its story and bringing credence to the “Presbyterian Brand”: in short, it has to build the confidence of its constituencies. Successful public relations are best built from a strong and trustworthy foundation. In the church that requires balancing the freedom of the pulpit at the individual level, with a responsible voice at the institutional level. Denominational communications and public relations need to be developed in a way that appeal to today’s congregants and represent both respect for the grand traditions of the past and a vision for the future.

- In an era of small church proliferation (whether from diminishing attendance, immigrant congregations, or new church development) it is important for the national agencies to take a leadership role in discerning new ways of supporting these churches both financially and in delivering ministry to them in new ways.

- The most effective service delivery by national agencies requires both time and resources, especially qualified human resources¹². In the PC(USA), effective use of our technological and financial resources is most dependent upon human leadership resources that are persons called to serve as colleagues with dedication, creativity, perspicacity, and professionalism. In addition to being able to recruit and retain qualified management, it is in the best interests of the denomination for each agency to be in close conversation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, as the leadership and experience of elected board members does have a lasting influence on the culture and effectiveness of an agency. Furthermore, it can work to the advantage of an agency for a board chair to serve for several successive years, if possible, in order to provide institutional memory and management accountability over time.

Respectively submitted,

Linda B. Valentine, Executive Director, General Assembly Mission Council
 Gradye M. Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
 Robert E. Leech, President, Presbyterian Foundation
 Robert W. Maggs Jr., President, Board of Pensions
 James L. Hudson, President, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program
 Marc Lewis, President, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

Appendix III

Joint Letter from Richard Clay, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer of the Presbyterian Foundation, and Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council.

September 23, 2009

The Rev. John McFayden Chair,
 Six Agency Review Committee
 First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights
 302 N. Dunton Avenue
 Arlington Heights, IL 60004

Dear John:

We write this letter to you on behalf of our respective agencies to witness the spirit of joint cooperation and enterprise between the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Foundation). We understand and appreciate the work of the Six Agency Review Committee. We intend by this letter to provide a useful overview of the cooperation that has developed between the two agencies in the areas of leadership, operational, legal and development relationships.

Leadership

The relationships among all six agencies depend hugely upon the abilities of their leadership to work together constantly, cordially, collaboratively and cooperatively. We have made concerted efforts in recent months in this regard.

We have had regular breakfasts and dinners with each other over the past eight weeks. There have been cordial, frequent and open communications between us. The staffs of both agencies have been meeting regularly in order to give careful attention to various inter agency issues. A joint meeting of the two agency heads, our general counsels and several of our operations people took place on August 11, 2009, at which time action items and agendas were agreed upon. Another meeting is scheduled for October 1, 2009.

The Working Group of Foundation trustees and GAMC members, which was established to “*a) examine the relationship between the GAC and the Foundation including structures, roles, and responsibilities, and define the terms for a successful working relationship; and b) establish an ongoing process to continue to work proactively with the executive leadership to resolve matters of mutual interest;*” met and

developed a vision and interim report. Pleased with their progress and value as a link between the two agencies, the Foundation Trustees and the GAMC Members have approved the continuation of this group for at least two years.

Some of the conflicts that have arisen in the past arose because the Foundation's endowment fund information was not always readily accessible to the GAMC staff who distribute the funds, and the GAMC's payment chain and ultimate recipients were not readily accessible to the Foundation. To resolve this, both agencies now have obtained mutual access to their respective data bases. It is anticipated that this transparency will greatly assist in the adequate tracking of the donors' intent and restrictions, how and when the funds are spent, and to whom they are distributed.

Additionally, there are governmental regulatory issues on the expenditure of foreign funds arising from interpretations of tax withholding requirements of the IRS and Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) requirements on payments made to beneficiaries in countries that may be on OFAC terrorism watch lists. Both agencies are working cooperatively on understanding and addressing or resolving these concerns.

In the last five weeks, an internal task force within the Foundation, overseen by its Board's Audit and Corporate Compliance Committee, has focused on how to best achieve the unfreezing of the foreign funds while making sure that the Foundation's fiduciary duties are exercised appropriately. As of September 18, 2009, \$4,438,799.88 in funds for foreign mission have been unfrozen as a result of this effort and information provided by the GAMC. Of this amount, \$3,401,615.26 represents principal held by the Foundation and \$1,037,184.62 represents distributable income that has gone/will go to the GAMC for distribution to foreign beneficiaries. The two agencies are exploring effective means on how best to secure the release of remaining funds, while making sure that all governmental regulatory concerns are jointly addressed and satisfied. Both agencies are now working collaboratively and cooperatively to exercise wise and useful judgments within their respective roles and responsibilities and in accordance with the General Assembly Deliverances. Again, it is clear that constant, cordial, candid and collaborative conversation between the leaders of both agencies and their corresponding senior staff members is paramount.

What follows is a more detailed overview of the extent of cooperation in the operations, legal and development areas. Additionally, there is ongoing cooperation between the marketing and human resources departments of the two agencies.

Operations

The Foundation and the GAMC have worked effectively and collaboratively to share information in the following ways:

- *Access to Records.* As mentioned above, we have worked to develop more transparent systems such that each agency can access the information it needs to more effectively carry out its mission work. The teams that worked on the systems initiatives worked very effectively and developed strong relationships with one another.
- *New Funds.* The Foundation's operations area and the GAMC mission and accounting areas work closely to ensure both agencies understand the endowment funds and any donor designations associated with the endowment funds. As new endowment funds are established at the Foundation, the Foundation's operations department transmits that fund's information to the GAMC so that funds can be expended as soon as possible in a manner consistent with the donor's designations. This helps the GAMC carry out its role in deploying funds given by donors to support mission.
- *Three Year Estimates.* The Foundation and the GAMC accounting areas have worked on a process over the last year where the Foundation's accounting area provides the GAMC with distribution estimates for the endowment funds. These estimates are for the next three years and are very helpful to the GAMC in its budgeting process.
- *Monthly Reports.* Our accounting areas work very closely to understand the details of endowments and other funds so that we account for them properly. We have discussions and provide detail reports on the endowment funds. The Foundation sends the GAMC an electronic file monthly that contains all account transactions and market values for all the accounts. The accounting areas also discuss the latest financial accounting standards to help each other determine the implications of those accounting standards.
- *Audits.* We provide various and numerous information to each other's external auditors.
- *Investment of Endowment Funds.* We have increased the dialogue regarding assets held by the Foundation that benefit the GAMC and how they are invested. Reporting from the Foundation has been improved and both agencies are committed to having frequent communications and face-to-face meetings at least quarterly to discuss investments and investment performance.
- *Information Services.* The Foundation and GAMC Information Services (Information Technology) teams have met periodically to exchange ideas. We have toured each other's data centers and we have talked about issues that we both experience. The IS teams have shared information on network virtualization which has been mutually beneficial. The IS teams from both agencies have assisted each other with information on software products, Windows domain security information and other IS related issues. The IS teams are excited about the opportunity to work closer together and possibly even assist each other with disaster recovery and business continuity planning in the future.

Legal

- The 218th General Assembly (2008) established the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee (RFRC) as a safety valve in the event the agencies are unable to reach agreement with respect to restricted funds. Both agencies met with the Committee, and indeed the current interim President and CEO served as one of the Foundation's representatives at the organizational meeting of the committee before he took on his current position. We believe that both agencies will cooperate effectively where questions as to funds restrictions can be resolved short of invoking the RFRC. The RFRC's guidelines are set up in such a way that both parties have every encouragement to seek mutual resolution before jointly certifying to the RFRC that it needs to consider an issue. And

both agencies understand and agree that the RFRC's rules provide that in the rarest circumstances the avenue of a civil declaratory judgment action or cy pres is appropriately available in the event either agency, for fiduciary reasons, cannot accept the RFRC's decision. The Foundation and GAMC legal departments cooperate in the filing of cy pres actions in court in Indiana to obtain court approval for changes to impossible or impracticable restrictions on endowment funds. While the Foundation prepares the filings and takes them to court, the GAMC, in its role as the mission agency, recommends the change to the restriction.

- The Foundation and the GAMC legal departments have established monthly standing meetings to review the church loan funds restrictions, have agreed upon several restrictions and will continue to seek resolution of remaining issues. The Foundation and the GAMC have recently worked together on the filing of joint OFAC licenses to speed the process and ensure that we, together, maintain current licenses enabling funds to be distributed overseas on a more timely basis.
- *Project Management System.* We have agreed upon a common project management software system that will enable staffs of both agencies to input, view and track information on the progress of issues relating to inter agency issues. Implementation has begun.

Development

- On August 6-7, 2009 the heads of the Foundation, the GAMC, the OGA and the Board of Pensions met for two days at the Foundation's offices. While the meeting covered many educational and informational issues, it also resulted in a decision to convene the field forces of these four agencies, plus invitations to the other two agencies, for a two day event in Louisville to educate and inform roughly 80 field force representatives on the missions, funding needs, and initiatives of all six agencies. This meeting will take place on January 12-13, 2010 in Louisville. In conjunction with this initiative by the agency heads, the development leadership from the Board of Pensions, GAMC, the Foundation and the Presbyterian Historical Society have met twice to plan how the agencies can collaborate and coordinate fundraising efforts. All are committed to this collaboration/coordination.
- The Foundation's chief development officer participated on September 15, 2009 in GAMC development officer training to share how the GAMC and Foundation interact to meet the needs of donors.

The inter-workings of the FDN and the GAMC are complex, with thousands of funds, numerous constituent corporations, legal and accounting laws, rules and regulations and donative documents, two boards and two staffs that also relate to numerous other constituents in the church and beyond. We are pleased with the progress on so many issues and in staff to staff communications. We continue to have a long list of issues and projects, and as issues are resolved and projects completed, new ones will emerge. Continued vigilance and commitment to positive, collaborative working relationships will be essential.

Conclusion

We believe that there is much to celebrate. We have worked diligently to bring our respective agencies to this point. Thank you for the work and guidance of the Six Agency Review Committee. We look forward to receiving its report.

Sincerely yours,

Richard H.C. Clay
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cc: Timothy Clark
Chair, Presbyterian Foundation Board of Trustees

Carol Adcock
Chair, General Assembly Mission Council

Exhibit 1

A partial list of additional materials available upon request

1. Articles of Incorporation of each GA entity
2. Bylaws of each GA entity
3. Deliverances of each GA entity

4. Annual Reports from those GA entities that produce one
5. Report to the 218th General Assembly (2008) from those GA entities that produce one
6. Reports of the GA Review Committee for each GA entity:
 - a. From 2003—Presbyterian Publishing Corporation
 - b. From 2004—Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program
 - c. From 2006—Board of Pensions
 - d. From 2006—Presbyterian Foundation
 - e. From 2008—Office of the General Assembly
 - f. From 2008—General Assembly Council
7. Notes from Agency Collaboration Meetings
 - a. All agency collaboration meetings in October 2007 and October 2008
 - b. Collaboration between GAC Ministries and the Board of Pensions in support of ministers of Word and Sacrament
8. Principles of Funds Development, adopted by Chairs and Executives in 2005
9. 218th General Assembly (2008) call to “Grow God’s Church Deep and Wide”
10. Materials from the 2005 and 2007 National Pastors Sabbath
11. Examples of materials published by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

Endnotes

1. Much of the current organizational structure for mission was approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993). The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program (PILP) and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) were formed or restructured by deliverances to later General Assemblies. A current organization chart is attached as Exhibit II (attached as review-committee-of-ga-entities-exhibit-II-and-III.pdf).
2. The 218th General Assembly (2008) recommended that the name of the GAC be changed to the General Assembly Mission Council. That change will take effect upon approval of a majority of the presbyteries expected in 2009.
3. *Manual of the General Assembly, 2010, Organization for Mission, V.*, p. 17.
4. The meeting was moderated by a representative of BoardSource, an independent consulting firm to not-for-profits.
5. It did not review (nor was it aware of) materials relating to attracting or retaining lay church leaders. Some key findings of this task force were included in BOP’s 2003 report to the General Assembly.
6. The Joint Annual Report was initiated by the agency heads after identifying a need for a tool to describe the roles and accomplishments of the national agencies for persons who might be otherwise unaware of the agencies or their roles.
7. The Presbyterian Foundation has a staff of twenty-two development officers throughout the nation. The Foundation does not develop funds for itself or for any particular agency. The Foundation Board of Trustees is currently studying ways to optimize the development function of the Foundation to further grow mission funding for the PC(USA).
8. New Covenant Funds, a family of socially conscious mutual funds sponsored by the Foundation, plays a prominent role in highlighting the church’s MRTI activities. As a publicly traded mutual fund family, their investments are consistent with the church’s social witness principles so that fund investors may integrate their faith and their financial goals.
9. An Executive Presbyter Forum, annual Regional Benefits Consultations, a National Pastors Advisory Council, and a Funds Development Advisory Council.
10. The Foundation also has independent duties to beneficiaries of the trusts and quasi trusts it holds.
11. These laws include the Internal Revenue Code provisions relating to defined benefit and 403(b) plans, HIPAA and the many federal laws regulating medical and other welfare plans, Medicare and Medicare Part D regulations and subsidy compliance responsibilities, and certain state trust and other laws.
12. Agency employment is as follows: GAC—420 (plus 200 foreign mission personnel); OGA—49; BOP—200; FDN—100; PILP—14; PPC—35.

GAMC COMMENT ON ITEM 18-B

Comment on Item 18-B—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) expresses its appreciation for the work of the General Assembly Review Committee of the Whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the opportunity of each agency individually and the agencies collectively to engage with the committee, and the affirmation of the committee of the recent and current efforts by the agencies in "... constant, cordial, cooperative, and collaborative ministry for the glory of God, the strengthening of the church's ministry and mission, and the good of God's creation..." (Item 18-B). The General Assembly Mission Council recognizes that we are all agencies of the PC(USA), and that our responsibilities are interrelated. Having said that, each agency also has distinct roles and responsibilities, and we need to be vigilant in both coordinating and collaborating with each other and in fulfilling our particular roles and responsibilities. The GAMC provides comments in particular on two recommendations in the report, the first regarding roles and responsibilities, and the second regarding funds development.

Regarding Roles and Responsibilities (Item 18-B, Section XIII.D.)

The GAMC welcomes the review and possible revision of the Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with attention specifically given to the roles and responsibilities of the GAMC and its Executive Director, and the Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk.

As currently identified, the Stated Clerk has a responsibility to promote cooperation and collaboration among the General Agencies based on that role's description in the Organization for Mission. The General Assembly Mission Council has a responsibility to bring mission priorities to the General Assembly according to the Organization for Mission. The General Assembly Mission Council recognizes the Stated Clerk's role in speaking for the entire church on matters of policy and polity. The staff of the GAMC often resource the Stated Clerk in, for example, interpreting and responding to issues of social witness policy, or that affect international mission partners. On the other hand, the GAMC is charged with responsibility for implementing mission directives and programs of the General Assembly.

To avoid further confusion, the GAMC asks that the 219th General Assembly (2010) affirm the role of the GAMC with respect to mission prioritization, as currently found in the Organization for Mission:

The General Assembly Mission Council shall advise and respond to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for the Ministries of our church. The primary purpose of the General Assembly Mission Council is to lead and coordinate the total mission program... (*Organization for Mission*, Section V, page 17.)

Regarding Funds Development (Item 18-B, Section XIII.F.5)

While funding to denominational mission has declined over decades, Presbyterians are giving more to mission than ever before. In recognition of changes in giving trends, the GAMC realizes the importance of engaging in new funds development strategies. The GAMC affirms its commitment to collaborative funds development and has been working together with the other agencies in a number of ways. Some of the collaborative efforts include, for example:

- a joint collaboration by the agencies to design and develop the new Web site homepage for pcusa.org, for which the GAMC provided the majority of funding;
- a January 2010 meeting of development and senior staff of all agencies (approximately one hundred participants) titled "One Church," during which development and other staff became better acquainted in order to foster good working relationships and share information and objectives;
- ongoing meetings and collaborations between the Foundation and GAMC funds development staffs for training, sharing of strategies, and planning of particular initiatives;
- all agencies are members of the grass roots Kaleidoscope Stewardship network and participated in planning and conducting of its Stewardship Conference. 2010; directly after Stewardship Kaleidoscope the GAMC held another Faith and Generosity training session with the Lake Institute of Philanthropy, inviting field staff of other agencies in attendance at the conference (this was the third such seminar organized by the GAMC to which other agency representatives have been invited);
- all agencies are participating in the review and endorsement of Stewardship in Reformed Tradition as specified by *Funding Christ's Mission Throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* passed by 218th General Assembly (2008); and
- the Board of Pensions and GAMC are participating in the special offerings project of the Special Offerings Advisory Task Force, with a report to be made to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

Item 18-Info

A. *The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 2008–2009 Agency Summary*

Marking the 293rd anniversary of the beginning of the work now carried on by this board and presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010) meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 2010.

The responsibilities assigned to the Board of Pensions by the General Assembly are:

- The design and administration of a comprehensive program of retirement, death, disability, medical, and optional benefits for ministers, missionaries, and other church workers.
- The design and administration of a program of financial assistance to help meet needs that are beyond the scope of the pension and benefits program.
- the establishment and operation of a retirement housing program for eligible retirees and their spouses.
- The receipt, investment, and disbursement of the funds required to support these plans and programs for the sole and exclusive benefit of members and beneficiaries of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other beneficiaries of the assistance and retirement housing programs.

This report incorporates by reference the 2008 and 2009 Annual Reports of the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in which the financial information for the Board of Pensions and the plans and programs it administers is presented.

1. *The Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

The Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides pension benefits, death and disability benefits, medical benefits, optional benefits (supplemental death benefits, supplemental disability benefits, dental coverage, long-term care insurance, and a retirement savings plan), and a retirement and financial planning education program. The *Book of Order* (G-14.0534) mandates that all ministers of the Word and Sacrament in installed positions must participate in the Benefits Plan. A particular church may also enroll other church employees in the Benefits Plan. Ministers of the Word and Sacrament in non-installed positions and employees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or affiliated organizations may also be enrolled in the Benefits Plan.

The Affiliated Benefits Program (ABP) offers the same benefits, including the Retirement Savings Plan but excluding the Pension Plan, to employing organizations for certain non-mandated employees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or affiliated organizations.

The 215th General Assembly (2003) approved changes to the Benefits Plan amendment process to accommodate biennial meetings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The right to amend the Benefits Plan is reserved solely to the Board of Pensions. Amendments to the Plan that constitute a reduction in Pension Plan benefits or an increase in Pension Plan dues are effective only upon approval by the General Assembly. The bylaws of the Board of Pensions require approval of a two-thirds majority of directors present at a duly constituted meeting to amend the Pension Plan except for a benefit reduction or a dues increase (which amendments require the approval of the General Assembly). The Board of Pensions must provide sixty days' notice to the General Assembly, Plan members, local churches, and presbyteries of any amendment requiring General Assembly approval and reasonable notice of any other amendment to the Benefits Plan.

2. *The Community Nature of the Benefits Plan*

The Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), administered by the Board of Pensions, is designed to care for and protect the community of Benefits Plan members as a whole.

An employing organization's cost of providing benefits for its employees enrolled for pension, medical, death, and disability benefits is not based on their marital status, gender, family size, or age. The dues contributed by the employing organization are instead based on a percentage of the participating members' salaries and represent that organization's share of the cost of protecting the entire community. The salaries used to determine the dues for the Pension Plan, the Death and Disability Plan, and the Medical Plan are subject to both minimum and maximum salary amounts.

In order to assist lower-paid employees, no employee accrues benefits at less than the median salary for his or her employment classification (i.e., ministers of the Word and Sacrament, lay exempt, lay non-exempt). Deductibles and copayment maximums are also set as a percentage of salary to lessen the impact on lower-paid members. In order to contain members' out-of-pocket healthcare costs, there are caps on medical deductibles and copayment expenses for higher paid members.

Affiliated Benefits Program medical dues are uniformly determined based on the medical claims experience of the overall group. Dues for individual members are based on the specific cost sharing policy of their employing organization and the

participation levels selected by the member. Some members may choose employee-only coverage, while others may choose to cover an entire family. This flexibility is one of the key advantages of the Affiliated Benefits Program.

3. *Pension Plan and Death and Disability Plan*

Towers Watson, actuarial advisors for the Board of Pensions, reported that there continued to be sufficient funds on hand to meet the obligations to current and future retirees and disabled members as of December 31, 2009, the most recent valuation of the programs.

a. *Pension Experience Apportionment and Disability Benefit Increases*

Each year the directors of the Board of Pensions have the responsibility of determining whether the Pension Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should grant an experience apportionment. An experience apportionment is a permanent increase in the retirement benefits of all Plan members, including active, retired, terminated vested, and eligible survivors.

The decision to grant an apportionment is a way for the Pension Plan to share favorable actuarial and investment experience with Plan members. This sharing of experience is an unusual, if not unique, feature of the Plan. It involves a balance between near-term benefit improvement and long-term security of future benefits.

The Board of Pensions has several overriding objectives in determining the experience apportionment:

- maintain the solvency of the Plan,
- protect the benefits of both active and retired Plan members against the impact of inflation, and
- achieve generational equity—meaning that, on a cumulative basis throughout its active and retirement years, one group of Plan members should not fare materially better or worse in the granting of apportionments than any other group.

Unlike the Pension Plan experience apportionment, the disability benefit increase applies only to benefits currently being paid to disabled members. Most active members will not become disabled and will never receive disability benefits.

The purpose of granting a disability benefit increase is to protect the benefits paid to disabled members against the impact of inflation. Other than determining the adequacy of the contingency reserve to support the granting of an increase, the key considerations in arriving at an appropriate recommendation for a disability benefit increase are the annual change in cost of living and the rate at which the incomes of active church workers are increasing.

For descriptions of the processes used in determining whether to grant an experience apportionment or a disability benefit increase, see Item 18-A. The decisions made in 2008 and 2009 are described in detail there.

(1) *History of the Pension Apportionments and Disability Benefit Increases*

In the table below, the recent experience apportionments and disability benefit increases are compared to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), a government-issued measure of inflation in consumer goods and services.

Experience Apportionments and Disability Benefit Increases Compared to Consumer Price Index 2004–2009						
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pension*	3.0%	3.6%	3.7%	3.8%	-	-
Disability*	3.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%	-	-
CPI	3.3%	3.4%	2.5%	4.1%	0.1%	2.7%
* Experience apportionments and disability benefit increases become effective the year following the year shown.						

(2) *Impact of Experience Apportionments*

For the years 2000 through 2009, the following table shows the number of ordained minister Plan members with at least fifteen years of service who retired at or after age sixty-five and the average annual amount of their pensions at the time of retirement. By applying the experience apportionments granted over the past ten years, the Benefits Plan has been able to fulfill its intent to shelter both pension credits and retirement income from the inroads of inflation. The average pension with an inflationary increase based solely on the CPI is shown for comparison.

Average Annual Pensions (2000–2009)				
			Value of Average Pension in 2009	
Year of Retirement	Number of Retirements	Average Annual Plan Pension at Retirement	Reflecting Inflationary Increases	Reflecting Experience Apportionments
2000	153	27,651	34,346	33,368
2001	173	31,661	38,708	37,093
2002	151	30,039	35,864	35,193
2003	172	32,015	37,510	37,508
2004	129	31,822	36,094	35,661
2005	133	32,186	35,306	33,893
2006	123	35,158	37,625	37,844
2007	141	32,763	33,681	34,008
2008	156	35,054	36,000	35,054
2009	136	37,256		

b. *Other Changes to the Pension Plan, Death and Disability Plan, and Optional Programs*

Details of other changes made to the Pension and Death and Disability Plans and various Optional Programs are offered in the Board of Pensions' recommendation regarding the amendments to the Benefits Plan (Item 18-A).

4. *Medical Plan*

Medical Plan dues and benefit changes made prior to 2008 and moderating healthcare trends resulted in favorable financial results for the 2008 and 2009 Plan years. Because the Medical Plan's fund balance was above the target reserve levels, the Board of Pensions was able to hold dues at 19.5 percent for each of these years. The *Book of Order* mandate that requires that called and installed pastors participate in the Benefits Plan has contributed significantly to the financial stability of the Plan because of the inherent avoidance of adverse selection.

In order to maintain the Affiliated Benefits Program (ABP), a self-supporting component of the Medical Plan, dues increases of 9.2 percent and 7.8 percent were approved in 2008 and 2009 respectively. With relatively stable enrollment, the ABP claims experience has been more consistent and predictable in recent years, giving the Board of Pensions the advantage of presenting reasonable trend increases to employing organizations in markets where there is otherwise considerable volatility. That volatility in the small employer insurance market has, in recent months, created some renewed interest in the ABP, suggesting that it remains a viable option for many churches and other employing organizations interested in providing benefits, including comprehensive medical coverage, to their employees.

Dues for the Medicare Supplement Program remained stable in 2008. However, uncertainty concerning the future levels of Vacancy Dues and Post-Retirement Service Dues and increasing medical costs caused the Board of Pensions to restore the Medicare Supplement Program dues to the 2005 level, effective January 1, 2009. As a result, dues increased \$20 per participant per month. Continued qualification for the Medicare Retirement Drug Subsidy has provided nearly \$6 million per year in 2008 and 2009 for this program, against subscription dues revenue of \$22 million and \$24 million, respectively. At more than 17 percent of the program's total cost, this revenue support continues to be significant. Moderating prescription drug trends have also helped to mitigate the need for more substantial increases in the Medicare Supplement Program dues.

Despite the relative financial strength of the Medical Plan through the end of 2009, it is anticipated that increasing healthcare trends, declining enrollments, and an aging population will inevitably lead to deteriorating financial results. In anticipation of this deterioration and with the objective of maintaining the Medical Plan's viability given the current cost structure, the Board of Pensions in 2008 began to examine some change opportunities in design, funding, and administration. This study, which was undertaken with the support of Milliman Inc., the Medical Plan's actuary, sought to examine the Plan in the context of its underlying principles: call neutrality, community nature, uniform coverage, and mandated participation. This analysis, which extended into 2009, was structured around basic objectives that included plan simplification, maximiz-

ing efficiency, and cost effectiveness in plan administration, integration of high-performing vendors, and real-time data aggregation.

In 2008, the Board of Pensions' continued focus on health management and member wellness led to the approval of a design initiative that called for \$0 co-pay on all preventive services, including office visits for annual wellness exams and related testing. This enhancement to the Medical Plan, which ensures that preventive services for all members and their dependents are covered 100 percent by the Medical Plan, was effective on January 1, 2009.

A summary of all of the additional Medical Plan design changes approved by the Board of Directors at its June 2009 meeting, including a specific response to General Assembly concern about coverage for children with special needs, follows:

a. *Effective October 1, 2009*

Plan members were granted the option to decline healthcare coverage for spouses and dependent children who have other comparable employer group or military service coverage. In order to preserve the integrity of call neutrality, the exercise of this option does not result in a dues change.

b. *Effective January 1, 2010*

The definition of medical necessity was expanded to include habilitative services for children with congenital developmental disabilities such as Down syndrome and autism.

In compliance with the Mental Health Parity Act, a series of provisional changes was instituted that will result in significantly improved integration of medical and behavioral health benefits and the promotion of cost-effective network use.

The Prescription Drug Program was modified to eliminate the annual deductible, adopt a fixed generic drug co-pay, increase the brand non-formulary co-pay, and increase the annual copayment maximum.

The chart below illustrates in greater detail the Medical Plan changes, all of which have been captured in a restated Benefits Plan document that was approved by the Board of Directors at its October 2009 meeting.

Medical Plan		
Plan Feature	Previous Design	New Design, Effective January 1, 2010
Out-of-Network Deductible	Applied to out-of-network medical office Visits	Not applied to out-of-network medical office visits
Out-of-Network Deductible Maximum (for other medical services)	1.5 percent of effective salary	2.0 percent of effective salary
Out-of-Network Copayments	After deductible, Medical Plan pays 60 percent of out-of network medical office visits and 50 percent of out-of-network mental health office visits	Not applied to deductible; Medical Plan pays 50 percent of both out-of-network medical and mental health office visits
Out-of-Network Copayment Maximums	8 percent of effective salary for medical services; \$2,500 for mental health services	12 percent of effective salary for all medical and mental health services combined
In-Network Copayment Maximums	4 percent of effective salary for medical services; \$1,500 for mental health services	4 percent of effective salary for all medical and mental health services combined
Annual Mental Health Deductible	Separate annual deductible of \$250 (network) and \$375 (out-of-network) applies to inpatient mental health services	No separate deductible applies to these services; a single in network deductible and single out-of-network deductible applies to both medical and mental health services
Habilitative Services (for children with certain congenital developmental disabilities)	No special provisions included	Subject to expanded definition of medical necessity, Medical Plan will pay for up to 50 visits per year each for physical, occupational, and speech therapy and up to \$36,000 per year (lifetime maximum of \$125,000) for Applied Behavioral Analysis Therapy

Prescription Drug Program (Medical Plan and Medicare Supplement Program)		
Plan Feature	Previous Design	New Design, Effective January 1, 2010
Annual Deductible	\$100 per member; additional \$100 per family (\$100 per participant in the Medicare Supplement Program)	No deductible
Generic Copayment	20 percent co-pay, subject to minimum of \$10 and maximum of \$100 retail, or \$25/\$300 mail	Fixed co-pay of \$8 retail and \$20 mail
Copayment Maximum	\$2,000 per family (\$2,000 per participant in the Medicare Supplement Program)	\$2,500 per family (\$2,500 per participant in the Medicare Supplement Program)
Brand Name Non-formulary Copayment	40 percent co-pay, subject to minimum of \$40 and maximum of \$100 retail, or \$100/\$300 mail	50 percent co-pay, subject to minimum of \$50 and maximum of \$150 retail, or \$125/ \$450 mail

Maximizing efficiency and cost effectiveness in Medical Plan administration requires a disciplined approach to third-party vendor procurement, contracting, and performance monitoring. The relationship of the Board of Pensions with other church benefits boards through the Church Benefits Association remains an important part of a strategy to maximize purchasing power and vendor management. In 2008, the Board of Pensions joined forces with some of the larger denominations in order to negotiate a new contract with CIGNA Behavioral Health (CBH), renegotiate a favorable early renewal with Express Scripts (ESI), and begin work on a contract renewal with Highmark.

The Board of Pensions' relationship with CBH began in 2006 as a cooperative purchasing agreement with two other denominations: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The relationship with CBH has subsequently been expanded to include other denominations. While services and prices are separately established for each denomination, the coalition provides a forum for exploring best practices and strengthens the ability to negotiate favorable pricing overall. Currently, mental health services represent approximately 3 percent of the Board of Pensions' total expenditures for healthcare benefits.

The formal contract renewal date with ESI was January 1, 2010. Because of significant industry-wide improvement in pharmacy benefit manager contract terms since the last renewal, the coalition initiated early renewal discussions in 2008. New contract terms were successfully negotiated that provide for a reduction in Prescription Drug Program costs of approximately 10 percent, representing a net savings of almost \$5 million annually to the Medical Plan. These savings emanate from deeper discounts on ingredient cost, lower administrative fees, and higher manufacturer rebates. These improved terms were contingent on a two-year extension of the contract through 2012.

Despite these significant cost reductions, plan design continues to be the most important vehicle for controlling prescription drug expenses. Consistent with prior years, the Board of Pensions Prescription Drug Program costs in 2008 and 2009 represented approximately 21 percent of the total healthcare expenses. Positive impact on trend came from the mail order initiative, effective January 1, 2008, and reported in the 2006–2007 Agency Summary of the Board of Pensions. As a result of this initiative, utilization of ESI's mail order program for maintenance medications more than doubled in 2008 and 2009, generating significant Medical Plan savings. As conversion to this delivery system increased, the generic fill rate also increased. Since members are currently absorbing approximately 30 percent of the cost of prescription drugs as copayments, the savings resulting from the increased use of generics is significant for them as well.

Highmark, the Board of Pensions' third-party administrator of the Blue Card® program, continued to deliver on its commitment to provide network efficacy, measured by both broad member access and deep provider discounts. Combined savings for the Medical Plan and its members generated by network use was in excess of \$130 million in 2008, with similar results in 2009. It was expected that a merger between Pittsburgh-based Highmark and Philadelphia-based Independence Blue Cross would result in the leveraging of resources and greater economies of scale. Coincident with the CBA coalition's early contract negotiations with Highmark, however, both organizations withdrew their merger applications from the Pennsylvania Insurance Department. Despite this abrupt change in the negotiating environment, the final administrative services only contract, which covers the Board of Pensions' Medical Plan and Medicare Supplement Program, resulted in reduced fees for 2010 and 2011, with a return to the 2009 fees in the 2012 plan year, a net savings of approximately \$500,000 over the three-year contract period.

Concurrent with the contract negotiations with these major third-party vendor partners, the Board of Pensions independently conducted a thorough market review and bidding process with ten best-in-class health management providers. After a thorough review process, ActiveHealth Management emerged as the vendor best positioned to meet the priorities of the Board of Pensions: member centric and integrated service; an intelligent, data-driven model; a strong communication partnership; and cost effective service delivery. The Board of Directors' approval of a three-year contract, effective January 1, 2010, was the first step in a meticulous transition process designed to ensure a seamless transition for Plan members and their families from CareAllies to ActiveHealth Management. ActiveHealth Management provides a full spectrum of health management services, from pre-certification to case and disease management. By electronically integrating each member's diverse clinical information into a personal health record and assigning a single nurse to work with the member and the member's family over time, ActiveHealth Management will be able to identify and appropriately follow-up on any possible gaps in the quality of medical care. All of this information will be treated with absolute confidentiality. With a "care engine" that receives and processes patient-specific data each day from multiple third-party providers, this vendor offers rich analytic and reporting tools that deliver targeted interventions, support members' efforts to improve their self-care, and enable the Board of Pensions to better evaluate future program initiatives and benefit design alternatives.

The Board of Pensions' commitment to successful integration of the work of these vendor partners resulted in the 2008 launch of what has become an annual event—a vendor summit. Bringing these key vendors together for a daylong meeting in Philadelphia, the Board of Pensions identified principal objectives that are central to their shared responsibilities: improving Plan member experience and achieving optimal health outcomes. The 2009 Vendor Summit focused on establishing ActiveHealth Management's responsibility for managing data exchanges and integrating individual vendor capabilities, vital to their ability to ensure a more streamlined and clinically satisfying member experience, and ultimately, better overall health outcomes.

Despite the best efforts of the Board of Pensions to integrate vendor services, there is a growing recognition that the increasing complexity of navigating the world of healthcare can result in significant member frustration and even compromised care. In 2008, the desire of the Board of Pensions to support members in this complex and confusing environment led to the creation of a new staff role, that of Member Advocate. The principal responsibility of the Member Advocate is to help members work their way through procedural and substantive claim issues in a way that maximizes the value of the benefits to which they are entitled. With a customer-centric focus, solid Medical Plan knowledge, strong relationships with key vendor partners, and excellent communication and problem solving skills, the Member Advocate helps members navigate resources and resolve claim issues.

As the debate on healthcare reform evolved in Congress and specific bills were finally approved by the House and Senate late in 2009, staff members worked closely with colleagues in the Church Alliance to protect the broad interests of "church plans." While there is uncertainty about the future of healthcare reform and its impact on the Medical Plan and related programs, the Board of Pensions is committed to responding in the best interests of Plan members and their employing organizations. The year 2010 will be a time to closely monitor legislative actions in order to begin the work of understanding and analyzing the impact of a reformed healthcare system on the Medical Plan. But, because it is likely that any legislation will be phased in over a period of one to three years, the Board of Pensions expects that abrupt reaction to change will not be required.

5. *Assistance Program*

a. *Overview*

The Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions values the commitment and sacrifice of the men and women who are called to serve the church. The program acts as a safety net to meet the urgent and emergency financial needs of church workers and their families, consistent with the Board of Pensions' mission in support of the ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Assistance Program is designed to help address the financial needs of employees and retirees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that are beyond the scope of the Benefits Plan.

No Benefits Plan dues are used for the Assistance Program. Support for this program includes gifts, legacies directed to the Board of Pensions, endowment income, and half of the Christmas Joy Offering.

The Assistance Program consists of a small retirement housing program and several financial assistance programs.

b. *Retirement Housing Program*

The Retirement Housing Program was initiated in 1883 to provide housing for eligible ministers. This program consists of the Homes Program, which offers affordable housing in properties owned by the Board of Pensions, and the Housing Supplement Program, which gives financial assistance to help retirees maintain their own homes or move to retirement communities.

(1) *The Homes Program*

Persons who have served in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for twenty years or more are eligible for the Homes Program. Rents in this program are structured so that residents pay according to their ability, contributing the lesser of:

- thirty percent of their total annual income, excluding post-retirement earned income, or
- an appraised fair rental value of the home.

The Homes Program presently consists of one individual home in Lakeland, Florida, and twenty-two houses in a cluster called El Sombroso Oaks in Los Gatos, California. Homes related to various governing bodies of the church also provide services under contract with the Board of Pensions.

(2) *Transition to the Housing Supplement Program*

More ministers are purchasing homes during the course of their ministry than in earlier generations. This reality has lowered the demand for church-related retirement housing. Recognizing this shift, the Board of Pensions requested permission from the 200th General Assembly (1988) to change the Homes Program from one based solely on homes owned by the Board of Pensions to one based on housing assistance supplements. The General Assembly approved this change in strategic direction and authorized the sale of properties then owned and received thereafter, with the proceeds going to the Housing Supplement Program. The General Assembly withheld approval for the sale of two housing communities operated by the Board of Pensions and instructed it to continue its "... ownership and management of the clusters at Morganwood (Swarthmore, Pennsylvania) and El Sombroso Oaks (Los Gatos, California) with no further sale of these clusters without General Assembly Approval" (*Minutes*, 1988, Part I, p. 97).

The 214th General Assembly (2002) approved the sale of Morganwood, a cluster of twenty-nine housing units. On October 29, 2003, an agreement of sale for Morganwood was signed with Swarthmore College, a Quaker-affiliated institution adjacent to the Morganwood property. The proceeds from the sale are used to support the Retirement Housing Program and provide subsidies to current Morganwood residents. Under the agreement of sale, the current residents are entitled to continue living in their units until they choose to vacate them or at the expiration of twenty years from the closing date (January 14, 2004), whichever is earlier. The Board of Pensions provides subsidies to the continuing Presbyterian residents of Morganwood who are related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Board of Pensions. These subsidies totaled approximately \$149,980 for 2008 and \$129,120 for 2009. Each year, the Board of Pensions reviews the subsidies with the residents to determine their future needs.

Similarly, the 215th General Assembly (2003) approved an affiliation agreement between Southern California Presbyterian Homes (SCPH) and Westminster Gardens. The agreement was signed by all parties and the certificate of authority was received from the Department of Social Services in California, effective May 4, 2004.

Westminster Gardens, Duarte, California, was established in 1949, by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., to care for retired missionaries. Since its founding, this retirement community has been available for retired church workers and their spouses. The denomination assigned responsibility for the oversight of the affairs of Westminster Gardens to the Board of Pensions in 1972.

Under the terms of the affiliation agreement, the Board of Pensions is providing rent subsidies to residents who are related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Board of Pensions. The total amount of the subsidy was \$189,650 in 2008 and \$140,000 in 2009. These payments were in addition to the direct assistance provided to qualifying residents under the Board of Pensions Income and Housing Supplements Programs.

c. *Financial Assistance Programs*

The financial assistance programs go to the heart of Christian discipleship: serving people in need in the name of Jesus Christ. They provide emergency and on-going financial aid for members of the pension and healthcare plans and, for some programs, other employees of Presbyterian churches. They also work to strengthen future leadership for the church by providing strategic assistance and support to pastors.

In recent years, the Board of Pensions has introduced a number of pilot programs as it seeks to be more proactive in addressing the needs of church workers. These pilot programs are intended to complement the traditional assistance programs.

The financial assistance programs have been organized under three overarching categories:

(1) *Caring for Church Workers: Urgent Financial Needs*(a) *Shared Grants*

These grants are designed to meet the financial needs that an active or retired church worker is unable to handle. The objective is to help the person who has a financial problem with everyday needs or medical/dental costs not covered by the Benefits Plan or insurance. A grant is shared by a governing body and/or an employing organization and the Board of

Pensions. Annual Shared Grants are usually approved for a calendar year but are disbursed monthly. Other Shared Grants are approved for a one-time payment or can be a monthly disbursement for a period of less than a calendar year.

(b) *Emergency Assistance Grants*

These grants are provided for one-time, special needs when no other financial resources are available. At times, members may have special needs that are beyond the scope of the Benefits Plan. Occasionally, governing bodies and employing organizations are unable to participate in a Shared Grant because of insufficient funds.

(c) *Adoption Assistance Grants*

These grants are distributed to members of the Benefits Plan who adopted a child (under age twenty-one) on or after January 1, 2006. One grant of \$3,000 is given for each eligible adopted child to help defray the cost of the adoption. The monies for these grants come from gifts to the Assistance Program and the receipts from the Relief of Conscience Plan.

(d) *Transition-to-College Assistance Grants*

These grants are distributed to eligible members of the traditional Benefits Plan who have a child enrolled as a full-time freshman at an accredited college or university and whose adjusted gross income is below twice the churchwide median salary. The grants are meant to help mitigate transitional, one-time expenses, such as the purchase of a computer, dorm room furnishings, and other expenses that are not covered by traditional financial aid.

(2) *Caring for Retired Church Workers: Financial and Housing Needs*

(a) *Income Supplements*

These supplements are designed to raise the monthly income of retired church workers and their surviving spouses whose total annual income from all sources is below levels established by the Board of Pensions. The guidelines for the Income Supplement program are reviewed each year. The guideline levels for 2009 were \$26,160 for a single person and \$31,380 for a married couple. This was a 1.8 percent increase over the previous year.

(b) *Housing Supplements*

These supplements provide financial assistance to help eligible retirees and their surviving spouses remain in their own homes or move to a retirement facility in a location of their choice. Each year the guideline for the Housing Supplements program is reviewed. The maximum annual income level guideline for Housing Supplement eligibility in 2009 was \$36,000. This program is the financial assistance component of the Retirement Housing Program.

(3) *Caring for Pastoral Leadership: Leadership and Retention*

(a) *Seminary Debt Assistance Grants*

These grants are provided to ministers of the Word and Sacrament who have graduated from seminary or theological school and are serving in the first seven years of ministry after ordination. To be eligible, a minister of the Word and Sacrament must be in a full-time, called, pastoral position in a PC(USA) church of fewer than 150 members. An eligible minister may receive a grant of up to \$1,500 per year for up to four years to help repay loans incurred while pursuing education leading to a Master of Divinity degree.

(b) *Middle Governing Body Grants*

These are matching grants of up to \$15,000 that are provided to a synod or a group of three or more presbyteries to help them conduct continuing education events focused on practical skills and leadership training for pastors.

(c) *Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants*

These grants are designed to help pastors serving congregations of fewer than 200 members take sabbaticals that will strengthen their skills and renew their ministries. The grants are for \$3,000. This program is administered in cooperation with the synods and presbyteries.

(d) *Presbyterian CREDO*

This program is modeled after a very successful program of the Church Pension Fund of the Episcopal Church. Its mission is to provide opportunities for clergy to examine significant areas of their lives and to prayerfully discern the future direction of their vocation as they respond to God's call in a lifelong process of practice and transformation. A Presbyterian CREDO conference provides time for clergy to step back from the non-stop pace of ordained ministry. It provides a foundation for participants to embrace wellness and prayerfully discern the direction of their personal and professional lives. Each participant commits to extensive reflection through pre-conference instruments and surveys that focus on personal and pro-

essional wellness. The eight-day curriculum is designed to trigger personal discovery through guided reflection, introspection, and dialogue. In 2008 and 2009, seven Presbyterian CREDO conferences were held each year, serving a total of over 350 participants. Twenty-one conferences have been held over the past five years.

d. *Financial Considerations*

The downturn in the financial and investment markets in 2008 and 2009 had an adverse effect on the Assistance Program assets and spending formula. In response to this situation, the Board of Pensions has evaluated and repositioned its programs in order to ensure the long-term financial health of the Assistance Program. Primary consideration has been given to maintaining the need-based (safety net) programs. Other programs will be evaluated based on the stated mission of the Assistance Program, the individual benefit to eligible participants, and the overall benefit to the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

In addition, a number of specific cost reduction actions were taken: the grant award for the Seminary Debt Assistance Grant program has been reduced from \$2,500 per year to \$1,500 per year for new applicants, effective June 1, 2009; the annual budget for the Middle Governing Body Grant program was reduced from \$300,000 to \$150,000 effective January 1, 2010; and the Presbyterian CREDO program postponed a planned expansion of the program in 2010 until a future date.

e. *Funds Development*

In response to the continuing and emerging needs of ministry and the challenges facing those who serve the church, the Board of Pensions has begun a more deliberate phase in its funds development effort.

The Christmas Joy Offering remains a vital financial support to the Assistance Program, and the Board of Pensions continues to work with the Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges and the General Assembly Mission Council staff to promote this denomination-wide offering. However, since the receipts from the offering have declined over recent years and Benefits Plan dues are not used for the Assistance Program, the Board of Pensions has determined that additional financial support, beyond half of the Christmas Joy Offering, is required to meet the increasing demands on existing programs and to fund new programs to meet emerging needs.

To ensure communication with other national entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that are also seeking contributions, the Board of Pensions and the other national agencies developed the “Principles of Funds Development.” In 2003, the agency heads agreed to use these principles as a basis for coordinating their efforts.

The Board of Pensions has selected a theme for funds development communications (“Keeping Our Promises”) and established the online capability for contributions through the Board of Pensions Web site, www.pensions.org. It also established a planned giving initiative to encourage deferred gifts. A Gift Acceptance Policy has been approved.

The Board of Pensions anticipates that the continued support of the Christmas Joy Offering and its funds development efforts will ensure that there will be sufficient resources in the future to “keep our promises” to provide assistance and leadership training to the men and women who have faithfully served the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

6. *Conflict of Interest and Ethics*

The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has policies covering conflicts of interest and ethics. The directors and employees have complied with those policies.

B. *Report of the New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.*

New Covenant Trust Company, N.A. (NCTC) was chartered January 2, 1998, as the first nationally chartered trust company owned by a not-for-profit foundation. The NCTC serves as back-office service provider for the Foundation and the endowment funds it holds as fiduciary for the benefit of the General Assembly, local congregations, and other Presbyterian-affiliated organizations. The company also serves as investment adviser to New Covenant Funds and trustee of various types of trust instruments in which there is a Presbyterian or Presbyterian-related beneficial interest. The board of the NCTC has enacted policies and procedures to ensure compliance with banking and securities law and provides oversight of the delivery of trust services to the Presbyterian community.

The Foundation and NCTC consistently strive to deliver superior service to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and seek to enhance the vehicles available to Presbyterians to express their Christian faith and generous stewardship. We are also exploring ways to partner with Presbyterian and related organizations in the delivery of enhanced trust services, such as personal trusts, wholly charitable trusts, and charitable remainder trusts. The NCTC accepts IRA accounts and provides life and legacy financial planning. These estate-planning devices provide an opportunity to care for loved ones while providing for planned giving opportunities.

The following individuals have been confirmed by former General Assemblies and continue in their service as Directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.

1. *Foundation Trustees*

Sharon Z. Fesler, retired, White, female, married, lay, over 50, Synod of Lincoln Trails.

2. *Former Foundation Trustees*

Lynwood L. Battl, Jr. retired, Black, male, single, lay, over 50, Synod of the Covenant; George J. Hauptfuhrer III, investment adviser, White, male, married, lay, over 50, Synod of South Atlantic; Robert A. McNeely, retired, Black, male, married, lay, over 50, Synod of Southern California; Richard J. Seiwel, (former adjunct trustee), investment adviser, White, male, married, lay, over 50, Synod of the Trinity; B. Cary Tolley III, tax attorney, White, male, married, lay, over 50, Synod of South Atlantic.

3. *OGA Designee*

Doska D. Ross, OGA staff, White, female, single, lay, over 50, Synod of Living Waters.

4. *GAMC Designee*

Currently, there is a vacancy in the position for the GAMC designated board member while we await a nomination by the GAMC.

5. *Other*

Bruce K. Dudley, estate planning attorney, White, male, married, lay, over 50, Synod of Living Waters; Susan R. Ingram, manager, Treasury, White, female, married, lay, over 50, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic; Robert E. Leech, White, male, married, lay, over 50, Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

C. Board of Pensions' Bylaw Amendments

The Board of Pensions reports to the 219th General Assembly (2010) the following amendments to the Bylaws of the Board of Pensions (as set forth below). [Text to be deleted is shown with strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

Section 4.1. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than seven (7) Directors including the Chairperson, the Vice Chairpersons and the Chairperson of each of the following ~~nine~~ *eight* committees: Investment, Healthcare, Assistance, Pension, Social Responsibility *and Church Relations*, Legal, ~~Personnel~~, Board Development and Governance, and Audit *and Compliance*, together with such other Directors as may be appointed by the Chairperson. It shall meet at the call of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. In the interim between the regular meetings of the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee shall perform the duties of and have all the powers vested in the Board of Directors. Any action of the Board taken by the Executive Committee pursuant to this interim authority shall be duly recorded in the minutes of the Corporation and reported to the full Board of Directors at the next meeting. A quorum consisting of a majority of the Directors of the Executive Committee shall be necessary to constitute a duly authorized meeting.

Section 4.3. Social Responsibility and Church Relations Committee. The Social Responsibility *and Church Relations* Committee shall consist of those Directors serving as regular or alternate Directors of the General Assembly Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, and any other Directors designated by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. It shall advise the Board of Directors with respect to questions of social responsibility in investment *and matters relating to Church Relations*.

Section 4.5. Assistance Committee. The Assistance Committee shall consist of not less than five (5) Directors of the Board of Directors. It shall develop for the Board of Directors' approval the policies according to which the Board's ~~programs of~~ financial aid ~~and~~ retirement housing supplements *and CREDO program* are to be administered. The Committee shall also be responsible for the oversight of the funds development and gift administration programs of the Board. The Committee shall regularly review the recommendations of the Board's staff for financial aid and/or retirement housing supplements to individuals in light of the established policies and recommend proper action to the Board of Directors.

The Committee shall also develop for the Board of Directors' approval the policies according to which such retirement housing units as may from time to time be owned by the Board shall be administered. It shall review and recommend to the Board of Directors proper action of the following: (1) the acquisition or disposition of retirement housing units; (2) the annual operating budget of each retirement housing unit; and (3) proposed expenditures for maintenance, repairs, alterations or improvement of retirement housing units which exceed an amount to be set by the Committee from time to time.

Section 4.9. Audit and Compliance Committee. The *Audit and Compliance* Committee shall consist of not less than five (5) Directors. It shall receive, review and report to the Board of Directors the results of the independent annual audit of the accounts of the Corporation and management letter and shall recommend to the Board of Directors proposed changes and other responsive actions based upon such review. It shall meet periodically with the Director of Internal Audit to assure that proper controls and security are being observed at the Corporation. *In consultation with the Legal Committee, it shall be responsible for the oversight of the Board's Compliance Program.* It shall perform such other duties as the Board of Directors or the President may designate from time to time.

~~**Section 4.10. Personnel Committee.** The Personnel Committee, which shall be a subcommittee of the Executive Committee, shall consist of not less than three (3) Directors of the Board of Directors. The committee shall make recommendations to the Board of Directors on matters of personnel. It shall perform such duties in connection with personnel as the Board of Directors may designate from time to time. It shall confer with the President on personnel matters as the Board of Directors deems necessary, or as the President may designate from time to time.~~

~~**Section 4.11. Informal Committee Action.** If all the Directors of a committee shall severally or collectively consent, in writing, to any action to be taken by the Committee, such action shall be a valid committee action as though it had been authorized at a formal meeting of such Committee.~~

Item 19-01

[The assembly approved Item 19-01 with amendment. See p. 72.]

On Designating May 1 Every Year as a Day of Prayer for Healing—From the Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley.

The Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to set aside ~~May 1st~~ every year ~~as~~ a day of prayer for healing and wholeness and suggests that this be done in conjunction with the day currently designated on the Presbyterian Planning Calendar as Health Awareness Sunday. Local churches and communities are encouraged to gather together and offer prayer for the discovery of ever more effective means of treatment. These gatherings may be an occasion to give thanks for the lives of saints who have died; prayers for healing for those who are currently receiving treatment; as well as prayers for doctors, nurses, and scientists who are seeking to bring healing and hope.

Rationale

More than half a million Americans die every year of cancer.

The World Health Organization predicts, “Cancer rates could further increase by 50 percent to 15 million new cases in the year 2020, according to the *World Cancer Report*, the most comprehensive global examination of the disease to date.”

Jesus healed the sick and called upon his church to pray for healing.

The Revelation to John promises an end to suffering, dying, and grief as a sign of God’s ultimate victory.

GAMC COMMENT ON 19-01

Comment on 19-01—From the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC).

The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) is charged with the annual review and approval of programmatic emphases celebrated by the church and published in the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar*.

The GAMC uses these “Guidelines for Programmatic Emphases”:

The life and worship of the local church finds its rhythm in the seasons of the church year as they reflect the life of the Lord and relate to our faith narrative found in Scripture. At the same time, the people of God do not live in isolation. The context of Christian ministry and worship is the world in which we live. The faith community proclaims that God is sovereign over all creation, acts in history, revealed in Scripture, and at work in our world today. Each congregation has the responsibility through its session to respond to the work of God’s Spirit in the life of the community, presbytery and region. Our sense of Christian vocation leads us in a variety of responses through mission service and spiritual formation. Programmatic emphases are those opportunities for church-wide participation and focus on the whole church’s mission together.

The following criteria reflect the theological and liturgical grounding in which our programmatic emphases are rooted.

1. Approved emphases will demonstrate a commitment to the liturgical calendar, the lectionary, and the programmatic needs of the denomination.
2. The church’s liturgical calendar with particular attention to Advent and Christmas, the Season of Lent and Easter Sunday, as well as historic feasts of Epiphany, The Transfiguration, the Day of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and The Festival of Christ the King provides an historical and theological framework for shaping the rhythm and life of our church.
3. Ecumenically shared emphases will receive primary consideration.
4. The Mission Work Plan of the General Assembly [Mission] Council provides a framework for understanding church-wide mission. In order to give substance and meaning to these designated observances, programmatic emphases should relate to and be supported by the Mission Work Plan.
5. In order to be fair to all General Assembly Mission Council programs, requests will be reviewed for overlap and redundancy. Each program team will normally have no more than one programmatic emphasis, and is responsible for providing interpretive resources.
6. Since the church in God’s world must be cognizant of its relationship with other world religions and the culture in which it exists, major Jewish, Islamic, and secular holidays will be included for information.

Each year, the first Thursday of May is designated as a “National Day of Prayer” in the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar*, following the annual date established by federal law. If the General Assembly would like to add a day of prayer for healing to the list of special days, the GAMC suggests that the overture be referred to the General Assembly Mission Council for coordination with other emphases, based on these criteria.

Item 19-02

[The assembly answered Item 19-02 by the action taken on Item 19-05. See pp. 72, 73.]

On Encouraging All Presbyterians to Know Their HIV Status—From the Presbytery of New York City.

The Presbytery of New York City, recognizing that the HIV and AIDS pandemic is a critical matter for our faith and God's justice, overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to encourage all Presbyterians, especially ministers of the Word and Sacrament, ordained elders and deacons, to "Know Their Status" and to work with the Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) to provide voluntary HIV testing at all General Assembly level conferences and at least annually at presbytery meetings.

Rationale

"Silence kills, stigma kills."
Archbishop Desmond Tutu, July 2004

In the United States and around the world people not only fail to get tested for HIV but fear getting tested. In the United States more than 1 million people are estimated to be HIV positive, but fully 25 percent do not know their status because they have never been tested. Fear combined with stigma has helped fuel the AIDS pandemic globally as people fail to promote prevention and access the treatment they require.

Lack of testing and treatment particularly imperils spouses, especially women. In Kenya, for example, 450,000 married couples are estimated to be "discordant" (i.e., one is infected, usually the man, and the other not). The UNAIDS warns that globally 5 million women, primarily married women, are endangered because they and their partner do not know their HIV status.

Key leaders of the church provide a great witness when they willingly and publicly undergo voluntary testing for HIV. The recent voluntary HIV tests taken by the Lutheran bishops sent a clear message to clergy and laity in the United States and around the world, that testing is critical if we are to address and slow this pandemic. When then Senator Barack Obama journeyed to Kenya, he and his wife Michelle voluntarily and publicly were tested as a way to demonstrate to the public the importance of testing and of everyone "knowing their status."

Presbyterian leaders undertaking voluntary HIV testing would serve to highlight the HIV and AIDS pandemic, help break down the stigmatization and the stranglehold of fear associated with HIV and AIDS, and encourage all PC(USA) members and partners to "Know Their Status."

"For the churches, the most powerful contribution we can make to combating HIV transmission is the eradication of stigma and discrimination ..." *The Ecumenical Response to HIV/AIDS in Africa, World Council of Churches 2001.*

Concurrence to Item 19-02 from the Presbyteries of Baltimore, New Castle, and Ohio Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 19-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 19-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 19-02 be disapproved.

Rationale

While the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) stands in solidarity with these presbyteries and with Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN), disapproval is recommended on the following grounds:

Since February 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have recommended universal testing of pregnant women and of all persons admitted to the hospital on an "opt out" basis. Special permission is no longer required for HIV testing, though pregnant women and patients must be informed that they will be tested. Hospitals have moved toward implementation of these recommendations. Thus testing is being done on a basis that captures both persons at risk as well as those not at risk in a way that is manageable and cost-effective within the health care system. Combined with self-referred voluntary testing in non-hospital settings, testing for insurance purposes, and testing done on all military applicants and personnel, a broad section of American society is already being tested for HIV infection, at least some of whom are Presbyterian.

Of the approximately 56,000 reported annual new HIV infections, 53 percent are related to male-to-male sexual contact, 31 percent to high risk heterosexual contact, 4 percent to male-to-male sexual contact with injected drug use, and 12 percent to injected drug use.¹ These four categories of new infection are behaviorally based. While testing of any person who falls in an at-risk category is warranted, the demographics of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) officers do not represent the demographic at behavioral risk of infection, and thus universal testing of church officers is not warranted and would not represent good stewardship of medical resources. In addition, testing at General Assembly would present significant issues of privacy and confidentiality and could raise concerns regarding violations of G-6.0106b.

We recognize the social utility of prominent leaders seeking testing even in the absence of all risk factors for infection, and would thus encourage persons such as the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of GAMC, and prominent pastors to be publically tested. Such testing by these leaders might help to lessen the stigma of testing and encourage those who believe themselves to be at risk to undertake voluntary testing.

Approximately one-in-five persons in the U.S. who are infected with HIV are undiagnosed.² CDC analysis finds that "... the greatest gaps in knowledge [are] among racial/ethnic minorities, males exposed through sexual contact, and youth. Further, the study quantifies the total burden of undiagnosed infection by racial/ethnic and risk groups, indicating that substantially greater numbers of African Americans and gay and bisexual men are living with undiagnosed HIV infection than other populations."³ Based on CDC analysis, in the absence of exposure, symptoms, membership in a high-risk group, or at-risk behavior, voluntary testing would be more effective and less burdensome to the health care system if targeted toward at-risk populations rather than advocated for all persons attending General Assembly, or all pastors, elders or deacons.

Endnotes

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *State of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic, HIV Incidence in the United States*. August 2009.
2. *CDC Morbidity and Mortality Report (MMWR)*, October 3, 2008.
3. Campsmith, Rhodes, and Hall, "Estimated Prevalence of Undiagnosed HIV Infection: US, End of 2006"; Sixteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2009). Montreal, Canada. February 8–11, 2009. (Abstract 1036)

Additional Resource:

"New Analysis Provides More Detailed Picture of Population Living with Undiagnosed HIV Infection in the United States: Suggests Significant Gaps in Knowledge of Infection across Multiple Risk, Racial, and Age Groups." CDC Media Release, February 9, 2009.

Item 19-03

[In response to Item 19-03, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 72, 73.]

[Alternate Resolution:

[The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms females' right and capacity to make responsible decisions regarding their sexual lives, including the right to use contraception, to reject sexual activity, to continue a pregnancy, or when necessary to end a pregnancy; condemns the injustice of any force, coercion, or violence against females to compel pregnancy, the continuation of pregnancy, sterilization, or abortion; commends and encourages those who provide shelter, medical care, and counseling for females subject to domestic violence and coercion in reproductive issues; and instructs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate this concern and commitment to the Congress of the United States and the state legislatures, urging them to expand support for women's shelters and transitional housing for women and children fleeing domestic and all other acts of violence, and to adopt legislation that provides adequate means of prosecuting those who perpetrate violence against females.

[In light of the many forms of violence perpetuated against women, the 219th General Assembly (2010) condemns violence against women in all forms and under all circumstances as violations of God's will for women and men, whether that violence is perpetuated by a stranger or by an intimate partner, and commends and encourages all persons who provide shelter, counseling, and other forms of assistance for women experiencing coercion and violence.]

On Making a Statement Regarding Violence Against Pregnant Women—From the Presbytery of Boise.

The Presbytery of Boise overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

1. Condemn assaults, attempts, and actual acts of pressure, force, violence, and coercion upon a pregnant female, especially where the activity inflicts mental or physical injury or death on the pregnant female.

2. Acknowledge that the voices of pregnant females and their unborn children are weak and many times powerless to combat acts of violence and coercion thereby depriving females of personal choice, leaving them physically and mentally victimized as well as spiritually damaged.

3. State that the PC(USA) affirms that pregnant females are precious to God and as Christians we share a common commandment to exercise care, compassion, and to seek justice on behalf of our pregnant sisters who are subjected to assaults and batteries that injure or kill them and their unborn children. The media and court systems record that the purposes behind the violence include: acts to destroy evidence of child molestation or incestuous activities; acts to eliminate personal responsibilities or inconvenience to the perpetrator's lifestyle; dislike for biracial unborn children; or desire to destroy pregnant females.

4. Commend and encourage the work of congregations, sessions, and ministers of Word and Sacrament who are proactively providing shelter, medical care, and counseling for pregnant females who have experienced such pressures, force, violence, and coercion.

5. Call for identification of assaults, attempts, and acts of force, violence, and coercion upon a pregnant female as violations against females, children, and creative acts of God. A report on the incidents of violence against vulnerable pregnant females shall be included as part of the regular human rights reports to the General Assembly.

6. Instruct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate with each state legislative body and to the U.S. Congress by sending a copy of this overture, together with a letter urging them to adopt legislation that recognizes the special vulnerability of pregnant females and to protect them from assaults, attempts, and acts of force, coercion, and violence, that inflict physical or mental injury, or death, on the pregnant female.

Rationale

Victimization

There are certain things in our society that we keep hushed up and from which we turn away our eyes so that we might purposely remain in ignorance. But evil does not go away by pretending that it does not exist or by hoping that someone else will fix the problem.

The use of force, violence, or coercion against pregnant females to effectuate an abortion are brought before our eyes in media reports that often recount the human tragedies as if they are nonfiction stories with bizarre entertainment value.

The media reports note that the purposes of force, violence, or coercion against pregnant women include efforts to destroy evidence of child molestation or incestuous activities, to eliminate personal responsibilities or inconvenience to a perpetrator's lifestyle, to destroy disliked biracial unborn children, or to eliminate the disliked pregnancy. This victimization and our passivity to it is one of the silent disgraces of our society. It takes courage and fortitude to examine the record of hate and abuse to pregnant females in the United States and to be instruments that bring God's good grace, healing, and justice.

Sometimes the stories of violence against pregnant females are reported with sensational headlines such as "Pregnant Woman Killed and Baby Cut Out of Her Womb" but even the news reports that do not use such dramatic words reflect a deep brokenness in our culture. They draw our averted eyes back to the reality of abusive activity that is a nightmare for those females who are being terrorized. Consider a simple handful of reports that demonstrate the scope of such cases:

- A father who impregnated his daughter demanded she abort in order to hide his incestuous, predatory activity.¹
- A man kicked a pregnant female in the stomach, suffocated her, and mutilated her body because she would not abort their child and a child would interfere with his bachelor lifestyle.²
- A work supervisor badgered a worker to get an abortion because her preborn baby was biracial.³
- A female who refused to get an abortion was repeatedly punched in the stomach and kicked with steel-toed boots to induce an abortion.⁴
- A female assistant coach was given the choice of aborting her baby or losing her job.⁵
- An incestuous stepfather forced his stepchildren to abort to hide his child molestation activities.⁶
- A man who did not want to pay child support murdered a pregnant female using a pipe bomb.⁷
- A mother held her daughter at gunpoint to make the daughter have an unwanted abortion.⁸

- An African American woman had her mouth gagged and she was restrained by an abortionist after she screamed that she did not want an abortion (lawsuit for ethnic harassment, intimidation, and medical malpractice for the abortion was filed June 17, 2009).⁹
- A teacher kidnapped and murdered a 14-year old pregnant student to avoid rape charges and child support payments.¹⁰

1. *Pressure Results in High Incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*

We need to take time to examine some facts before making a conscious decision of whether we will avert our eyes again and ignore the plight of the pregnant female who is experiencing coercion, force, and violence. We are grateful that some women are blessed and able to escape from coercive and dangerous situations.

Finally, the other silent voice in the face of the violence against a pregnant woman is the preborn child. According to the March of Dimes, battering during pregnancy is the leading cause of birth defects and infant mortality, in fact more birth defects are caused by such violence than all birth defects that are caused by all the diseases for which people are routinely inoculated.”¹¹

2. *Coercion and Pressure Ramp-up to Violence and Deadly Force*

The pressure and coercion experienced by a pregnant female can escalate to force and even deadly violence if the female refuses to submit to the pressures and coercion of others. A study of pregnancy-associated deaths in Maryland from 1993–1998 revealed that homicide was the leading cause of the pregnancy-associated deaths.¹²

3. *Roe v. Wade Violated: Freedom of Personal Choice Missing*

Females who are subjected to coercion and violence are robbed of their personal choice about their pregnancy. The Supreme Court case of *Roe v. Wade* provided that the pregnant woman not only has a constitutional right to choose an abortion but also a personal right to be free in whatever choice she made to do with her body. That includes the right to be free from pressures, assaults, coercion, and violence as to the choice of whether she will preserve the life of her preborn child.

The pregnant female who wants to have her child is denied her *Roe* constitutional right to personal freedom in the face of pressures, coercion, force, or violence. She must either submit to the violence, injury, or death, or submit to an unwanted abortion that also has medical risks and permanent loss of her preborn child.

The freedom of personal choice is truly missing for a victimized, pregnant female.

4. *Our Call to See and Hear and Act*

Pregnant females, as a class, easily become invisible, nonpersons. Many people are awkward around pregnant females, unsure of how to relate to them thus contributing to their isolation just when they need assistance and attention to help them with assaults, coercion, force, and violence. And, as seen in even the handful of accounts recited above, victimization of pregnant females exists across all economic and societal groups of females, including the young, the sexually molested, those carrying biracial preborn children, those who are racially ethnically targeted, those married and unmarried, and those who are otherwise voiceless, invisible, and unable to defend themselves.

We have a clear call to see, hear, and be proactive in praying, speaking up, defending, and seeking justice for terrorized pregnant females. Scripture chides us as to our complacency:

How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. (Ps. 82:2–4)

The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, and was appalled that there was no one to intervene. (Isa. 59:15b–16)

As Christians, let us take up this task of intercession on behalf of victimized pregnant females.

Commend and Encourage Congregations to Care for Victimized Pregnant Females

There are congregations, sessions, and ministers of Word and Sacrament who are proactively providing shelter, medical care, and counseling for pregnant females who have experienced such pressures, force, violence, and coercion; these should be commended for their work and other PC(USA) congregations encouraged to join in efforts to pray and care for those pregnant females who have already been victimized.

Much prayer and careful study is needed in the effort to stop and eradicate the core evil in our society that generates acts of pressure, coercion, force, and violence against vulnerable pregnant females.

Call for Identification and Tracking of Incidents

There is no systematic recordation of the violence or number of murders perpetrated against a woman because she is pregnant. We obtain much of our information from media accounts that provide reports of the disgust, anger, and violence of a perpetrator toward the victim for being pregnant.

The media account of the Laci Peterson murder (California, 2004) not only brought the problem to the public attention but that the tracking of murders of pregnant females that are perpetrated because of a pregnancy are lacking and/or undercounted. These violent deaths slip through administrative counting processes due to inherent difficulties in tracking and connecting a criminal conviction for murder that may occur years after a recordation of the death of the pregnant female. In addition, it is not essential to elicit testimony at the criminal trial that the perpetrator inflicted deadly violence on the pregnant woman due to the existence of a pregnancy so the connection is lost and an undercounting occurs.¹³

The undercounting, or even non-counting, means that there is limited awareness of the extent of the problem except through localized media coverage that elicits such information. Social injustice will not be addressed when we are not aware of it except for reading fleeting sensationalized media accounts.

Need for Legislative Action

Human institutions are to work out God's justice on earth; human government is charged with the function of restraining evil and preserving life. It is through faithful and obedient Christians that the state becomes aware of the need for justice and how to incorporate true justice in accordance with God's good design into society.

As Christians we are to take up a cross of caring and responsibility that resists evil, cruelty, and brutality. We are to come to the aid of the voiceless, innocent, and weak. We are to take a stand against the distortion of social justice and the demeaning of the *imago Deo* in humanity. We acknowledge His sovereignty over all relationships. Holiness requires a servanthood of engagement with our culture, not just passive observance of what the state deems an acceptable level of restraint of oppression or evil.

In April 2008, the State of Idaho became the first—and only—state in the United States to pass a law that made it a crime to threaten or inflict physical injury on a pregnant female for an abortion (Chapter 388 of the 2008 Statutes of Idaho). For the first time in the United States, the pregnant woman was given a means of justice against her assailant; but this right exists in only one of the fifty states.

Even this initial endeavor by one state to provide justice for the pregnant female is weak in that the penalty under the Idaho statute for conviction of injury to the female is a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or sentence of up to six months in jail. The legal penalties that we set reflect our values. It is especially striking that the Idaho penalty for perpetrating force or violence on a pregnant female for an abortion is even less than:

- mutilating a public record (up to \$1,000 fine and/or 5 years in prison; ID statute 18-3202)
- offering a bribe to a municipal officer (\$1,000 fine and 5 years in prison; ID statute 18-1309)
- burning forest land (\$50,000 fine and 10 years in prison; ID statute 18-906).

There is a need to urge all state and federal legislative bodies to enact statutes to provide real justice for the victimized pregnant female. The constitutional rights of *Roe v. Wade* are of no value to a pregnant female facing coercion and violence when there has been no federal, and only one state legislature, that has statutorily embodied enforcement provisions and penalties for coercing and victimizing pregnant women for the purpose of causing an unwanted abortion.

Effectuating social justice must include a partnership with the governing bodies that will clearly stand together with the church in seeking justice for the victimized pregnant female.

Endnotes

1. "Operation Aimed at Sex Offenders, Child Predators Nets Dozens of Arrests in L.A. Area" *San Francisco Chronicle*. Oct. 10, 2003.
2. "Suspect Charged with Killing, Mutilating His Pregnant Girlfriend" *Winston-Salem Journal*. April 6–7 2005.
3. "Jury Awards Woman in Abortion Lawsuit" *Naples Daily News*. Feb. 11 2001.
4. "Man Faces Rare Charge of Trying to Hurt Fetus," *The Grand Rapids Press*. Sept. 11, 2003.
5. "Choice Between Child, Paycheck: Lawsuit Claims Coach Told Assistant to Have Abortion or Give Up Her Job," *New Washington Post*. Sept. 18, 2002.
6. *State of Kansas v. Robert Estrada Sr.*

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7. “Death Penalty Sought in Bombing Conviction,” *The Virginian- Pilot*. May 24, 2007.
8. “No Jail for Trying to Force Daughter’s Abortion at Gunpoint,” *Lifesite Daily News*. Jan. 8, 2001.
9. *Caitlin Bruce v. Abraham Hodari MD et al.*, State of Michigan Circuit Court for the County of Genesee Case # 09-91546 Filed June 17, 2009.
10. “Slain Teen Had Been Pressured,” *Wichita Eagle*. June 20, 2006.
11. *The Domestic Violence Sourcebook*, Dawn Bradley Berry, J.D., p. 9.
12. Isabelle Horon D. PH and Diana Cheng MD. “Enhanced Surveillance for Pregnancy-Associated Mortality- Maryland, 1993–1998.” *JAMA* 285 (11) 1455–1459 (2001); see also J. McFarlane et. al., “Abuse During Pregnancy and Femicide: Urgent Implications for Women’s Health,” *Obstetrics & Gynecology* 100:27–36 (2002).
13. (Laci Peterson media report) www.cnn.com/2007/US/law/12/11/court.archive.peterson8/index.html.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 19-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 19-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 19-03 be answered by approving the following substitute recommendation: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

~~“[1. Condemn assaults, attempts, and actual acts of pressure, force, violence, and coercion upon a pregnant female, especially where the activity inflicts mental or physical injury or death on the pregnant female.~~

~~“[2. Acknowledge that the voices of pregnant females and their unborn children are weak and many times powerless to combat acts of violence and coercion thereby depriving females of personal choice, leaving them physically and mentally victimized as well as spiritually damaged.~~

~~“[3. State that the PC(USA) affirms that pregnant females are precious to God and as Christians we share a common commandment to exercise care, compassion, and to seek justice on behalf of our pregnant sisters who are subjected to assaults and batteries that injure or kill them and their unborn children. The media and court systems record that the purposes behind the violence include: acts to destroy evidence of child molestation or incestuous activities; acts to eliminate personal responsibilities or inconvenience to the perpetrator’s lifestyle; dislike for biracial unborn children; or desire to destroy pregnant females.~~

~~“[4. Commend and encourage the work of congregations, sessions, and ministers of Word and Sacrament who are proactively providing shelter, medical care, and counseling for pregnant females who have experienced such pressures, force, violence, and coercion.~~

~~“[5. Call for identification of assaults, attempts, and acts of force, violence, and coercion upon a pregnant female as violations against females, children, and creative acts of God. A report on the incidents of violence against vulnerable pregnant females shall be included as part of the regular human rights reports to the General Assembly.~~

~~“[6. Instruct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate with each state legislative body and to the U.S. Congress by sending a copy of this overture, together with a letter urging them to adopt legislation that recognizes the special vulnerability of pregnant females and to protect them from assaults, attempts, and acts of force, coercion, and violence, that inflict physical or mental injury, or death, on the pregnant female.]”~~

“[The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms women’s moral right and moral capacity to responsibly determine their reproductive lives, including the right to use contraception, to reject sexual activity, to continue a pregnancy, or when necessary to end a pregnancy; condemns the injustice of any force, coercion, or violence against women to compel pregnancy, the continuation of pregnancy, sterilization or abortion; commends and encourages those who provide shelter, medical care, and counseling for women subject to domestic violence and coercion in reproductive issues; and instructs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate this concern and commitment to the Congress of the United States and the state legislatures, urging them to expand support for women’s shelters and transitional housing for women and children fleeing domestic violence.]”

Rationale

A good deal of research documents the use of violence and coercion for the purpose of imposing reproductive control over women in order to achieve the reproductive goals of their intimate partners.¹ ACSWP advises that Item 19-03, which focuses on violence intended to terminate a pregnancy, be answered with a substitute recommendation that expands the re-

sponse of the PC(USA) to include condemnation of any physical or emotional violence and coercion intended to control women's reproductive choices.

Item 19-03 appropriately raises the important issue of physical and emotional assaults and threats of assault or other forms of harm against women who are pregnant. Some research has indicated that intimate partner violence increases during pregnancy. The Centers for Disease Control report that 4 percent to 8 percent of pregnant women report violence during pregnancy—most likely a low figure since most domestic violence is not reported.² While research indicates numerous motivations for such violence, Item 19-03 brings our attention to violence that is intended to terminate the pregnancy against the woman's will. Even when such violence does not lead to the horrific examples noted in Item 19-03, this abuse may lead to a miscarriage, preterm labor and birth, and injury to both the woman and the fetus. Women experiencing abuse in the year before or during a pregnancy are much more likely to report other health issues: including high blood pressure, kidney and urinary tract infections, and depression.³

The intent to control women's reproductive lives also takes other violent forms. For example, intimate partners may use physical and emotional violence, coercion, and threats against pregnant women who seek an abortion. Women who are not pregnant may be subject to unwanted sexual intercourse, the refusal of their partners to use condoms, threats of violence if they use contraception to avoid pregnancy, and the refusal of their partner to pay for contraception or to allow access to reproductive health care.⁴ Termed "birth control sabotage" in the research literature, these abuses increase the likelihood of unintended pregnancy. The vicious cycle continues as women whose pregnancies are unintended are four times more likely to suffer increased abuse.⁵

All such attempts to impose reproductive control are justly condemned. *Do Justice, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly (Micah 6:8)*, the report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion, adopted by the 204th General Assembly (1992) affirms "... the ability and responsibility of women, guided by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, in the context of their communities of faith, to make good moral choices in regard to problem pregnancies" (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 368, 27.091) and the church's support of "... full and equal access to contraceptive methods ..." (*Ibid.*, 27.118) as well as "... universal access to health care..." (*Ibid.*, 27.121). *Turn Mourning into Dancing*, the church's statement on healing domestic violence (213th General Assembly, 2001), defines domestic violence as "... always a violation of the power of God intended for good. It is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behavior, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks as well as economic coercion ..." (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, p. 235, 25.044). This policy provides numerous recommendations for the church's public witness as well as for pastoral and congregational responses.

The ACSWP advises against advocating specific legislation "... that recognizes the special vulnerability of pregnant females and to protect them from assaults, attempts, and acts of force, coercion, and violence, that inflict physical or mental injury, or death, on the pregnant female..." (Item 19-03, #6). It is unclear how such legislation would differ from existing laws against assault and murder or how such legislation would actually protect women from assault. Supporting the expansion of services that aid women in getting help, including protection and shelter, seems more likely to prevent harm and facilitate healing.

Endnotes

1. Moore, Frohwirth, and Miller, "Male reproductive control of women who have experienced intimate partner violence in the United States," *Social Science and Medicine* (forthcoming) at <<http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/journals/socscimed201002009.pdf>>.
2. Centers for Disease Control, "Intimate Partner Violence During Pregnancy," <<http://www.cdc.gov/ReproductiveHealth/violence/IntimatePartnerViolence/>>. See also McFarland, et. al., *Abuse During Pregnancy: A Protocol for Prevention and Intervention, A March of Dimes Nursing Module*, Second Edition, March of Dimes Birth Defects, 2000.
3. Silverman, Decker, Reed, and Raj, "Intimate Partner Violence Victimization Prior to and During Pregnancy Among Women Residing in Twenty-six U.S. States: Associations with Maternal and Neonatal Health." *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, Vol. 195, #1 2006: pp. 140–148.
4. Moore, et. al., above. See also Miller, et. al., "Pregnancy Coercion, Intimate Partner Violence, and Unintended Pregnancy," *Contraception*, Vol. 81, #4 (April, 2010): pp. 316–322.
5. Heise, L. "Reproductive Freedom and Violence Against Women: What are the intersections?" *The Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics*, Vol. 27 (1993).

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 19-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 19-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns concurs with the advice of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve the substitute recommendation contained in ACSWP's Advice and Counsel.

Item 19-04

[The assembly approved Item 19-04 with amendment. See pp. 72, 73.]

On Taking a Stand Against Forced and Coerced Abortions—[Decisions on Ending or Continuing a Pregnancy]—From the Presbytery of Prospect Hill.

The Presbytery of Prospect Hill overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA) to declare that we stand with all women against the injustice of any forced or coerced abortions [and the injustice of any forced or coerced decisions to carry a pregnancy to term].

Rationale

The 1992 abortion policy document, *Problem Pregnancies and Abortion*, states, “The strong Christian presumption is that since life is precious to God, we are to preserve and protect it.” It also affirms our confidence in women to “make good moral choices in regard to problem pregnancies.” And it states that “no law should condone mandatory or forced abortion or sterilization.”¹

In some cases, coercion escalates to threats against the woman’s life, physical restraint during the abortion procedure, or being taken forcibly, even at gunpoint, to an abortion clinic.² Even medical providers are sometimes guilty of subtle coercion when couples receive a difficult prenatal diagnosis and may pressure the couple to choose abortion as the “right thing” to do.

God’s people are called to speak out against violence and injustice. We are sent into the world as the reconciling community of Christ to disclose “man’s inhumanity to man and the awful consequences of its own complicity in injustice.” The church is called to live and serve society as a living confession of Christ as Lord.³

In Psalm 82:2 we read: “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” And again in Isaiah 59: 15b-16: “The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, and was appalled that there was no one to intervene.”

The PC(USA) upholds the value of the individual conscience before God and its right to be free of coercion.

When an individual woman faces the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy, the issue is intensely personal, and may manifest itself in ways that do not reflect public rhetoric, or do not fit neatly into medical, legal, or policy guidelines. Humans are empowered by the spirit prayerfully to make significant moral choices, including the choice to continue or end a pregnancy. Human choices should not be made in moral vacuum, but must be based on Scripture, faith, and Christian ethics. For any choice, we are accountable to God; however, even when we err, God offers to forgive us. (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 905)

Endnotes

1. *Problem Pregnancies and Abortion*, Sec. I.E. 1.c, 1.1, 1 & 3. h, p. 10-15, Office of the General Assembly, PC(USA), 1992.
2. Julie A. Gazmararian et al., “The Relationship Between Pregnancy Intendedness and Physical Violence in Mothers of Newborns,” *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 85:1031 (1995); Hortensia Amaro et al., “Violence During Pregnancy and Substance Use,” *American Journal of Public Health*, 80:575 (1990); and J. McFarlane et al., “Abuse During Pregnancy and Femicide: Urgent Implications for Women’s Health,” *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 100:27, 27–36 (2002).
3. *The Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967 9.32–33, PC(USA).

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 19-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 19-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 219th General Assembly (2010) that Item 19-04 be answered by action on its Advice and Counsel on Item 19-03.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 19-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 19-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with the advice of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) that Item 19-04 be answered by ACSWP’s Advice and Counsel on Item 19-03.

Rationale

See ACWC’s rationale for Item 19-03.

Item 19-05

[The assembly approved Item 19-05 with amendment. See pp. 72–73.]

Becoming an ~~[HIV and AIDS]~~ [HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C] Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

[Editor’s Note: In adding mention of Hepatitis B and C to its approval of a report on HIV/AIDS and the church, the 219th General Assembly (2010) also acknowledges the dangers of co-infection with Hepatitis B and C and other blood-borne diseases, and encourages at-risk persons to take appropriate precautions, noting that exposure patterns and treatment protocols differ markedly. For more information, see the addendum to this report (HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B or C Co-infection), which can be found on-line as a jump link to Item 19-05: <http://oga.pcusa.org/ogaresources/journal2010.pdf>.]

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approve the following measures in response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic:

1. Approve the “Resolution on Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action.”

2. Receive the background rationale (to be included in the *Minutes*).

[3. Encourage the PC(USA) to advocate on behalf of, create, and engage in educational programs that reduce the stigma, discrimination, and fear of persons who have been diagnosed as HIV positive as a method to encourage honest disclosure and prevent the further spread of the virus.]

~~[3-]~~ [4.] Challenge the PC(USA) to become an HIV and AIDS competent denomination at all levels of the church and in all its ministries, combining emphasis on compassionate care with action to dismantle the social inequalities that create marginalized populations at great risk, by doing the following:

a. Call upon congregations to accept the challenge to become an HIV and AIDS competent church by studying the HIV and AIDS related policies and resources of the PC(USA), becoming

(1) knowledgeable about the root causes and social determinants of HIV and AIDS risk and vulnerability, including encouraging all Presbyterians, especially ministers of Word and Sacrament and church leaders, to be tested in order to be a visible example to all people and help eliminate the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS testing;

(2) proficient in being a welcoming community for all of God’s children;

(3) compassionate in providing pastoral care for persons living with, or affected by, HIV and AIDS; and

(4) prophetic in advocating for social policies that address the social inequalities creating increased risk of infection, nationally and globally.

b. Direct the appropriate entities of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), in consultation with the Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN), the Racial Ethnic Caucuses of the PC(USA), the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), to develop:

(1) denominational standards defining the marks of HIV and AIDS competent congregations and ministries, in accordance with PC(USA) policies and in collaboration with ecumenical partners in HIV and AIDS ministries; and

(2) a study guide that provides pastors, church educators, elders, deacons, mission workers, youth and young adults, and lay persons with practical examples of how to discuss and thoughtfully examine, with cultural proficiency and sensitivity, HIV and AIDS issues, including the role of social structures examined in this report, as well as the role of responsible sexual behaviors, through Bible studies, worship, liturgy, preaching, pastoral care, and social justice advocacy.

c. Call upon presbyteries to include pastoral training related to HIV and AIDS competency as part of a qualified candidate’s preparation for ministry.

d. Commend Presbyterian theological seminaries that have incorporated HIV and AIDS education into their community life.

e. Urge Presbyterian theological seminaries to expand their programs to develop HIV and AIDS competency in preaching, pastoral care, and social witness.

f. Call upon the members of the PC(USA) and congregations to renew our commitment to the following:

(1) being a welcoming community for all of God’s children;

(2) engaging in anti-homophobic educational programs;

- (3) providing responsible sex education for our children, including such topics as healthy relationships, harm-reduction practices, comprehensive sex education, and abstinence;
- (4) encouraging safe sex practices, including condom use;
- (5) encouraging and/or providing pastoral care for persons living with HIV and AIDS; and
- (6) calling for universal health care.

~~[g.] Urge the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to critically assess the profit margins of drug companies that develop drugs for treating HIV and AIDS and include in its report to the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) a recommendation on appropriate percent margins the church may want to consider when investing its resources with companies that profit from drugs designed to treat HIV and AIDS.]~~

~~[h.]~~ [g.] Commend the work in the area of HIV and AIDS undertaken by the International Health and Development (IHD) ministry area of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), the Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA), Presbyterian Women (PW), the Peacemaking Program, the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC), the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), and the Racial Ethnic Caucuses of the PC(USA).

~~[i.]~~ [h.] In light of the social determinants that impact the spread of HIV and AIDS described in this report, challenge all entities of the PC(USA) to identify within themselves and their ministry areas the practices and policies through which they can address these underlying forces of poverty, racial inequality, gender inequality, or human rights violations, nationally and internationally, as appropriate: for example, by supporting basic development projects that allocate resources in a manner equitable to women.

~~[j.]~~ [i.] Direct the Presbyterian Washington Office (PWO) and the Presbyterian United Nations Office (PUNO) to advocate to the appropriate national and international tribunals

(1) that drug treatment and other treatment and prevention modalities for HIV and AIDS, including condom distribution, be made readily accessible, particularly in rural areas, and more easily affordable or free to destitute people living with HIV and AIDS;

(2) that government establish partnerships with pharmaceutical companies to enable the free or low-cost distribution of anti-retroviral drugs, nationally and internationally;

(3) that the U.S. government increase funding for critical HIV and AIDS research including research focused on (a) infants and children, (b) the risk behaviors of teenagers and comprehensive sexuality education curriculum for teens, and (c) underreported, indigenous, and special-needs populations;

(4) that the social determinants of HIV and AIDS vulnerability inform all HIV and AIDS research and policies;

(5) that U.S. global health diplomacy be expanded to inform all foreign assistance programs focusing on the factors that lead to good health for all people and the eradication of the social determinants of disease (such as poverty, food insecurity, gender inequality, and the violation of human rights); and

(6) that the overall vision of worldwide diplomacy raises the global health diplomacy to parity with other leading values such as trade and commerce.

~~[k.]~~ [j.] Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate to the president of the United States, the chairpersons of the Senate and House standing committees on Appropriations and Foreign Relations, and the administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, the Church's support within U.S. foreign assistance programs benefiting HIV and AIDS -infected countries for (a) expansion of HIV and AIDS prevention activities, including condom distribution, and (b) government partnerships with U.S. pharmaceutical companies to enable free and low-cost distribution of anti-retroviral drugs.

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$10,000; 2012: \$0 (Per Capita—GAMC)]

Rationale

This report and recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2008 Referral: Item 10-02. On Directing the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Develop and Fund a Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Policy for the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of the Pacific (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1078–82).*

The 218th General Assembly (2008), “recognizing that the HIV and AIDS pandemic is a critical matter of our faith and God’s justice ... direct[ed] the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), in consultation with appropriate General Assembly Council staff, PC(USA) networks, and church partners, to develop and fully fund a comprehensive study on HIV and AIDS for the PC(USA), recommending compassionate action and giving prophetic witness regarding issues related to people living with HIV and AIDS in the U.S.A. and around the world, and report to the 219th General Assembly (2010) (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 58–59, 1078–79).

Having consulted with appropriate entities of the church, a work group was appointed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to draft a report responding to the 218th General Assembly (2008) referral. The members of this group included: Delfin W. Bautista, Kezia L. Ellison, Marsha Fowler, Ann Hayman, James A. Lemons, and Clive Neil. Kathryn L. Smith served as consultant on this project. Staff support to the group was provided by Belinda M. Curry, associate for policy development and interpretation for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Introduction

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has maintained a faithful witness to the vicissitudes of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) since the mid 1980s. We have charted a course from continent to continent, from gay to heterosexual populations, from the point of view of caregivers to concrete suggestions about how local congregations can get involved, to formulating a Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) and establishing a special focus on AIDS in the International Health and Development (IHD) ministry area of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). We have studied this pandemic, Presbyterian Women (PW) have journeyed, and mission dollars have been given to AIDS-related causes. The PC(USA) has aimed to study and address this issue with the needs of those infected and affected by this pandemic always at the forefront of our study, reflection, ministry, and practices. Almost thirty years from the advent of this virus we know a great deal—we know what it is and how it is transmitted, we know how to prevent its spread with use of condoms and needle-exchange programs, yet despite this knowledge there will be an estimated 53,000 new cases of HIV reported in the United States this year. We found ourselves looking deeply into the new faces of this disease and have realized that there are many “powers and principalities” at play: not new germs, not uncaring churches, not failed care giving, not a lack of profound and even prophetic social witness policy, but the ever constant presence of poverty, gender inequality, human rights violations, and the constellation of stigma, prejudice, and unjust discrimination and marginalization.

This report presents the PC(USA) with a concise but comprehensive look at HIV and AIDS thirty years after it made its first blip on our epidemiological radar screens. We begin with an overview of the development of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in the United States and globally and the church’s response. From this overview, we report on the present context of the global pandemic as it appears in the U.S. and other regions of the world. We turn to Scripture for comfort, guidance, hope, and a prophetic vision of how to respond most faithfully. We then examine the marginalizing social forces that foster the spread of HIV: poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, stigma, and discrimination. We see how cultural and religious beliefs can contribute to the greater vulnerability of some groups, extending the power of this pandemic. As we journey toward examining the dynamics of unequal social power, we lift up and highlight populations that have been historically underreported or mis-categorized. This leads us to a social analysis and an assessment of our current situation where we address the implications of the dynamics of these powers and principalities for us as a church, nation, and world. Finally, we return to our theme and goal: that the PC(USA) become an HIV and AIDS competent denomination defined by the merging of compassionate care, so well developed in current church policies and resources, and prophetic witness, now focused on the dynamics of unequal power nationally and globally, with the recognition that attention to both is necessary to stop the tragedy of this pandemic.

I. The Development of a Pandemic and the Church’s Response

A. *The Development of a Pandemic*

In the U.S., AIDS was perceived as a gay man’s disease by the time its clinical manifestation was recognized and the HIV lentivirus was isolated in the early 1980s. Soon thereafter, AIDS was recognized among injecting drug users and Haitians, then among transfused hemophiliacs, and, subsequently it was discovered that it could be passed from mother to fetus. By January 1983, it was recognized that the disease could be passed through heterosexual sex. That same year, European reports identified two separate epidemic populations: homosexual persons, and persons from Central Africa who had no associations with homosexual sex, injection drug use, or blood transfusion. By the end of 1984, 7,699 AIDS cases and 3,665 AIDS deaths were reported in the United States, 762 cases in Europe, and 108 cases in the United Kingdom. By the end of 1985 it became known that AIDS could be transmitted through breast-feeding and AIDS had been reported in every region of the world. There were 20,303 cases reported to the World Health Organization (WHO), of which 15,948 were in the U.S. alone.¹ Today, worldwide, there are 33 million people living with AIDS, 2.5 million of whom are children; globally 25 million people have died due to AIDS-related complications.² The HIV infection and AIDS have affected and infected persons of every age, sex, marital status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, ethnic, and racial group throughout the world; no demographic has remained untouched. This enormous suffering cries out again for compassionate action and prophetic justice.

B. *The Church's Response*

As this pandemic swept across the world, fear arose and with this fear came stigma, prejudice, unjust discrimination, and social marginalization. Church response began prior to reunion (1983) when the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. first explored a “new medical syndrome identified and designated as Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (A.I.D.S.)” The 195th General Assembly (1983) advocated for (1) justice, (2) media coverage of the disease, and (3) funding for medical research.³

In the mid 1980s, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) began to study myriad issues related to HIV and the accompanying AIDS illnesses. The 196th General Assembly (1984) affirmed that these illnesses should neither be viewed as “punishment for behavior deemed immoral nor as an excuse for discrimination and oppression.”⁴ The 200th General Assembly (1988) called again on Presbyterians to show unbiased and genuine compassion for persons living with HIV and AIDS in a resolution titled *To Meet AIDS with Grace and Truth*. Recognizing that HIV and AIDS were thought to be affecting primarily the gay male community; the assembly declared that “all people are precious to God” and urged legislative action “to protect the human and civil rights of persons infected by the HIV, persons perceived to be at risk for such infection, and persons with AIDS or ARC (AIDS Related Complex); [and] urge[d] thorough efforts to investigate, document, and prevent prejudice and violence against all persons who have AIDS or are perceived to be at risk for AIDS.”⁵

The church also recognized the harsh reality that unless sufficient resources were allocated within the United States and around the world, both the church and society would soon grapple with the majority of individuals likely contracting the HIV virus through heterosexual contact. It urged attention to the spread of HIV “among drug addicts, their sex partners, and babies” and the development of national strategies for preventive education, civil rights protections, and financing of care.⁶

By 2001, the church had fully recognized that AIDS was now a global pandemic disproportionately affecting women and children, particularly women and children of color. The church responded by working in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations (UN), and in ecumenical and interfaith collaborations demonstrating the love of God and advancing the status of women.⁷ Two years later PC(USA) AIDS policy shifted to the African continent. Through the 215th General Assembly (2003) approval of the *Resolution on Africa*, Presbyterians were challenged to “engage in hands-on mission projects that provide care for people living with ... AIDS in Africa”⁸ and, further, to “advocate boldly for more just and extensive application of human rights principles and pronouncements by governments, nongovernmental organizations, private ... organizations, and religious institutions globally and in Africa.”⁹

For almost three decades, the voice of the Presbyterian church has been strong and clear, calling local congregations and other governing bodies to engage in compassionate, nonjudgmental care, and to respond to those facing a life with HIV and AIDS with respect, support, compassion, and nonjudgmental assistance. Our policies have called upon us to witness to injustice, to do justice, and to promote prevention. The General Assembly has directed our General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) to work with our legislatures creating public policies and funding that provides ready access to lifesaving drug treatment for those affected by HIV and AIDS. We have produced numerous resources to enable individuals and churches to break the silence and to counter the negative theology often surrounding these issues.¹⁰ We have supported the Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN), the International Health and Development (IHD) ministry area, and other caring organizations of the PC(USA) including Care Teams. Presbyterian Women have been especially active in these efforts through their support of mission and their global exchange programs.

Yet, since the first cases of HIV and AIDS were recognized in 1981, more than “sixty million people have been infected with the human immunodeficiency virus; nearly half have died and the toll on individuals, families, communities, and entire nations has been profound.”¹¹ In its reach and devastation this pandemic is among the worst infectious scourges in human history. The church is challenged again to sharpen its prophetic witness and deepen its compassionate action.

II. The Current Context of the HIV and AIDS Pandemic

To construct compassionate ministries of justice and healing, it is important to understand the many faces of HIV and AIDS today. It is particularly important to identify social and cultural factors that increase the risk and vulnerability of specific populations to infection. This section provides data on the regional expanse of the pandemic and identifies some of the social and cultural forces at work in that expanse.

A. *The United States*

From the early 1980s to the present, the number of persons living with HIV in the U.S. is more than 1.1 million, with approximately half of those having developed AIDS. Though a cure is not yet available, advances in treatment have changed AIDS from an inevitably terminal illness to a chronic illness. While the incidence of new infections has declined from its peak in the 1980s and has been stable since 2000, there are 53,000 new cases of HIV infection annually in the U.S. The largest number of cases of HIV infection and AIDS is found among Caucasians.¹² However, in some racial and ethnic communities the percentage of those with HIV is higher than the percentage of Caucasians with HIV.¹³

Patterns of HIV transmission are also shifting. While most new infections in the U.S. are diagnosed among gay and bisexual men, heterosexual transmission across the age spectrum now accounts for a larger share. Women, particularly women of color, represent about 30 percent of new HIV infections. Rates of newly diagnosed infection are increasing among senior citizens who, often because of divorce or the death of a spouse, find themselves becoming sexually active with new partners for the first time in decades.¹⁴ New infections due to contaminated needles from drug use have declined significantly and now represent only a small proportion of new infections. Routine and accurate HIV antibody testing of blood, blood products, tissue, and semen has made the transmission of HIV via blood transfusion, organ transplant, and artificial insemination a rare occurrence. Antibody testing and effective antiretroviral therapy have brought a significant decline in maternal-to-fetus transmission of HIV.

It is of great concern, however, that racial and ethnic minorities, particularly Blacks and Latinos, have been disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS throughout this epidemic, representing the majority of new infections and those living with HIV and AIDS, of new AIDS cases, and of AIDS deaths. For example, Blacks accounted for 56 percent of AIDS deaths in 2005. Young adults and teens continue to be at higher risk for infections predominantly transmitted sexually. Younger gay and bisexual men between the ages of thirteen and twenty-nine are at particularly high risk accounting for almost 40 percent of the infections among gay and bisexual men. Other groups face underreporting and, therefore, potentially less access to preventive education and medical treatment. (See Section V. Underreported U.S. Populations.)

Understanding the forces that create these disparate patterns of infection and death is imperative if our church is to fulfill its mandate of prophetic witness and compassionate ministry to people living with HIV and AIDS. Understanding that HIV infection and AIDS is a pandemic impacting any one of us, as pastors, elders, deacons, and laity, is essential to our becoming an HIV and AIDS competent church in which stigma and discrimination have no place.

B. *The Global Context*

Globally, the prevalence rate of HIV infection among 15–49 year olds has plateaued but at an unacceptably high level. AIDS continues to be the leading cause of death worldwide. Men who have sex with men (MSM), injection drug users, and prostitutes are still at high risk of becoming infected. However, the majority of new infections worldwide arise from heterosexual sex. Moreover, HIV and AIDS is the scourge of the global poor. Of the approximately thirty-three million people worldwide living with HIV and AIDS, 96 percent reside in countries with low per-capita incomes, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Such countries are beset by other enormous problems including infectious diseases, food insecurity, and poverty. The subsections below highlight regions with emerging epidemics indicating not only the magnitude of the pandemic, but also illustrating the widespread and devastating effects of one virus on various mission areas of the church. To respond with compassionate action and prophetic witness in its global health ministries, the church is challenged to recognize the forces that are changing the face of HIV and AIDS and respond with care that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.¹⁵

1. *Sub-Saharan Africa*

In many regions of the African continent, AIDS is the number one cause of death and has led to a surge in cases of TB (mycobacterium tuberculosis), which is the leading cause of death for people with HIV. Women, in particular, are at higher risk due to greater biological susceptibility, constrained access to diagnosis and treatment services, gender inequalities, and sexual violence. Of the approximately 2.5 million children globally living with HIV, 90 percent live in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁶ Of the more than fifteen million children under eighteen who have been orphaned as a result of HIV and AIDS, approximately 11.6 million live in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁷ The PC(USA) International Health and Development (IHD) ministry area works closely with African church partners, contributing both personnel and monetary resources.¹⁸ Cultural and socioeconomic forces impacting the face of HIV and AIDS in Africa are discussed in Section IV.B.2, Social, Cultural, and Religious Barriers to Diagnosis and Treatment, Global; and IV.C. Economic Forces.

2. *Asia and India*

Although Africa has the largest number of people living with HIV, South and Southeast Asia are some of the fastest growing regions for the epidemic.¹⁹ There may be as many as six million Asians infected with HIV. Since many Asian countries suffer from low per-capita incomes, dramatic inequities in income distribution, gender inequality, and poor healthcare infrastructure, providing high-quality medical care to those in need is difficult. The high rate of infection among 15–19 year-old girls reflects women's powerlessness to control the terms of sexual contact within and outside of marriage. Moreover, while fidelity after marriage is required for many Asian women, many men are not bound by such norms.

The Joint United Nations Programme (UNAIDS) on HIV and AIDS estimates that 2.4 million people are living with HIV in India.²⁰ In the southern states, HIV is "primarily spread through heterosexual contact," and in the northeastern states HIV infection is highest among "injecting drug users and sex workers."^{21, 22} India's National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) has focused public campaigns on the reduction of stigma and discrimination and the promotion of services with special emphasis given to women and youth, who are particularly vulnerable.²³ According to the U.N. agency for women, UNIFEM, marriage is among the highest HIV and AIDS risk factors for southern African women and Indian women, largely as result of male infidelity.²⁴ India's efforts to increase HIV and AIDS prevention, education, and access to treatment face

challenges, including client compliance with treatment schemes and access to life-saving medicines, appropriate follow-up with patients, socioeconomic and nutritional support, and reduction of stigmatizing attitudes among health staff.²⁵

3. *Latin America and the Caribbean*

The rate of infection and the number of individuals living with the disease in Latin American and Caribbean countries is lower than that in African countries, but some studies suggest that it has the second fastest growing rate of infections today. Rates of infection vary from country to country.²⁶ As in Africa and Asia, sociopolitical conditions make the disease deadly. For example, 250,000 people acquire HIV infection in the region every year and 120,000 deaths occur annually due to AIDS-related illnesses exacerbated by lack of access to life-saving medicines and adequate health care.²⁷ Poverty, lack of adequate education, including comprehensive sexual health education, and widespread social stigma and discrimination, contribute to these numbers. While the infection tends to concentrate in urban areas among men who have sex with men, many of these men also have sex with women. Thus, as in the U.S. and globally, Latin America is experiencing a feminization of the epidemic with rates of heterosexual transmission increasing and a greater number of women being infected. Social mores limit women's ability to negotiate safer sex practices with husbands/partners and increase their rates of infection.²⁸ The need is growing for health-care centers and education programs that provide intervention strategies that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and inclusive (especially among indigenous populations).

4. *Eastern Europe*²⁹

The UNAIDS reports that “since 2001, HIV prevalence in Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia has roughly doubled, making the region home to the world's most rapidly expanding epidemic.”³⁰ The instability and socioeconomic issues of this region in the mid 1990s lead to increased rates of injection drug use, which acted as a gateway for the HIV epidemic. To curb the pandemic in this region, there have been increased efforts to encourage needle exchange programs and HIV and AIDS education, especially among sex workers.³¹

5. *Global Sex Trafficking*

The relationship between HIV and AIDS and international sex trafficking exposes the deadly interconnection between a virus (HIV) and multiple social factors, including poverty, gender subordination, the demand for young girls who are often from ethnic and indigenous populations, unequal and ineffective cross-border law enforcement, and the sex trade industry. In fact, the HIV and AIDS pandemic itself has created a demand among male clients for ever-younger partners or virgins to avoid becoming infected themselves, or in the mistaken belief that having sex with a virgin will cure a person of AIDS. Available research estimates the numbers of trafficked women and children to be in the 100,000 to 250,000 range in 2009.³² Recent findings from South Asia illustrate the high prevalence of HIV among sex trafficking victims,³³ a rate higher than their non-trafficked counterparts.³⁴

Physiological differences make women as much as two-to-four times more susceptible than men to contracting the disease through heterosexual sex. Political, social, and cultural inequality compound the vulnerability of women and girls who are coerced, tricked, or sold into commercial sex. Risk of infection soars as women and girls are forced to endure multiple sexual contacts without the power to insist upon condom use. Injuries and abrasions heighten physical vulnerability to AIDS transmission, particularly for the youngest whose bodies are still immature.³⁵ These same factors heighten the risk of infection from other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), the presence of which heightens the risk of contracting HIV by up to a factor of ten.³⁶

The vulnerability of trafficked women to sexually transmitted diseases may be compounded by their inability to speak or understand the language in a foreign land, their poverty and indebtedness, and their lack of freedom of movement—in short, enslavement that impedes access to health care or prevention information and education. The PC(USA) has extensive prostitution- and trafficking-related social witness policy.³⁷ In the face of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, nothing less than the elimination of sex trafficking is required. Thus, the 218th General Assembly (2008) instructed the Stated Clerk to

communicate with the United States Department of Homeland Security (a) to urge the development of methods to recognize and arrest traffickers; (b) to urge the development of methods to identify forged passports and visas in order to limit the number of trafficked victims brought into the United States. . . . to find ways to urge agencies in other countries to stop traffickers from enticing women with the promise of jobs in other countries, and by promoting false marriage.³⁸

III. Where Scripture Calls Us to Be: Compassionate in Action, Prophetic in Witness

A. *Compassionate Action*

Scripture speaks to all of us, to all those living with HIV and AIDS: those of us infected and those of us affected. It speaks words of comfort and tenderness to those who face their own mortality. It speaks with knowing experience about the fragility of life and the grief of loss: lost joys, lost hopes. It gives voice to the grief that can lead to anger, frustration, or a sense of profound meaninglessness. It understands the desire for death to come swiftly. Our ancient forebears experienced all this agony and gave us voice to cry out in despair. Job, when suffering pain all over his body, groaned, “. . . I would choose

strangling and death rather than this body” (Job 7:15 NRSV). He then lashed out at God, saying, “I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are a breath” (Job 7:16 NRSV). So some of us may cry. Others have cried out with the Psalmist in despair: “O my God, . . . do not take me away at the mid-point of my life” (Ps.102:24 NRSV). Those moments of wanting to give in to pain and loss are powerful. So also are the times of our bitterness and complaint. (Job 7:11) Yet, our faith assures all of us, those living with HIV and AIDS and those of us affected by HIV and AIDS, that God is walking through that valley of the shadow of death with us (Ps. 23:4).

Thus, right after the outburst of pain, we hear the Psalmist proclaim, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless [the Lord’s] holy name” (Ps. 103:1 NRSV). In that moment of blessing and of proclaiming blessing, the weight of our mortality can be lifted and we recognize the grandeur and wholeness of God’s intentions for us. Living with mortality often involves this moving from despair to blessing, from anguish to thankfulness, and back again. The crucified Christ, who cried out in the Garden of Gethsemane when faced with his own impending mortality, joined us in this very human condition when he cried out as well, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done” (Lk. 22:42 NRSV). We are told that then there appeared an angel from heaven to bring him comfort (Luke 22:43). So we cry out as did Jesus, both to pray for God’s mercies and to proclaim blessings upon God who suffers with us. And in the midst of our anguish and despair, God is there to comfort us and give us hope.

Job’s story of suffering also reminds us that cruel tragedies fall on both the good and evil and that life is indeed a breath for all of us. Before being stricken, Job had it all—wealth, status, family. Yet, as good a man as he was, he had never recognized that hardship and calamity can fall on anyone. He was not prepared when it fell on him. Too often we hear, or perhaps we repeat, the voices of Job’s friends insisting that he must have brought this suffering on himself. Such accusations too often result in discrimination, derision, and the unjust treatment of people living with HIV and AIDS. Job teaches us to recognize that sorrow and loss is neither an indication of moral failure nor of some impediment to God’s loving presence with us. In the face of HIV and AIDS, we encourage one another to reject guilt and self-recriminations. Specifically, we must reject any use of Scripture that would label anyone living with disease as impure or unclean. (See Appendix A.)

Ultimately, Scripture offers a message of comfort for those living with HIV and AIDS. God grieves with us; God mourns with us; God suffers with us in and through Christ. We respond in faith, standing with one another in our grief and loss, as in joy. Some of us will pray when some of us cannot. Some of us will praise, when some are inconsolable. This is the meaning of ecclesia—the people gathered together as one. Let the people of God understand that love and trust are at the center of our response to God, as love and compassion are central to our response to neighbor. We know that healing in the gospels is always an act that challenges the forces of destruction and proclaims a new way of understanding God’s vision of wholeness in the world. Our God is a God who proclaims reversal of all status claims. Those whom society relegates to the margins are those whom God embraces and to whom God assigns great honor. As such, Scripture offers the highest dignity to those who are living with HIV and AIDS and the challenges—physical, emotional, and spiritual—this condition, and society in many cases, presents. Truly, there is dignity here, an image of God at work in our midst. This is the message of hope: that God is a God in whose loving compassion we can have absolute faith and trust.

B. *Prophetic Witness*

The Hebrew prophets, angered by the suffering of the poor around them, declared the word of God against the ruling elite and the structures by which they legally impoverished the poor, the widows and orphans, and the strangers in their midst. Central to the preaching of Jesus and the ancient prophets of Israel was the proclamation of God’s covenant with us and its ramifications on us. Covenant places an expectation upon a collective people to structure ourselves in a way that strives to represent, albeit inadequately, the values of the kingdom, that is, the reign of God. Today, we are becoming increasingly aware that the church must heed the call to reform the social structures impacting all of those living with HIV and AIDS. To take up this responsibility as a church is to reflect our understanding of our covenant with God, those kingdom values, and their place in our hearts.

Jesus gave prophetic witness to the ethics of the reign of God in five ways: (1) teachings on prayer and liturgy; (2) parables; (3) behavior at banquets; (4) healings; and (5) denunciations of religious leaders. Each of these is uniquely germane to the discussion about what the church is called to be in the face of this HIV and AIDS pandemic and to the prophetic reformation of social structures it is called to proclaim.

1. *Prayer and Liturgy*

The Lord’s Prayer and the Beatitudes are two liturgical hymns that contain, in concise and beautifully paralleled form, the essential ethical values of the reign of God. The Lord’s Prayer begins with an address to God as our Divine Parent, whom we address together in unison. Hence, the very notion of God, in Christian understanding, is tied in with the pronouncement that we are responsible for one another as children of a single Divine Parent. To the extent, then, that we desire to know God, we are thus called upon to know and to be accountable in relationship to all God’s people. As such, even to be able to claim to know God as “our Father” is to proclaim our kinship with those who live with HIV and AIDS as God’s beloved children.

After calling on God collectively as God's family, we proclaim, "hallowed be your name" (Mt. 6:9, NRSV). The ancient prophets have long called God's people Israel to "hallow," or "sanctify," God's name. How is this to be understood? In Ezekiel, God proclaims the desire to sanctify God's own name in and through God's people (Ezek. 36:23). This is an awe-inspiring covenantal move on God's part. It is in Israel that God has elected to sanctify, to make God's name holy, before the world. As Christians, we gladly accept this covenantal responsibility as well—that in us God chooses to demonstrate to the world God's own holy nature. The responsibility is upon us to live in a way that consciously reflects that nature.

How do we reflect God's holy nature? Ezekiel called on Israel to follow God's statutes and justice, "by whose observance everyone shall live" (Ezek. 20:13, NRSV). By embracing and committing ourselves to advocate for justice, we will find life! In this way, we sanctify God's name before the world.

Five times in Deuteronomy (10:18, 24:19, 24:20, 24:21, 27:19) God calls on Israel to care for those who are on the margins of society—"the stranger, the orphan, and the widow," thus reinforcing the essence of God's justice. Five times the Deuteronomist makes clear that central to living out the ethics of the reign of God is to create a just society in which the needs of those who are the most vulnerable are met—and not just minimally but at a level that actually causes them to rejoice in the midst of God's people (Deut. 16:11–14). To what extent are we, as the collective people of God, creating environments in which those of us living with HIV and AIDS, here and throughout the world, truly rejoice in our midst? This would be the vindication of God's name as Scripture defines it. This is what it means to proclaim together, "hallowed be your name."

The Lord's Prayer is a collective prayer that ultimately calls for God's reign, power, and glory to be made manifest as God's will is done "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10, NRSV). As such, we are to understand that our willingness to do God's will is made visible as we work to free one another from the conditions wearing us down. In freeing one another, we hallow God's name in the midst of the people and act out God's will here on earth—the justice of God.

Likewise, the Beatitudes, clearly a liturgical proclamation, look forward to the eschatological inversion of all the status signifiers in the world. The poor, the mourners, the meek, the hungry and thirsty, the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers, and the persecuted are those who receive joy and blessing in the eschatological reign of God. The list comprises people who have little or no status in our collective social consciousness. The corollary message is that God's people are to seek concrete ways to welcome, bless, and celebrate those whom society relegates to its outer margins. Not only in the United States, but worldwide, those living with HIV and AIDS suffer discrimination, derision, and disenfranchisement. For a people who seek to enact the ethics of the reign of God, it is imperative that we hear clearly the voices of persons living with HIV and AIDS, here and throughout the world. Together we can actualize the values of the reign of God, sharing the suffering, attending to the needs. Blessed are the vulnerable, for it is they, prior to the strong, who shall know the reign of God.

2. *Parables*

Likewise, in the parables, Jesus often taught about the nature of the reign of God. In Luke, the opponents of Jesus had just been grumbling because those whom they considered impure were coming to listen to Jesus. As a response, Jesus taught them three parables which Luke has clustered together in his gospel. They are the parables of the lost sheep, the woman with the lost coin, and the prodigal son (Lk. 15:1–7; 15:8–10; 15:11–32). In every case, the message is that those whom our religious communities assign to the social margins are the very people who are valued, even treasured, within the ethics of the reign of God.

These parables challenge the power wielded by those in the religious social center of society—the power to marginalize and to disenfranchise those whom, for whatever reason, the social center has deemed unfitting to represent the values that they espouse. That is a powerful and sobering message for Christians today, for we clearly create or tolerate social models that disenfranchise, silence, and marginalize people whom we have determined do not model, either in their social status, their lifestyles, or their appearance, the values that we choose to espouse. This behavior, claims Jesus, is antithetical to the values of the reign of God. More profoundly, it is behavior that denies God. As Jesus reminds us in Matthew: "just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:35–45, cf. 40).

3. *Behavior at Banquets*

Jesus continued to challenge the social center in his teaching about behavior at banquets. In the ancient Mediterranean world, banquets provided an important means for patrons to honor their clients and for clients to reciprocate with greater honor for patrons. It was a system in which status was ascribed within a closed social group. Those on the outside of the patron/client relationship had no hope of gaining access. Instead, they were relegated to a place of shame and degradation. It is this honor/shame social system that Jesus most strongly attacked in the banquet stories.

Whether it be tax collectors and sinners whom Jesus welcomed (Lk. 5:29–32), or the poor and the physically maimed (Lk. 14:12–14), or simply the uninvited (Lk. 14:15–24), Luke's message is clear. It is people on the collective margins, and not those who enjoy high status in the current honor/shame system, who receive honor according to the ethics of the reign of God. Jesus' claim was that to publicly assign honor or shame to people based on the group's social norms was wrong. So, for example, if people could not reciprocate or represent in their bodies the prevailing social norms, they were assigned lower

status. We too, as the people of God in the world today, must reexamine our social structures and ask to what extent they are serving a similar purpose—a purpose antithetical to the ethics of the reign of God.

4. *Healings*

Healings in the gospels are some of the most misunderstood acts carried out by Jesus. As Jesus healed and restored health, he also demonstrated the ethics and the values of the reign of God, inscribing those values on the very bodies of those who were healed.

Thus in the healings in the synagogues of the man with the unclean spirit, the man with the withered hand, and the woman bent over with a crippling condition, we see healings occurring in the place where the people of God gathered to pray and to discuss Scripture on the Sabbath (Mk. 1:21–28; 3:1–6; Lk. 13:10–17). In every case, the event of healing enacted the inclusion of those who found themselves on the margins of the people of God. In each case, the healing story is preceded and followed by Jesus' teaching about the nature of the reign of God. Jesus exhorted God's people to seek the things of God's reign, which results in wholeness, inclusion, enfranchisement, and expanding the center of the community of faith so that all might be included. To the extent that we, the worshipping community, enfold and enfranchise those whom society places on its margins, we are enacting the coming reign of God. In the church's compassionate and prophetic response to those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS today, the church is learning to become more fully and faithfully the people of God.

In the past, it has been assumed that Jesus did away with the purity laws when he healed people. In the book of Leviticus, it is commanded that no one who has a "blemish," or "defect" may approach to make an offering—this included those who are blind, lame, maimed, or have skin diseases (Lev. 21:17–20). In this system, God's holiness exercised a centripetal force—the closer one approached to God's sanctuary, the more whole in body one was expected to be in order to reflect God's own holiness. Jesus, on the other hand, proposed a notion of holiness whose force was centrifugal; that is, the holiness emanated outward from God's presence to enfold the "outcasts of Israel" (Ps. 147:2, NRSV)—those who under a particular interpretation of Leviticus had become marginalized. In this vision, God's holy presence is still inscribed on the bodies of the people, but the force of God's holiness is now centrifugal rather than centripetal—emanating out rather than converging in. In like manner, God's people are called to embody the centrifugal, inexhaustible force of God's emanating holiness by being sources of healing and wholeness to those bodies whom society has relegated to the margins in shame.

5. *Denunciations of Religious Leaders*

The final category to consider is that which comprises Jesus' woes and denunciations. First, Jesus denounced those who put a "stumbling block" before the "little ones" whom the religious center had deemed to be less suitable to reflect its values (Mt. 18:6–9). Without question, this challenges us to take up new initiatives in support of justice toward persons living with HIV and AIDS—in support of those marginalized, the vulnerable ones, in today's globalized cultures.

Jesus also very purposefully heaped denunciations upon the religious leaders of his day, who, Jesus said, addressing them, "lock people out of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 23:13). He added, "You do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them" (Mt. 23:13; see also Mt. 23:14–33; Mk. 12:38–40; Lk. 11:52; 20:47). He proclaimed, "... you tithe the mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting ... others" (Mt. 23:23).

The church is faced with the reality that these shattering pronouncements are directed precisely at us—at religious people who sometimes create social spaces into which people cannot enter, because we make our social religious space uncomfortable for them. We acknowledge that, although our ritual and liturgical actions are moving and powerful, we are often unaware of how they may also become a reflection of our own needs. Without intending it, we may create spaces others cannot enter.

The goal to become an HIV and AIDS competent church recognizes our desire to live as Jesus taught as well as our recognition of our unintended inadequacies. If our task, as the collective children of "our Father in heaven," is to enact the ethics of the reign of God in our behaviors toward all of God's children, including the vulnerable among us—whether it be in North America, Africa, Asia, South America, Australia, or Europe—including persons infected and affected with HIV and AIDS, then we are called to be healed and made whole even as we work to enfranchise and give voice to those who live with life-threatening conditions.

These values are gospel values: from the five-fold call to protect the outsiders, the orphans, and the widows in Deuteronomy, to the call of Ezekiel to vindicate God's name by doing what is just, to the Spirit-anointed proclamation of Isa. 61:1, which announces good news to the poor, dressing the wounds of those whose hearts are shattered, and declares emancipation and release to those who are held captive and imprisoned. This is the center of the call to be a people of God who enact the ethics of the reign of God in our midst. It is a privilege, a responsibility, and a mandate upon our covenantal commitments to live in community with one another, creating life, hope, and healing for all.

C. *Reformed Tradition*

Compassionate action and prophetic witness come together in the Presbyterian church's recognition of the covenantal claim upon our corporate life. In the *Book of Order* the church is called to "... the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom [Realm] of Heaven to the world."³⁹ Yet *The Book of Confessions* reminds us that we, as well as the whole world, are implicated in the injustices perpetuated by social structures, in the tyrannies and idolatries to which humankind is prone. We "... rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth... We deserve God's condemnation."⁴⁰ We are thus required, in recognition of our sin and complicity and as "... the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God."⁴¹ Jesus' imprecations upon religious leaders call us to be faithful in "... unmask[ing] idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace."⁴² As the *Book of Order* enjoins, the Church is to be "Christ's Faithful Evangelist" by concretely:

(3) participating in God's activity in the world through its life for others by (a) healing and reconciling and binding up wounds, (b) ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the powerless, (c) engaging in the struggle to free people from sin, fear, oppression, hunger, and injustice, (d) giving itself and its substance to the service of those who suffer, (e) sharing with Christ in the establishing of his just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world.

The Church is called to undertake this mission even at the risk of losing its life, trusting God alone as the author and giver of life, sharing the gospel, and doing those deeds in the world that point beyond themselves [sic] to the new reality in Christ.⁴³

In obedience to God, as followers of Christ in the Reformed tradition, we must abhor the injustices that perpetrate harm upon the poor of the world now living and dying of HIV and AIDS. As we are reminded by The Confession of 1967,

The reconciliation of [humankind] through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world's poor is the cause of his disciples. The church cannot condone poverty ... A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God.⁴⁴

IV. Marginalizing Social Forces:

A. *Poverty, Sexism, Intimate Partner Violence, Racism, and Homophobia*

The immediate cause of HIV infection and its progression to AIDS is microbial. The task is (1) to intervene at the point of transmission to prevent new infections, and (2) to administer a therapeutic drug regimen to those who have already been infected in order to prevent progression to AIDS or transmission, especially to nursing infants. By doing so, it should be possible eventually to make new infections rare and to limit AIDS to a long-term, chronic illness. In fact, much has been done through public education, rapid and accurate testing, condom availability, needle exchange programs, safe blood to transfuse, and treatment for pregnant or nursing women.

Yet, if a simple microbiological approach to HIV and AIDS worked, the disease would have long since been stopped in its tracks. Instead, it now involves more than thirty-three million people worldwide who are living with HIV and AIDS and it is growing. Another twenty-five million have already died of AIDS. Clearly more is needed, but what?

A microbiological approach fails to take into account the social determinants of the infection or disease. Issues of sex, race, age, class, gender identity, domestic violence, and poverty are brought to the fore by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. One cannot truly grasp the complexity of HIV and AIDS today without considering these underlying and exacerbating constructs. The patterns of HIV and AIDS infection parallel the manifestations of social injustice, inequality, and marginalization that God and our Reformed tradition call us to unmask and redress. These injustices increase both risk and vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. As the church has called Presbyterians to welcome persons living with HIV and AIDS with compassionate ministry, the church must now speak forcefully about those social conditions that increase risk and vulnerability and contribute to the expansion of the pandemic. In this report we can only begin to name and decry these conditions.

1. *Poverty*

For both women and men, there is a reciprocal relationship between poverty and HIV and AIDS: the presence of poverty ensures increased vulnerability to and risk factors for HIV and AIDS while at the same time the presence of HIV and AIDS brings about poverty. This is true at the level of nations as well as individuals. Thus, in the U.S. and abroad, the pandemic increasingly affects poor women of color. Poverty brings horrible choices to women—sometimes exchanging sex for a better place in the food line, as described by a member of our International Health and Development (IHD) staff. When women are infected, children too are profoundly affected, if not also infected. Limited resources must stretch to cover medications (more on that follows), nutrition worsens, children are withdrawn from school to become caregivers, and another generation is doomed to poverty. Barnett and Whiteside, writing about children with HIV and AIDS, note more broadly that "AIDS deepens poverty and increases inequalities at every level, household, community, regional and sectoral. The epidemic undermines efforts at poverty reduction, income and asset distribution, productivity and economic growth. AIDS has reversed progress towards international development goals because of the influence it has on all development targets."⁴⁵ Thus, men

and women who are poor, the world's most marginalized people, have the added burden of living with HIV that further reinforces their poverty and entraps another generation. The prevention of HIV and AIDS has become dependent upon the reduction of poverty and the reduction of poverty depends upon the reduction of HIV and AIDS. The same relationship pertains to other infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis.⁴⁶ Poverty always exists in combination with other marginalizing forces, as will be noted below.

2. *Gender Inequality and Intimate Partner Violence*

According to a report released on November 9, 2009, by the World Health Organization (WHO), millions of women die each year from conditions that could be avoided—if they were men. In addition to hazards like female infanticide and maternal deaths, women are more likely to contract HIV on exposure, suffer from domestic abuse and depression, and lack access to basic health care that could help them survive.⁴⁷ (See Section IV. B. Social, Cultural, and Religious Barriers to Diagnosis and Treatment and Appendix B “Gender Inequality and the Persistence of HIV and AIDS.”)

The WHO report lifts up five key areas of concern: (a) widespread inequities between men and women in developed and developing nations; (b) the lack of recognition for sexuality and reproduction as central to women's health (c) the toll of chronic diseases, injuries, and mental illness on health care maintenance, (d) the lack of a fair start for all girls as critical to the health of women, and (e) that societies and their health systems are simply failing women. Globally, HIV is the leading cause of death and disease in women of reproductive age.⁴⁸ Some studies show that women are more likely than men to acquire HIV from an infected partner during unprotected heterosexual intercourse. Yet, many cultures condone sex between young women and older men who are more sexually experienced and more likely to be infected with HIV.⁴⁹

Intimate partner violence is an important, but often neglected, factor contributing to the spread of HIV and AIDS among women in many countries. Despite national and international laws against rape and other forms of assault, the failure of governments to enact marital rape laws, combined with cultural norms and practices subordinating women's roles within the family and society, inevitably contribute to the spread of HIV and AIDS among women. Violence in sexual acts creates tears through which the virus enters. In some African countries, for example, the high incidence of infection among married women infected by their husbands is often the result of the wives' inability to demand the use of condoms; and/or to refuse sexual relations with their husbands for fear of violent retaliation. Enactment of marital rape laws without enforcement, however, will not stop the spread of HIV and AIDS among married women.⁵⁰ While Presbyterians have condemned the prevalent use of violence in patriarchal cultures, violence against women remains a hidden problem with great human and health-care costs.⁵¹

Because they are less likely to be part of the formal labor market, women lack access to income, job security, and the benefits of social protection, including access to health care. Within the formal workforce, women often face challenges related to their lower status, discrimination and sexual harassment. They have to balance the demands of paid work and work at home, giving rise to work-related fatigue, infections, mental illness, and other problems. Yet, it is women who bear the responsibility for caring for children, the sick, and the elderly in most cultures.

Lessons can be learned from bold national initiatives that have sought to address social inequality and exclusion in ways that promote gender equality and women's health. For example, Chile's multisectoral and integrated approach to social protection for the poor includes a universal program for early child development. *Chile Crece Contigo* (Chile Grows with You) includes access to child care, education, and health services to help young children achieve their optimal physical, social, and emotional development, while enforcing the right of working mothers to nurse their babies with supportive employment.⁵²

3. *Racism*

Presbyterians have condemned the power of racism for decades: “People of good will have long recognized that eradicating the sin of racism from church and society is a high priority. It cannot be done without sacrifice. Experience has taught that people cannot leap from centuries of racial polarization into a new vision. It is a long journey that will require discernment, prayer, and worship based action.”⁵³

And yet, structural racism still plays a significant role in propagating the spread of HIV and AIDS. In urban areas, racism relegates racial minority groups into segregated neighborhoods of concentrated poverty lacking access to jobs, adequate education, secure housing, medical insurance, and health care. Black and Latino Americans are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS and that disparity has widened over time.⁵⁴ Blacks account for more new HIV infections, AIDS cases, people estimated to be living with HIV disease, and HIV-related deaths than any other racial ethnic group in the U.S.⁵⁵ Analysis of national household survey data found that 2 percent of Blacks in the U.S. were HIV positive, higher than any other group.⁵⁶ The epidemic has had a disproportionate impact on Black women, youth, and men who have sex with men (MSM), and its impact varies across the country. Moreover, Blacks with HIV and AIDS may face greater barriers to accessing care than their White counterparts. For example, a variety of studies show that Blacks and Hispanics are less likely than Whites to receive certain diagnostic tests and medications.⁵⁷

For similar reasons HIV and AIDS has disproportionately affected the Hispanic/Latino American population. According to the CDC: “Hispanics/Latinos comprise 15 percent of the U.S. population but accounted for 17 percent of all new HIV infections occurring in the United States in 2006. During the same year, the rate of new HIV infections among Hispanics/Latinos was 2.5 times that of whites. In 2006, HIV and AIDS was the fourth leading cause of death among Hispanic/Latino men and women aged 35–44.” Furthermore, “the rate of new AIDS diagnoses among Hispanic/Latino men is three times that of white men, and the rate among Hispanic/Latina women is five times that of white women.”⁵⁸ Although many Latinos are Spanish speaking, there are language, dialect, and cultural differences that impact the effectiveness of public health messages.

Unintentional racism can also cause Latinos, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders to be lost or hidden in the statistics or underreported in research. The diversity within the Asian and Pacific Islander population has made effectively reaching these communities and quantifying the pandemic difficult. “Although Asians and Pacific Islanders account for approximately 1 percent of the total number of HIV and AIDS cases” they are a population in which HIV and AIDS diagnoses are increasing—unlike the rest of the U.S. population. Native Americans and Alaska Natives also face similar issues of underreporting due to cultural diversity and dispersion between rural/reservation and urban settings. “. . . [W]hen population size is taken into account, this population in 2004 was ranked 3rd in rates of AIDS diagnoses, after African Americans and Hispanics. The rate of AIDS diagnoses for this group has been higher than that for whites since 1995.”⁵⁹

4. *Homophobia*

From the beginning of the epidemic, HIV and AIDS were associated with gay men. AIDS was called the gay plague, gay cancer, and Gay Related Immune Deficiency (GRID). As a result, there has been an enduring association between the stigma of HIV and AIDS and the stigma of homosexuality. Predominantly negative attitudes toward homosexuality have influenced people’s attitudes and behavior toward people with HIV in general, and gay and bisexual men in particular. As early as 1978, the PC(USA) stated: “Persons who manifest homosexual behavior must be treated with the profound respect and pastoral tenderness given to all people of God. There can be no place within the Christian faith for the response to homosexual persons of mingled contempt, hatred, and fear that is called homophobia.”⁶⁰

The association between HIV and AIDS and homosexuality has affected how governments and institutions have reacted (or, more accurately, failed to react promptly, adequately, and consistently) to HIV and AIDS. The issue of intimate partner violence within the gay community has been neglected and unacknowledged by most social institutions. The few studies that have been done on this growing problem indicate that violence among gay/lesbian couples is just as common as among heterosexual couples (with the added threat to those living with HIV and AIDS of the use of denied access to care as a weapon). As early as 1978, the Presbyterian church stated that homophobia is a sin.⁶¹ We continue to contend that homophobia is a sin and must be eradicated from our faith-based traditions.

5. *Stigma, Prejudice, and Unjust Discrimination*

Inequality affects people in society through the vehicles of stigma, prejudice, and unjust discrimination. The HIV-related stigma has been defined as, “a process of devaluation of people either living with or associated with HIV and AIDS.”⁶² Prejudice is an “unreasoned dislike, hostility, or antagonism” towards another.⁶³ Discrimination makes distinctions between individuals, but when rooted in prejudice is unjust. Persons who are stigmatized and who suffer unjust discrimination are consequently often socially marginalized. Stigma, prejudice, unjust discrimination, and social marginalization represent forms of social power that further the risk and vulnerability to HIV and AIDS in several ways:

- Fear of stigma or discrimination can deter people from seeking testing thereby undermining prevention efforts. It can also deter those with HIV infection from seeking information or education, engaging in safe sex, disclosing their HIV status to sexual partners, seeking treatment, or following through with a treatment regimen.
- In some instances, national or local laws, such as immigration laws, discriminate against persons infected with HIV or who have AIDS. In the U.S. restrictions against the immigration of noncitizens, or travel by noncitizens, with HIV and AIDS will end in 2010.⁶⁴
- Work places, health-care settings, and voluntary associations (including churches) can be places of profound HIV-stigma, prejudice, and discrimination. For example, some health insurance may exclude HIV and AIDS, may charge a superpremium, or may deny insurance based on a preexisting condition such as HIV and AIDS is seen as a providing serious financial exposure. In some instances, physicians, nurses, and hospital staff have been shown to be agents of HIV-related stigma.^{65, 66, 67}
- Laws that criminalize injecting drug use, men having sex with men, and prostitution deter the persons involved from seeking testing or treatment and are a barrier to prevention and treatment.
- Housing discrimination can lead to further marginalization and homelessness both of which increase HIV risk and make treatment difficult for those who are infected. When a person does not have stable housing, they may engage in risky

behaviors to ensure a place to sleep. People living with HIV and AIDS may be forced to move because of discriminatory practices or relegated to “affordable” housing that may interfere with their access to continuous care or drug assistance.⁶⁸

- Laws against HIV-related discrimination or crimes against persons with HIV and AIDS are not always enforced.⁶⁹
- Nongovernmental networks of persons advocating for those living with HIV and AIDS often lack any kind of meaningful financial or resource support.⁷⁰

B. *Social, Cultural, and Religious Barriers to Diagnosis and Treatment*

There are cultural, traditional, ethnic, religious, and social norms and practices that affect attempts at prevention, diagnosis, and treatment and that foster the spread of HIV and AIDS. It is not within the scope of this report to do more than to name and briefly comment on some of the issues to which an HIV and AIDS competent church needs to be sensitive.

1. United States. Every nine and a half minutes, a person in the U.S. becomes infected with HIV.⁷¹ Yet, of the, 1.1 million people living with HIV in the U.S., one in five persons does not know they are infected. Why do people not know their status? Is it fear, apathy, or a combination of these and other factors?

The Kaiser Family Foundation conducted a survey in the spring of 2009 on public opinion about HIV and AIDS and found that most people, especially young adults, do not feel that they are at risk for HIV infection. People also reported hearing less about domestic HIV and AIDS now than five years ago. Concern about contracting HIV is reported to be higher in the African American community and has remained steady since 2000; yet, the concern of African American youth has dropped from 54 percent in 1997 to 40 percent in 2009.⁷² In a national culture that is dictated by trends, HIV has decreased in “popularity” since the early 1990s. However, there has not been a drastic improvement in the overall statistics, and the epidemic has become worse for certain populations including African American women, youth, young men of color who have sex with men, and Hispanics/Latinos.

It is this focus on risk instead of vulnerability, from both an individual and a public health perspective, that has been one of the barriers to increased HIV testing and diagnosis. Risk is defined as “the probability or likelihood that a person may become infected with HIV.” Vulnerability “results from a range of factors outside the control of the individual that reduce the ability of individuals and communities to avoid HIV risk.”⁷³ Although there has been discussion about incorporating HIV tests into comprehensive health screening and care—allowing those at risk and those vulnerable to be tested—the predominate message has been to focus on testing populations who are at high or increased risk. While identifying and screening high risk groups provides important information related to public health trends, it may lead to a false sense of security for large segments of our population who do not fall into particular risk categories.

Cultural beliefs affect a population’s HIV risk. These include beliefs about sexuality, the body, women’s roles, and what is appropriate to discuss and with whom. Silence about sexuality, the body, matters of sex, and HIV and AIDS is a barrier in many cultures and subcultures in the U.S. The role of religion in open conversations about sexuality, sexuality education, and issues of HIV transmission may positively influence risk factors in the spread of HIV and AIDS.⁷⁴

One of the major barriers to diagnosis for people of faith is the various debates about contraception and condom use. Often promoting condom use is seen as promoting sex; however, the issue is much more complex. The PC(USA) has strong policy on the efficacy of condom use in the prevention of transmitting HIV, but also must emphasize the need for broad use, including for married couples. For example, there are serodiscordant couples (one partner is HIV positive, the other is not) that must be encouraged to use condoms in order to prevent the spread of the virus to the HIV negative partner. These couples need support and guidance, especially when it comes to family planning. Although the phrase has become taboo, serodiscordant couples must truly plan to have children whether naturally, through in vitro fertilization/another biomedical method, or through adoption.⁷⁵ The church and its leadership must be prepared to guide families through these difficult life choices, and promote healthy and safe relationships (including male and/or female condom use), instead of reinforcing gender roles. Promoting condom use is not about promoting sex, it is about promoting a healthy life; and by not advocating for the use of condoms within and outside of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), innocent people are put at risk.

2. *Global*

The following practices, which can be found in many cultures around the world, are highlighted because they increase the risk of HIV infection and contribute to the changing face of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. As the global migration of people increases, many nations face a growing presence of customs with which they are unfamiliar and which, perhaps, they find to be a violation of their own values.

a. *Underage Female Marriage*

The World Health Organization (WHO) notes that the incidence of HIV and AIDS among young females, specifically adolescent females in developing countries is growing at an alarming rate. Their 2004 report states:

Of substantial consequence, yet largely ignored, is the fact that the majority of sexually active girls aged 15–19 in developing countries are married, and these married adolescent girls tend to have higher rates of HIV infection than their sexually active, unmarried peers. Thus married adolescent girls not only represent a sizeable fraction of adolescents at risk, but they also experience some of the highest rates of HIV prevalence of any group.⁷⁶

The research of Clark and co-workers found that in Kenya and Zambia marriage greatly increases a young girl's likelihood of becoming HIV seropositive.⁷⁷ Their research finds that:

... early marriage increases coital frequency, decreases condom use, and virtually eliminates girls' ability to abstain from sex. Moreover, husbands of married girls are about three times more likely to be HIV-positive than are boy friends of single girls. Although married girls are less likely than single girls to have multiple partners, this protective behavior may be outweighed by their greater exposure via unprotected sex with partners who have higher rates of infection. These results challenge commonly held assumptions about sex within marriage.⁷⁸

b. *Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting*⁷⁹

Currently there is some debate over which phrase should be used to describe this custom. However, it is estimated that an additional three million young females are subject to some form of cutting of their genitals each year. This practice is deeply rooted in culture and religion, including the Christian religion in some regions. The reasons for the practice are many and varied.⁸⁰ Female genital mutilation or cutting is associated with a heightened risk of HIV infection because of the often unhygienic means by which the cutting is done. The resultant sewing, scarring, and risk of tissue tearing on penetration also increases the risk of contracting HIV.

c. *Wife Inheritance*

Wife or widow inheritance is “The union of a widow to a male relative of her deceased spouse, by which she becomes his wife and property along with the land and property from her husband's death.”⁸¹ This East African practice began as a means for a community to care for its widows and served to protect those women who had lost their husband. The widow would not remarry. Her husband's family would take responsibility for her and her children for meeting their needs for food, clothing, shelter, education, protection, and so forth. The responsibility would fall to a married male relative of her deceased husband (e.g., brother-in-law, cousin-in-law) who would take her into his home. There was a taboo against sex with the relative's widow. Over time, however, this taboo fell and is seen to be a significant contributing factor to the spread of HIV in East Africa. If the widow's husband had died of AIDS and she were seropositive, her “inheritor” would become infected, and would subsequently pass the infection to his own wife.⁸²

d. *Widow Cleansing*

Widow cleansing is “forced sex between a widow and a man compensated to have sex with her, which is thought to cleanse the widow of her dead husband's spirit. It may also refer to a widow having sex with the male relative of her deceased husband.”⁸³ As in widow inheritance, if a woman's husband had died of AIDS and she were infected, HIV would be passed to the “cleanser” (sometimes a designated village cleanser or relative of her deceased husband) with whom she had sex and then from him to other women with whom he had sex (e.g., his wife) or other women whom he “cleansed.” This practice was seen as

... a way to break with the past and move forward—as well as an attempt to establish a family's ownership of the husband's property, including his wife. ... It also prevents women from inheriting property that has been their family's main source of support.⁸⁴

e. *Infant/Virgin Rape*

In some regions a prevailing myth is that sex with/rape of a virgin (a female child) or infant rape will cure one of HIV and AIDS.⁸⁵

f. *Polygamy When the Husband Is HIV Positive*

Polygamy can increase the risk of HIV transmission to all of the wives and potentially to the infants of breast-feeding wives.⁸⁶

g. *Prohibitions Against Male Circumcision*

Large clinical trials in Africa indicate that male circumcision can decrease the risk of men from becoming infected with HIV through heterosexual intercourse.^{87,88} In the face of compelling scientific evidence, the WHO/UNAIDS have called for an expansion of safe male circumcision practices.⁸⁹ While approximately 30 percent of the world's men are circumcised, worldwide there are non-circumcising societies, cultures, ethnicities, traditions, and religions that resist circumcision on cultural grounds, even for medical reasons.^{90,91}

C. *Economic Forces*

1. *Biomedical Scientific Research: Searching for a Cure and Promoting Prevention*

We are essentially faced with two options: to cure the patient and to prevent infection. The first, a cure, has remained elusive. HIV and AIDS differ from other viral infections, such as polio, in that it directly attacks the immune system itself, effectively damaging the body's ability to fight the virus. The virus also has the ability to replicate and mutate very rapidly, developing drug resistance quickly, and to hide within human host cells, evading the immune system and drugs. In 1995, a new class of antiretroviral drugs (protease inhibitors) was introduced, followed by other drugs that attacked the virus in new ways and which were then used in combination therapy. These drugs have dramatically reduced mortality rates and prolonged life spans. But to date it has not been possible to find a drug that would kill every virus in the body of an infected individual, so that a course of treatment would be weeks or months, rather than a lifetime. At this point, there is no cure on the horizon.

Prevention, the second option, has been tackled from many different angles. There are a number of proven HIV-prevention and harm reduction strategies: behavior modification, condom use, antiretroviral treatment to prevent mother to baby HIV transmission, clean syringe and needle exchange for drug users, and screening of blood and blood products for transfusion. Although there is debate over the efficacy of male circumcision, large clinical trials in Africa indicate that male circumcision can help prevent men from becoming infected with HIV through heterosexual intercourse.

In the developing world and particularly among people who are poor everywhere, prevention becomes more complex. Access to health care and preventive education is extremely limited creating enormous challenges to the provision of appropriate information and education, rapid testing, expensive pharmaceuticals in complex combination therapy, monitoring of compliance and disease status, and adequate nutrition. Despite this complex array of issues, individuals, organizations, and programs, including the PC(USA) International Health and Development (IHD) ministry area, are engaged in heroic efforts to overcome these hurdles.

The National Institutes of Health has identified the priorities for research, and has allocated more than \$3 billion toward various facets of research and training related to HIV and AIDS in 2010. A significant portion of this funding is directed at research—basic, clinical, translational, social, behavioral, and epidemiological. Such research is essential to overcome the HIV pandemic. It is critical that the church understand the importance of research in combating this pandemic, and that every means be used to advocate for increased funding of research on HIV and AIDS globally.

2. *Pharmaceuticals*

Now that people are living much longer lives with HIV and AIDS, it has become one of the most expensive chronic diseases. In the U.S., most HIV positive individuals can receive coverage and care through private insurance, Medicaid, or a state AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). The average cost of one HIV medication per month is \$500 and can go as high as \$2315 per month.⁹² Most people with HIV are on more than one medication at a time, so even with insurance or state programs, the out-of-pocket cost can still be high. There are also state differences in who may qualify for treatment and what drugs they can receive. For example, there are sixty-nine approved drugs on Kentucky's ADAP drug list compared to 130 approved drugs on Indiana's list.^{93, 94} Indiana's drug list includes three options for anti-nausea drugs (a frequent side-effect from antiviral medications) compared to only one option for ADAP qualifiers in Kentucky. In addition to such discrepancies, if a person living with HIV and AIDS wants to move to a different state, they may not be able to receive coverage for their medications, or due to paperwork, face discontinuity of care.

In developing countries, the issue is about getting appropriate treatments into countries in the first place. According to AVERTing HIV and AIDS (AVERT), an international HIV and AIDS charity, "the availability of cheap antiretroviral drugs has been instrumental in treatment scale-up for resource-poor settings hard hit by the [AIDS](#) epidemic. Four million people in low- and middle-income countries are currently receiving drugs to treat HIV and AIDS."⁹⁵ This would simply not have been possible without a reduction in the price of anti-retrovirals, and other strategies in which the U.S. Global Health Initiative has played a significant role.⁹⁶ Despite significant advances, a number of problems related to the price of anti-AIDS drugs remain. Not all drugs to treat AIDS are available at a suitably cheap price for poor countries, meaning that many of the newer, more effective drugs are only available in the West. At a cost of \$10,000–15,000 per person per year, these drugs are not only too expensive for the vast majority of infected people in resource poor countries, but, more often than not, are too expensive for those in developed countries.

It is an ethical imperative that life-saving medications be made available to developing countries at the lowest cost possible. These essential medications must then be given to patients, the majority of whom are impoverished, at no cost. Currently, only one third of the people who need antiretroviral therapy are receiving it. While some pharmaceutical companies provide Highly Active Antiretroviral (anti-HIV Therapy) (HAART) directly to developing countries at markedly reduced costs, these efforts have been inadequate. Companies have also provided drug formularies to generic companies in India to produce low-cost medications; however, quality control and international patent laws remain an issue.

The pharmaceutical industry is enormously and famously profitable. In 2002 the combined profits for the ten drug companies in the Fortune 500 (\$35.9 billion) were more than the profits for all the other 490 businesses put together (\$33.7 billion).⁹⁷ Surely, this industry must assume greater responsibility for ensuring adequate treatment of all people infected with HIV throughout the world, from making low-cost medications available to pursuing more research related to the pediatric populations. The world simply cannot afford more HIV infections. Beyond the pure costs of drugs and related health care, the toll on individuals, families, communities, and entire nations is enormous.

V. Underreported U. S. Populations

While HIV and AIDS is a global pandemic, it continues to be a U.S. epidemic. The surveillance system in the U.S. is now considered one of the most complete with respect to infectious and communicable diseases, but it is not without blind spots. Problems with reporting point to issues of ethics and power that result in many populations and demographics being underreported and mischaracterized. Below we focus on the intersection of some of these populations and HIV and AIDS.

A. *Demographic Groups*

1. *Native Americans*

American Indians and Alaska Natives surveillance statistics are substantially less reliable for several reasons. These include incomplete surveillance data, non-reporting of data collected by Indian Health Services, racial misclassification and underreporting, and avoidance of testing because of concerns for confidentiality in a closed-community where one would likely be tested by friend, relative, or acquaintance in a reservation health facility.^{98, 99, 100}

2. *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders*

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “In recent years, the number of AIDS cases diagnosed among Asians and Pacific Islanders has increased steadily. Although Asians and Pacific Islanders account for approximately 1 percent of the total number of HIV and AIDS cases in the thirty-three states employing long-term, confidential name-based HIV reporting, the Asian and Pacific Islander population in the United States is growing.”¹⁰¹

Among Asians and Pacific Islanders, there are many nationalities—Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Hawaiians, Indians, Japanese, Samoans, Vietnamese, and others—many cultural factors, much socioeconomic diversity, and more than one hundred languages and dialects. Because many Asians and Pacific Islanders living in the United States are foreign-born, they may experience cultural and language barriers to receiving public health messages. Additionally, many health surveys are administered only in English (and perhaps Spanish), a situation that may cause miscommunication or exclude Asians and Pacific Islanders who do not speak English from demographic statistics. In addition, these persons may also be mis-categorized or even missed in statistical counts so that their demographics are skewed.

3. *Transgender, Transsexuals, Lesbian Communities*

Statistics for HIV and AIDS are likewise unreliable for transgendered people who are likely greatly under-counted because they live their lives across the gender spectrum and may self-identify as female, male, trans-women or trans-men, non-operative transsexuals, transvestites, or cross-dressers, among others.¹⁰² Thus tracking MTF’s (Males-to-Females) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) HIV classification system has failed with MTFs showing up as either men who have sex with men or heterosexual women. Researchers maintain that transgender-specific categories need to be included on all federal and local data collection forms. In spite of the lack of a large volume of definitive research, it is believed that HIV prevalence among trans-women is higher than estimates from studies with gay men, as well as injection drug users of the same age.¹⁰³

Transphobia is blamed for the lack of reporting, study, research, and care given to the MTF population. As a result of pervasive transphobia, transgenders are denied access to social support, housing, employment, healthcare, education, and other resources, in addition to a lack of inclusion and accurate demographic reporting.¹⁰⁴

There is very little medical documentation of woman-to-woman sexual transmission of AIDS. However, according to the Lesbian AIDS Project of the Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC), a significant number of women who identify primarily as lesbians have contracted AIDS through intravenous drug use or heterosexual sex.¹⁰⁵ The HIV and AIDS cases related to WSW (Women who have Sex with Women) are the results of engaging in high-risk behaviors that place them at risk for HIV transmission. “These risks are exacerbated by racial disparities in health care access, as well as by homophobia, sexism, and stigma,” said Marjorie J. Hill, chief executive officer of GMHC. “We seek to clarify confusion regarding lesbians and WSW risk in order to create visibility for this marginalized subpopulation of women.”¹⁰⁶

4. *HIV and AIDS in Rural America*

Stigma is a serious problem for people with HIV and AIDS in all communities, but particularly in rural areas. According to the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction, “people with HIV and AIDS in rural communities car-

ry an extra burden with their disease in that many are stigmatized as unworthy of community support and adequate health care.”¹⁰⁷ People diagnosed with AIDS who live in rural areas now account for 8 percent of all cases nationwide, up from 5 percent in 1996. Despite these growing numbers, most AIDS control strategies have focused on urban communities.¹⁰⁸ Further, it must be noted that many people living with HIV and AIDS in rural communities struggle with access to adequate medical treatment and services as result of a serious shortages in doctors, nurses, dentists, and the overall healthcare workforce.

B. *HIV and AIDS in Prisons and Jails*

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) notes that “[in] most countries around the world HIV prevalence is higher among prisoners than in the general population.”¹⁰⁹ Incarcerated individuals face a peculiar situation in that their rights and actions are limited; however, risk behaviors for HIV infection and transmission still occur in detention. Prisoners may lack access to protective measures, be subject to violent conditions, including rape, and have inadequate health services.¹¹⁰ In some countries, lack of knowledge about HIV transmission also perpetuates the problem.

More than 2.2 million persons are in U.S. prisons where HIV and AIDS is up to five times more prevalent than in the general population.¹¹¹ Although inmates comprise only 0.8 percent of the U.S. population, it is estimated that 20–26 percent of those with HIV infection pass through a correctional facility each year.¹¹² Many with HIV and AIDS are addicted to illicit drugs and contracted HIV prior to incarceration through needle sharing, sex trading, or unprotected sex with multiple partners. In fact, the U.S. National Commission on AIDS noted that “policies that mandate confinement for drug-related offenses primarily are responsible for . . . dramatic increases in imprisonment.”^{113, 114, 115} Lawrence Greenfeld at the Bureau of Justice found that one in four inmates in the system has engaged in some form of substance abuse.¹¹⁶ Many had engaged in intravenous drug use,¹¹⁷ the second most prevalent mode of HIV transmission.

In the Mahon focus group study, inmates reported that both men and women engage in a range of sexual behaviors between prisoners as well as prisoners and guards.¹¹⁸ Although there has been debate over prisoners’ rights, and whether providing condoms and clean needles promotes sexual activity and drug use, it is ultimately the community that suffers when these individuals return home and spread the virus. Exposure to HIV and AIDS infection should not be used as a deterrent or form of punishment for engaging in prohibited sexual behavior while incarcerated. In some facilities, HIV counseling, testing, and partner notification programs have been implemented for adults. But very few facilities make available the means for reducing the risk by distributing condoms, dental dams, exchanging needles, or providing bleach for cleaning needles. Despite overwhelming evidence that condom use prevents the transmission of HIV, U.S. prison officials continue to limit the availability of condoms. The H.R. 1429, the “Stop AIDS in Prison” Act, introduced in the current Congress by Representative Maxine Waters, would require the Bureau of Prisons to provide non-mandatory HIV tests of all Federal prison inmates upon entering prison and being released from prison, prevention education, and comprehensive treatment for those who test positive.¹¹⁹

C. *U.S. Military Personnel*

1. *Active U.S. Military Personnel*

In 2008, 1.445 million persons were on active duty in the U.S. military: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard. Another 839,000 are in the selected Armed Forces, National Guard and Reserves.¹²⁰ To begin with, it should be noted that the prevalence of HIV infection among U.S. military personnel is lower than that of the general population for three reasons: “homosexual men and male and female intravenous-drug users are underrepresented in military personnel. Second, persons with hemophilia are not medically eligible for military service. Third, seropositive military recruit applicants are denied enlistment.”¹²¹ Yet, those in the active military are confronted by the HIV and AIDS pandemic in unique ways. A 1996 study reported that the U.S. Army found a behaviorally related increase in vulnerability to HIV infection among our military personnel. “Risk factors include high rates of sexual partner change, elevated rates of STD, relatively low rates of condom use with prostitutes and other “casual” partners, and significant mixing between groups having high- and low-risk behavior patterns, as well as higher and lower HIV prevalence.”¹²² The military has responded with an aggressive testing program. Active duty U.S. military personnel have been tested for HIV infection since 1986. Since 2004, the U.S. military has required HIV testing of all military personnel every two years.¹²³

Deployment offers other risks. Information regarding the level of risk of HIV exposure in areas of deployments as well as in areas of future deployments is not always available. While the military maintains its own blood supplies, it must rely upon warm blood transfusions or local supplies when devastating circumstances outstrip their supply, heightening the risk of HIV infected transfusion.¹²⁴ Another issue revolves around continued HIV testing and assessment of HIV subtypes infecting active forces and overseas populations during foreign deployments; such monitoring is essential to ensuring adequate treatment, care, and research.¹²⁵ An HIV test is now uniformly required at least every two years.¹²⁶ This is frequent enough to intervene between infection and the progression to AIDS, but may not be frequent enough to track HIV exposure. An issue affecting both active military and veterans is the correlation between Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and high-risk

behaviors such as substance abuse. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and substance abuse working in tandem may lead to impaired decision-making thereby creating the potential for increased exposure to HIV and other blood borne pathogens.¹²⁷

2. *U.S. Military Veterans*

As the country's largest provider of HIV-related care, the Veteran's Health Administration (VHA), through a network of hospitals and clinics, has enabled many HIV-positive veterans to afford healthcare and obtain regular treatment. However, serious concerns regarding the adequacy of medical care and HIV testing at the Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and clinics have arisen.¹²⁸ For instance, following positive tests of veterans for HIV and Hepatitis B and C, Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs launched a full-scale investigation into the adequacy of care provided by three southeastern VA hospitals that potentially put thousands of veterans at risk of infection due to exposure to unsterilized medical equipment used in colonoscopies and other medical procedures.¹²⁹ Further, in the face of an ever-increasing population with various and complex physical disabilities, as well as often facing "challenges of substance abuse, mental health problems, and financial issues," it is clear that the VA lacks sufficient resources and personnel—specifically doctors, nurses, chaplains, counselors, and social workers—to meet the diverse and various physical, mental, and emotional needs of veterans.¹³⁰

Regarding HIV testing, the VA currently tests only those patients who request HIV testing in writing, those receiving care for "intravenous drug abuse and diseases associated with HIV" or are "otherwise at high risk for HIV infection."¹³¹ Recognizing that the HIV-positive rate in veterans is greater than the general population¹³² and that too many veterans are leaving VA care without knowing they are HIV positive, advocates and political officials have worked tirelessly to change the law requiring the VA to offer pre-test counseling and a signature consent, which further creates barriers and stigma around testing. Accordingly, in reevaluating testing policies, the CDC has strongly encouraged the VA to recognize that "general consent for medical care should be considered sufficient to encompass consent for HIV testing."¹³³

VI. The Dynamics of Power and the Persistence of HIV and AIDS

As new methods of prevention and treatment are discovered and developed, we must not add them to old patched wineskins. A truly comprehensive approach to the root causes and social determinants of HIV and AIDS risk and vulnerability requires an entirely new wineskin: an examination of the disparities in power that perpetuate those social determinants nationally and internationally. It also requires that we ask if we in any direct or indirect way have contributed to reinforcing poverty and its consequences. Unmasking sin and idolatries in society and the church requires political will, moral commitment, the courage of our faith convictions, and the illumination and aid of the Holy Spirit.

The surpassing causes of increased risk and vulnerability to HIV and AIDS are poverty, gender inequality, human rights violations, and the constellation of stigma, prejudice, unjust discrimination, and social marginalization with its attendant disenfranchisement. The commonality between and among all these causes is the unequal distribution of power. Our failure to address these inequalities will lead to the failure of our attempts to address the incidence and effects of HIV and AIDS. A few demonstrative examples are useful here:

- Legal and undocumented immigration and ethnic and religious conflicts around the world have led to the marginalization of peoples in many countries. Those with power address the needs of the majority or empowered population. Those relegated to lower social standing are excluded from economic and social participation, as well as from educational and health resources. This has led to their suffering systematized poverty and discrimination, and prejudice holds them there. These conditions substantially increase the risk and vulnerability to HIV and AIDS of these communities. Given their social standing, the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS often further leads these communities to become the focus of blame for the presence of the virus in the society, further separating them from the resources that would reduce their vulnerability.

- International agencies that act in the name of assistance, but often with greater global agendas, bear responsibility for using their power in ways that exacerbate the conditions in which HIV and AIDS spreads. For example, structural adjustment policies required of borrowing countries mandated rapid reductions in government expenditures forcing governments to undertake cuts in the most immediately available categories, usually social expenditures on health, sanitation, education, water delivery systems and purification, welfare, and more. These policies, with their dramatic short-run impacts on employment and expenditures, rapidly created the conditions for the spread of the disease. For example, cuts to health care in response to structural adjustment policies have been shown to be correlated with a rise in HIV and AIDS and mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTb).¹³⁴

- In addition to the immediate impacts on employment, health, and poverty, these cuts in social expenditures have had profoundly gendered effects. The burden of providing for health, sanitation, and welfare (regarded as "women's work") has fallen disproportionately on women, often women already living in abject poverty. As jobs have moved into urban areas, rural men have left for cities, leaving women and children behind to fend for themselves. Already suffering from typically unequal sexual power relations that increase their risk and vulnerability, these women have also borne this increased vulnerability through their economic standing. This has likewise increased the vulnerability of children to disease, lack of education, and food insecurity.¹³⁵

Further, these international organizations insisted on trade adjustment, including the reduction of trade barriers, enhancements in the rights of foreign investors, market deregulation, and privatization. The PC(USA) has addressed these issues in several of its recent policies, including *Hope for a Global Future* (1996) and *Resolution on Just Globalization* (2006). The imposition of these trade rules left developing countries vulnerable both domestically and internationally. Their bargaining position was severely compromised with regard to their ability to protect their share of economic gains. This has led to the long-run institutionalization of economic disparities, the entrenchment of foreign business interests at highly unfavorable terms, and the restructuring of production toward export markets and away from the provision of domestic consumption goods. Studies confirm that these conditions create a moderate-term increase in vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.^{136, 137, 138}

Future globalization policies must include explicit consideration of their impact on vulnerable groups and the costs of increasing HIV and AIDS risk and vulnerability among these groups. Briefly, such areas of concern include the following.

- The current structure of international intellectual property rights. Literally holding the power of life and death, these fiduciary relationships are the shareholders of firms, not to those most at risk and vulnerable to the disease.
- Current agricultural policies have resulted in a worldwide growth of urban poverty and slums by shifting jobs to urban areas. Men, who seek jobs in the cities leaving their families behind, provide conditions where sex trade—and HIV infection—may flourish. Poor women in urban areas are deeply affected as they may be unable to secure any work other than that provided by participation in the sex trade in these cities, and engage in “survival sex.” This circular migration of men and women for economic reasons has compounded the spread of HIV infection as people move from their rural family setting to urban work settings, and back, moving from spousal to non-spousal partners and back to spousal sexual partners increasing the risk and vulnerability of wives to contracting HIV infection from their husband.
- Food aid policies. As Christians we are enjoined to “feed the hungry.” It seems counterintuitive to say that utilizing our crop surplus to support “food aid” internationally (not referring to emergency relief) can harm those whom we would wish to help. Yet, it can. Shipping food to developing nations that is free or below market price, undercuts that nation’s farmers. They cannot compete and are driven out of work, off their farms, and into poverty.¹³⁹ Alternatively, they may be driven to produce stigmatized or unlawful alternative cash crops such as opium poppies or khat.¹⁴⁰

Reducing these power differentials requires renunciation, reconciliation, and forgiveness in order to halt the advance of a common enemy, a universal foe that threatens every group in society. Some differentials exist because of individual and social avarice, greed, and sin. Freedom from these requires repentance, or lacking that, resistance to, and the condemnation and rejection of, those who would withhold life from others to enrich and empower themselves. Some disparities of power exist because of the economic success of some through effective effort at creating value. Overcoming these requires humility, compassion, and love, a choice by the powerful to not use power for their own advantage, but to the advantage of those affected by HIV and AIDS.

Paul Farmer writes, “... we must remember that effacing the inequality of outcomes is not the same as eliminating the underlying forces of inequality itself.” He goes on to quote economist, Amartya Sen: “when we assess inequalities across the world in being able to avoid preventable morbidity or escapable hunger, or premature mortality, we are not merely examining differences in well-being, but also in the basic freedoms that we value and cherish.”¹⁴¹ “In a very real way, inequality itself constitutes our modern plague.”¹⁴²

The new wineskin that must be sewn is to examine the ways in which we knowingly or unknowingly participate, directly and indirectly, in the maintenance of our own power and in the perpetuation of a differential of power that keeps us at the center of abundance and power and others at the margins amidst poverty, powerlessness, and the deadly advance of HIV and AIDS.

VII. Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long affirmed the need for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and collaboration (*Book of Order*, G-15.0101-G-15.0104).¹⁴³ In the face of enormous injustice, immense suffering, and the death of millions of God’s children, God calls the PC(USA) to partner collaboratively with other churches and faith communities to respond to the HIV and AIDS pandemic with prophetic vision, faithful imagination, just action, and loving compassion. Since 2008, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has campaigned to promote “HIV-competent churches.” In working systemically, particular HIV-competent churches are called to develop the institutional and theological capacity as well as leadership and resources needed to respond to the pandemic. Going beyond HIV-competent churches, we must be an HIV-competent denomination. The PC(USA) as a whole is challenged to learn from, partner with, and strategically collaborate with other churches, faith communities, governmental, business, and civil organizations to comprehensively address the HIV and AIDS pandemic (*Book of Order*, G-15.0105).

The World Council of Churches (WCC) defines “an ‘HIV competent church’ as a church that has first developed an *inner competence* through internalization of the risks, impacts and consequences and has accepted the responsibility and imperative to respond appropriately and compassionately. In order to progress to outer competence, there is need for *leadership*,

knowledge and resources. Outer competence involves building theological and institutional capacity in a socially relevant, inclusive, sustainable and collaborative way that reduces the spread of HIV, improves the lives of the infected and affected, mitigates the impact of HIV and ultimately restores hope and dignity [italics in the original].¹⁴⁴

Creating a denomination that is HIV and AIDS competent is a big challenge, but a great necessity. And it should be noted that the specific responses for HIV competent churches will vary from church to church and denomination to denomination. Presbyterians must ask themselves:

- “Do I know enough about HIV and AIDS to make informed decisions and help my local congregation develop the educational programs and outreach ministries that will make this world a better place for people living with HIV and AIDS?” This harkens back to the earlier question posed in this report, “Do those with HIV and AIDS delight in the work and witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) related to our HIV and AIDS policies and programs?”
- What are the best practices for individuals, churches, and denominations that are competent in issues related to HIV and AIDS? For Presbyterians this knowledge comes from study, research and policy formation, hands-on experience, and faith in God’s love to bring hope and to heal.
- How are our common assumptions and practices unintentionally, even indirectly, helping to maintain unjust structures of poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, stigma, and discrimination?

The World Council of Churches manual (WCC) titled, *Beacons of Hope: HIV Competent Churches a Framework for Action*, spells out several benchmarks for competency related to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, including:¹⁴⁵

1. *Pastoral Care*

Encouraging neighborhood congregations to engage in systems that ensure home visits, opportunities for fellowship, marriage enhancement programs, pre- and post-marriage counseling and safe places for people living with HIV to frequent are suggested, lifting up widows, widowers, and single parents as needing particular attention.¹⁴⁶

2. *Preaching*

The preaching of worthy and well-informed sermons on the HIV pandemic and creating worship services with liturgies, prayers, and orders of worship that include silence, contemplation, words, songs, dances, and practices that celebrate life, love, and the hope that faith brings to all of life’s struggles need also to be lifted up, including prayers for those living with HIV and AIDS.¹⁴⁷

3. *Education*

Another characteristic of HIV competent denominations is the development of prevention materials designed to keep people safe and HIV-free. Creating sexually healthy congregations; producing sexuality education curriculum that is medically accurate, biologically sound, and culturally sensitive. Local congregations are encouraged to hold frank discussions about the social factors leading to creating risk and vulnerability for HIV infection such as the use of condoms, clean needles and syringes. Individually and collectively dealing with high-risk cultural practices and reaching out to those who are at risk are all critical components of HIV competency.

Offering hands-on care to folks living with HIV and AIDS in our local churches and neighboring communities and identifying youth who are at risk, infected, or affected by HIV, are also called for in churches that are HIV competent.¹⁴⁸ The critical aspect of treatment, availability of clinics, and the staggering cost of HIV and AIDS medicines are also of concern to HIV competent churches. The best practices for an HIV competent pastor might include the ability to refer a pregnant woman and her spouse to a neighborhood clinic for screening and other services. An HIV competent congregation might take on the responsibility for dispensing medications or creating a space for HIV testing, and an HIV competent denomination would indeed decry through its social witness policies drug manufacturers making gross profits from the manufacturing of antiretroviral drugs for treating AIDS.

The PC(USA) has developed through its social witness policy much of the criteria found in the WCC document even though the *Beacon of Hope* manual is not specific to the PC(USA). Presbyterian churches and agencies have been faithfully responding to the HIV and AIDS pandemic since the early 1980s. Christian education and youth group curriculum has been developed. Presbyterian Women (PW) at all levels of the church have responded through education, prayer, Bible study, and mission work to the HIV and AIDS pandemic globally. Local congregations have engaged in hands-on ministry with people living with AIDS and their families. The PC(USA) has affianced meaningfully and respectfully with other denominations and world faiths to create policies and programs that address HIV and AIDS globally. These are all benchmarks of an HIV and AIDS competent church.¹⁴⁹

4. *To Become an HIV and AIDS Competent PC(USA): Compassionate Care and Prophetic Witness*

It will be critical for the PC(USA) to develop coherent criteria for Presbyterian HIV competent local congregations in the form of a study guide for implementing these best practices, instilling the inner competencies of individual church folk, and

then facilitating and leading to the institutional and outer competency required to defeat this disease. A denomination that recognizes and accepts the imperatives of HIV for itself, its individual members, and its congregations has the knowledge, willingness, and experience to respond in an inclusive, effective, and prophetic manner. In addition, an HIV and AIDS competent church goes toe to toe with the powers and principalities of poverty, discrimination, stigma, and violence. It does not shy away from controversial issues. It recognizes the role of the church in the Reformed tradition to challenge and reform social structures. It accepts the unique role that it can play, not only in bringing help, but strong policies; offering prayer, and compassionate action; doing what is right, and proclaiming a prophetic witness.

VIII. Conclusion

Our foundational values compel us to make the HIV and AIDS pandemic one of our highest priorities as a denomination. In our recommendations, not only do we lift up and ask to continue the excellent work that has been carried out in our existing PC(USA) social witness policy, but we prophetically also extend it to take much more seriously the social, institutional, and economic factors that come more fully under the ethical scrutiny of the gospel. This includes more rigorously pursuing the underlying issues of poverty. We must continue to advocate that discrimination on the bases of gender, race, class, and/or sexual orientation be highlighted as antithetical to the gospel witness and that programs that challenge these discriminatory forces be well-funded, especially in the context of HIV and AIDS education. We cannot ignore the structural problems that exacerbate HIV and AIDS among the underreported and those who are incarcerated. It means evaluating drug company profits as they affect access to treatment for persons living with HIV and AIDS. Our challenge is to keep people living with HIV and AIDS central in our focus, to create life-giving communities of faith in our own neighborhoods while avoiding a national myopia that privileges Western needs over those of other regions. Too often social policy is focused on the visible rather than the vulnerable—the viable rather than the vanquished. Our challenge is to take seriously the biblical mandate to become a community that cares for the interests of the most vulnerable—to cause them to rejoice and to vindicate God’s name by placing their interests at the center of our focus. Our success will be measured not by the amount of money we amass or by the amount of notoriety we may receive on behalf of our brothers and sisters living with HIV and AIDS, but rather by the extent to which those whom HIV and AIDS have relegated to the social, political, or economic margins now gain honor, dignity, and fullness of life.

Appendix A

Two Biblical Questions

When Christians face living with HIV and AIDS, there are two questions they may ask of the Bible: (1) Are the biblical purity codes regarding blood pertinent to persons living with HIV and AIDS? (2) Is there a parallel with leprosy (in Hebrew, *tzara’at*)? The answer to both is, decidedly, “No.” Many, for instance, point to the woman with the hemorrhage of blood in Mark 5:25–34 in order to claim that Jesus has overruled purity codes from the Bible. Sadly, this has resulted from a very real misunderstanding about biblical law in general and the purity codes specifically. First of all, in Mark 5, we are never told whether the woman’s hemorrhage was menstrual or whether it came from another part of her body, which would not convey impurity. Secondly, we are told in Leviticus 15:11 that, by washing her hands, the woman would not have conveyed ritual impurity to those she touched. Moreover, Mark mentions “the crowd pressing in” upon Jesus and, we can assume, upon the woman as well (v. 31). Clearly, they were not concerned about impurity. Finally, Jesus never mentions impurity in the story. Instead, the story is about healing and wholeness. Jesus, in healing her, focused only on her health and freedom from affliction. So for those persons living with HIV and AIDS, the message of Mark 5 is a message of healing. It is *not* one that implies impurity associated with blood.¹⁵⁰

Additionally, to make explicit a connection between persons living with HIV and AIDS, which is a blood-borne virus, on the one hand, and those suffering from various discharges in Leviticus, on the other, carries with it a whole host of problems—biomedical, cultural, literary, and interpretive.¹⁵¹ We are saddled with a long history within Christianity of exaggerating the social effects of biblical law in Jesus’ day and of imagining social stigma when there was none.¹⁵² The message of Mark 5 is that God desires healing and wholeness for God’s people, pure and simple.

Likewise, those living with HIV and AIDS have no reason to draw a parallel between their situation and the ancient biblical condition of leprosy, or *tzara’at*. First, to make a comparison with HIV and AIDS is to import a whole host of inappropriate or mistaken assumptions into the conversation.¹⁵³ Secondly, *tzara’at* had to do with ritual and cultic exclusion from the Temple, an issue that it is far from clear would have been of great concern in distant Galilee, in the gospels, and certainly of no concern today. Moreover, to raise the issue, even if to do so in the context of encouraging people to embrace our sisters and brothers living with HIV and AIDS, is to imply an association between our sisters and brothers and the ancient stigma of leprosy—an association that is not warranted in the biomedical evidence, the symptoms, or the biblical scholarship. Hence, in trying to argue against that stigma, we introduce an association in people’s minds that is clearly not warranted. Peter said it well in Acts 10:28, “God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean.”

Appendix B

Gender Inequality and the Persistence of AIDS

Structural, that is legal, inequalities as well as those of custom and culture also raise risk and vulnerability. Since the 1980s, the largest rise in HIV and AIDS has occurred among women and adolescent girls. In contrast to the myth of “safety in marriage,” it has been said for many women around the world, the greatest risk for HIV infection is marital sex. Gender inequality, that is, a power differential between men and women, puts women at particular risk of HIV infection in some very specific ways.

- Sociocultural norms often restrict women’s access to information about sex and reproduction. Even when women, including married women, have access to information and condoms, women cannot negotiate their conditions of sex: “gender norms that prescribe unequal and more passive role for women in sexual decision making undermine women’s autonomy, expose them to sexual coercion, and prevent them from insisting on abstinence or condom use by their male partners.”¹⁵⁴ Paul Farmer notes “... risk of acquiring HIV does not depend on knowledge of how the virus is transmitted, but rather on the freedom to make decisions. Poverty is the great limiting factor of freedom indeed, gender inequality and poverty are far more important contributors to HIV risk than is ignorance of modes of transmission or ‘cultural beliefs’ about HIV.”¹⁵⁵

- In addition to being unable to demand condom use from her partner, wives in serodiscordant couples often have no access to a husband’s screening results and are unable to protect themselves from infection.

- In many low- and middle-income nations, women and girls are systematically restricted in access to general education, securing their continuing dependence upon men for their economic and general welfare, including access to health and medical resources. Employment external to the home may be culturally or legally proscribed.

- In some regions a prevailing myth is that sex with/rape of a virgin (young girl) will cure one with HIV and AIDS.

- Traditional cultural norms for males often expect and accept or condone early and multiple sexual involvement, multiple contemporaneous sexual partners, multiple marriages, extramarital sex, drug and alcohol use, and gender violence including wife beating. “Wide-spread violence against women not only represents a global human rights crisis but also contributes to women’s vulnerability to HIV.”¹⁵⁶ These male gender norms are not limited to low- and middle-income nations as the sex trade that arises around U.S. military bases in other nations gives evidence.

- In many nations, male dominance and the subordination of women is structural and codified in law.

- In some nations, neither budget nor policy, nor custom, allow for women’s full and free access to HIV preventive services.

- Rape of women remains a tool of warfare.

Appendix C

Resources

Denominational Statements

Below is a listing of resources that state denominational resolutions and policies related to HIV and AIDS.

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. Resolution on the AIDS Crisis—<http://www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/aids.pdf>.

Central Conference of American Rabbis Responsa on AIDS and HIV—<http://data.ccarnet.org/resp/tindex.html>.

Christian Church of Christ (Disciples of Christ) General Assembly Resolution Responding to the Pandemic of HIV and AIDS—<http://www.djan.net/resolutions/0127.pdf>.

Church of the Brethren Statement on AIDS—http://www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/87Aids.htm.

Episcopal Church Standing Committee on HIV and AIDS Report and General Convention Resolutions—<http://www.episcopalarchives.org/e-archives/bluebook/33.html>

Mennonite Central Committee—Generations at Risk: Join Hands, Stop AIDS, <http://mcc.org/aids/faq/>.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Action on HIV and AIDS and related issues—listed with resources, <http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids.htm>.

Roman Catholic Statements from the Vatican—http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/documents/rc_seg-st_doc_20010627_declaration-aids_en.html, from the U.S. Catholic Bishops—<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/ctoresp.htm>.

Union of Reform Judaism Position Statement—<http://rac.org/advocacy/issues/issuehiv/>.

Unitarian Universalist Association Social Justice Statements on Health Issues including Opposing AIDS Discrimination, AIDS/HIV Crisis, and Global HIV and AIDS—<http://www.uua.org/actions/health/>.

United Church of Christ Social Policy Statements Related to HIV and AIDS—<http://www.ucc.org/hiv/aids/policy.htm>.

United Methodist Church Social Principles on HIV/AIDS—http://www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4KnN1LtH/b.1625675/k.901E/AIDS_Overview.htm.

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism Resolutions on HIV/AIDS—<http://www.uscj.org/HIVAIDS5338.html>.

Faith-Based Manuals and Curricula

Affirming Persons-Saving Lives: AIDS prevention curriculum published for adults, teenagers, and children, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, United Church of Christ, <http://www.ucc.org/hivaids/ap.htm>.

AIDS and Your Religious Community: A Hands-on Guide for Local Programs. Blumenfeld, Warren and Scott Alexander. Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Bookstore, Boston, Mass.

Developing HIV/AIDS Policy Statements in Communities of Faith, The Children's AIDS Fund.

Also available are *HIV/AIDS in the Faith Community: Sample Policy Packet*, a packet of eight sample policies and *The Church's Response to the Challenge of HIV and AIDS: A Guideline for Education and Policy Development* to use as a resource for churches creating HIV and AIDS programs and policy. See <http://www.childrensaidsfund.org> and search by title.

Faith-Based HIV Prevention Interventions, A Technical Guide for Working with Communities of Faith, by Robin Orsborn. February 2003. http://www.mihivnews.com/pdffiles/faith-b_manual.pdf.

Faith Community Responses to HIV and AIDS, The Center for Development and Population Activities, Training Manual, June 2003. <http://www.cedpa.org/content/publication/detail/697>.

Healing Begins Here: A Pastor's Guidebook for HIV/AIDS Ministry Through the Church, HIV/AIDS Church Outreach Program and Ark of Refuge, California, 2004. <http://www.arkofrefuge.org/guidebook.html>.

HIV and AIDS: A Manual for Faith Communities, National Coalition of Pastors' Spouses (NCPS), 2005. <http://www.pastorspouses.com/home/>.

HIV and AIDS Prevention, Care and Support Across Faith-based Communities: An Annotated Bibliography of Resources (Africa), Family Health International, 2006. <http://www.fhi.org/en/HIVAIDS/pub/guide/abofaithbased.htm>.

Many Threads, One Weave: An HIV and AIDS Training and Resource Manual for the Parish.

National Catholic AIDS Network, 1999, updated 2002.

What People of Faith Should Know About HIV. Channing Bette Company, Inc, 2002. <http://store.channing-bete.com>.

What Religious Leaders Can Do About HIV and AIDS: Action for Children and Young People, UNICEF and UNAIDS, 2003. (Available in English and French.) http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_19024.html.

For a complete listing of sexuality education curricula for faith communities, see <http://www.religiousinstitute.org/curricula.html>.

To Read More About Faith and AIDS: Bibliography

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The Salvation Army—<http://www.salvationarmy.org>.

Siloam—<http://www.siloamwellness.org>.

United Church of Christ—<http://www.ucc.org/hiv aids/>.

United Methodist Church—<http://gbgm-umc.org/health/aids>.

Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC)—<http://MCCchurch.org>.

World Conference of Religions for Peace—<http://www.wcrp.org>.

World Council of Churches—<http://www.wcc-coe.org/>.

World Vision International—http://www.wvi.org/wvi/aids/global_aids.htm.

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American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFAR)—<http://www.amfar.org>.

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS—<http://www.broadwaycares.org>.

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Children Affected by AIDS Foundation (CCAF)—<http://www.caaf4kids.org>.

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HIVinsite—<http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu>.

Human Rights Campaign—<http://www.hrc.org>.

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National AIDS Fund—<http://www.aidsfund.org>.

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National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC)—<http://www.nmac.org>.

Pediatric AIDS Foundation—<http://www.pedaids.org>.

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142. Ibid.
143. G-15.0101 holds that “the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to manifest more visibly the unity of the church of Jesus Christ and will be open to opportunities for conversation, cooperation, and action with other ecclesiastical bodies and secular groups.” Further, G-15.0104 recognizes that “the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will seek new opportunities for conversation and understanding with non-Christian religious bodies in order that interests and concerns may be shared and common action undertaken where compatible means and aims exist.

Stigma, Discrimination and Unjust Prejudice

144. *Beacons of Hope HIV Competent Churches A Framework for Action*; World Council of Churches, 2008, p. 19.
145. *Beacons of Hope HIV*, p. 96.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid, 98
148. Ibid, 101
149. Ibid, 99
150. See Amy-Jill Levine, “Discharging Responsibility: Matthean Jesus, Biblical Law, and Hemorrhaging Woman,” in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001): 70–87.
151. The discharges described in Leviticus 15 can be seminal emissions on the part of men, or menstrual or vaginal blood, on the part of women. There is no discussion there about other forms of blood. In biblical law, blood often purifies and makes clean rather than pollutes.
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ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 19-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 19-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 19-05 be approved.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns concurs with the recommendations of Item 19-05 and offers these comments:

- An inordinate number of racial ethnic people are affected by the aids pandemic.
- Churches in the community could and would be encouraged to offer or house programs to educate, test, counsel, serve, and become outpatient treatment centers for the victims.
- Church members would be encouraged to volunteer as helpers, aids, and, in some instances, testers and educators.
- Encourage churches and people to become support centers and leaders for those living with HIV/AIDS.
- Equip churches and members to move beyond service to attack root causes of the pandemic.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 19-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 19-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with Item 19-05 and advises that the 219th General Assembly (2010) approve this overture.

Rationale

The report from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), *Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action*, clearly and authoritatively summarizes many issues for the church, our country, and the world related to the pandemic of HIV and AIDS.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns supports the report and emphasizes the incredible effect the disease has begun to have on women. According to the Well Project, many women are undiagnosed, or not in care, and UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) estimates that women accounted for half of the estimated 33 million HIV-positive people in the world in 2007.¹ In the United States, HIV has hit the African American and Hispanic communities hard. They make up 25 percent of the U.S. female population, yet accounted for 82 percent of all female HIV/AIDS cases in the U.S. in 2006.² In a study in India, almost 90 percent of the HIV-positive women interviewed were infected by their husbands.³ Seventy-six percent of African American women in the U.S. were infected by heterosexual sex.⁴

Women generally have a faster disease progression and are more likely than men to develop both AIDS and bacterial pneumonia. They have more care-giving responsibilities and are vulnerable economically. Addressing women’s needs for HIV prevention, treatment, and care is vital for curbing the epidemic.

Endnotes

1. The Well Project Website, July 2009: http://www.thewellproject.org/en_US/HIV_The_Basics/Women_and_HIV.jsp;jsessionid=L0nV2f7JTrrTnynYLnNF7qscBpFCgntyJTvzN87LyTNSpGnHJSkw!887863684.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. C. Laurencin, D. Christensen, and E. Taylor, “HIV/AIDS and the African American Community: A State of Emergency,” in *Journal of the National Medical Association*, vol. 100, No. 1 (Jan. 2008): 38–43.

Item 19-06

[The assembly approved Item 19-06. See pp. 72, 73.]

On Full Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Services in U.S. Correctional Facilities—From the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley.

The Presbytery of the Missouri River Valley respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send a letter to President Barack Obama that urges the Department of Justice to implement comprehensive HIV prevention and treatment services in all Federal prisons;
2. Direct the Stated Clerk to send a letter to all fifty governors urging the implementation of comprehensive HIV prevention and treatment services in all state prisons and county correctional facilities; and
3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council to allocate the resources necessary for the Washington Office, in partnership with other programs, to host a briefing for a grassroots audience that addresses the changing face of HIV/AIDS in America, and underscores the need for comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services in all correctional facilities.

[Financial Implications: 2010: \$0; 2011: \$36,000; 2012: \$0 (Unrestricted—GAMC)]

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to empower its congregations to respond to the changing face of HIV/AIDS in communities with acts of compassion and justice. In 2002, the United Nations office of the church and the Office of International Health Ministries co-hosted a conference that addressed the international dimensions of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is time for a follow-up educational opportunity that focuses on the changing face of HIV/AIDS in the United States. It was a wake up call for many Americans when the media reported that the HIV infection rate in our nation's capital of 3 percent was comparable to some sub-Saharan African countries. If we are to effectively confront the domestic HIV/AIDS crisis, we need to improve the health care systems in our correctional facilities. Far too many prisoners do not receive access to comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention, testing, and treatment.

The United States reached a painful milestone in 2004 when the number of Americans behind bars surpassed the number of American family-owned farms (2.1 million).¹ There continues to be a disproportionate number of African Americans in our correctional facilities (42 percent of prison population versus 13 percent of the general population).² The HIV infection rate in our prisons is 2.5 times greater than the general population.³ These demographics help explain the alarming increase of HIV infections rates in our African American communities.

Throughout incarceration and upon release, HIV testing and treatment must be an integral component of the correctional healthcare services. Several Supreme Court rulings have made it clear that constitutionally, when someone is incarcerated, the respective government agency is required to provide adequate healthcare. In 2009, the Georgia legislature set a new precedent by mandating that all state prisoners are to be afforded HIV prevention and treatment services.⁴ The call from Micah to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly requires that we respond to the changing face of HIV/AIDS in America. This should include comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services for all prisoners. Access to these services is a key variable in efforts to reduce the HIV infection rates in African American and Latino communities, where thousands of prisoners are released each year.

Endnotes

1. See <<http://www.epa.gov/oecaagct/ag101/demographics.html>>
2. [U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners in 2006* \(December 2007\)](http://www.bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1747)
3. See <<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1747>>
4. See <http://gpbnews.blogspot.com/2009/03/senate-passes-bill-requiring-hiv.html>.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 19-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 19-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that Item 19-06 be approved.

Rationale

The ACREC agrees with Human Rights Watch that a catastrophic result of “the war on drugs” is the huge growth in the number of inmates who are incarcerated for nonviolent crimes. As the overture states, a disproportionate number of these inmates are African American. This fact also applies to the Hispanic community. As more and more people are arrested for drug-related offenses and spend time in prison, the numbers of HIV/AIDS infections rise not only in prisons but also in the communities to which they return. These communities are indeed the racial ethnic communities who receive smaller and smaller allocations of resources to handle what is an epidemic in places like Washington, D.C., and could grow to become an epidemic in other locations.

Item 19-07

[The assembly approved Item 19-07 with amendment. See pp. 72, 74.]

2008 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 10-03. Direct the Appropriate PC(USA) Entities to Redevelop Congregational Resource Materials, on the Subject of Reproductive Options, to More Adequately Reflect the Full Spectrum of Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Council, While Remaining Consistent with the Policy of the 1992 Report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion and the 2006 Policy on Late-Term Pregnancies and Abortion and Report Back to the 219th General Assembly (2010)—From the 218th General Assembly (2008) (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 58, 59, 1082–87).

Response: Congregational resource materials on the subject of reproductive options have been redeveloped. (PDS # 27-526-10-001, 27-526-10-002, 27-526-10-003, 27-526-10-004) **Future editions of resource materials on the subject of reproductive options will be revised by the Office of Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries to include additional related and appropriate scriptural references to assist those using the resources to be guided into prayer and discernment for faithful life decisions.**

SECTION THREE

SUPPLEMENT:

Roll of the General Assembly,
Standing Rules,
Moderators and Clerks,
Members of Entities Elected by the General Assembly
Audit

ROLL OF COMMISSIONERS AND ADVISORY DELEGATES

ABINGDON

Rev. Kathy Haga
Elder Phyllis Canter

ALASKA

Rev. Ron Horn
Elder Carol Martin
YAAD Chelsea Mills

ALBANY

Rev. Lucy Harris
Elder Joyce Brewer
Rev. Stewart Pattison
Elder Tara Lindsley
YAAD EmmaLee Decker

ARKANSAS

Rev. Fern Davis
Elder Madeleine
Middleton
Rev. Richard Miller
Elder Robert Murphy
YAAD Lacy Morris

ATLANTIC KOREAN

Rev. Dong Kim
Elder John Lee
YAAD Pearl Kim

BALTIMORE

Rev. George Antonakos
Elder Judith Binkley
Rev. Elizabeth Johnson Blythe
Elder William Starke
Rev. Janice Trammell-Savin
Elder Sarah Matthews
YAAD Keith Sandell

BEAVER-BUTLER

Rev. Dennis Burnett
Elder Mark Finch
Rev. Greg Wiest
Elder Philip Henkel Jr
YAAD Jillian Oberg

BLACKHAWK

Rev. James Camp
Elder Alan Manchester
Rev. Kathleen Luke
Elder Bill Schaeffle
YAAD Hannah Robinson

BOISE

Rev. Aaron Beaty
Elder Chuck Winder
YAAD Mathew Eardley

BOSTON

Rev. Burns Stanfield
Elder Margaret MacLeod
YAAD Jennifer Hyde

CARLISLE

Rev. Graham Fowler
Elder John Henry
Rev. Donald Steele
Elder Nancy Flint

THE CASCADES

Rev. David Hampton
Elder Tracy Cerri
Rev. Aleida Jernigan
Elder Verne Duncan
Rev. Audrey Schindler
Elder Judy Hubbard
Rev. Richard Christensen
Elder Claudia Eagle
YAAD Jaclyn Hill

CAYUGA-SYRACUSE

Rev. Karen Dimon
Elder Daniel DeBrucker
YAAD Benjamin Wind

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Rev. Calvin Gittner
Elder Clark Brillhart
Rev. Paul Ogne
Elder John Davis
Rev. Wesley Porto
Elder Harriet Barringer
Rev. Nancy Graham Ogne
Elder Suellen Golden
YAAD Robert Klaasen

CENTRAL NEBRASKA

Rev. Kathleen LaRocque
Elder Wayne Owens
YAAD Ben Owens

CENTRAL WASHINGTON

Rev. Al Sandalow
Elder Samuel Dechter

CHARLESTON-ATLANTIC

Rev. Janice Cook
Elder Odessa Brown
Rev. Thomas Herrington
Elder James Deavor
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Princeton Seminary	Iain Torrance
Austin Seminary	Theodore Wardlaw
Johnson C. Smith	Paul Roberts
Columbia Seminary	Steve Hayner
Evangelical Seminary-PR	Sergio Ojeda-Carcamo
San Francisco Seminary	Laird J Stuart

Advisory Committee on the Constitution

Susan Evans
 W Keith Geckeler
 Paul K Hooker
 Alyson Janke
 Catherine MacDonald
 Stewart Pollock
 Heahwan Rim
 Daniel Saperstein
 James Wilson
 Timothy Read

Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

Barbara Corwin
 Barbara Campbell Davis
 Kent Grimes
 Dennis Hughes
 Leah Johnson
 Eileen Lindner
 Jerrod Lowry
 John Purcell
 Virginia Rainey
 Chris Rhodes
 Vincent Thomas
 Byron Wade
 John Wilkinson
 Robert Wilson

Presbyterian Historical Society

Stephen Grace

General Assembly Committee On Representation

Cindy Ray

General Assembly Nominating Committee

James Madson

Permanent Judicial Commission

Fred Denson

General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations

George Telford

GA Review Committee of the Whole of the Pcusu

Allison Seed

Administrative Committee On Review-Puerto Rico

Mauricio Chacon

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage

James Szeyller

Douglas Megill
Conrad Rocha
Karen Schmidt
Linda Valentine

Form of Government Task Force

Dan Williams

Advisory Committee On Social Witness Policy

Gloria Albrecht

Middle East Study Team

Ron Shive

Advocacy Committee For Womens Concerns

Jerri Rodewald

Special Committee on the Heidleberg Catachism

Neal Presa

Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns

Carroll Jenkins

Special Committee on the Belhar Confession

Jane Dempsey Douglass

Committee on Theological Education

Theodore Wardlaw

Youth Task Force

Jacob Bolton

Board of Pensions

Jefferson Aiken
Robert W Maggs

Restricted Funds Resolution Committee

Julie MacLemore

Presbyterian Foundation

Marcia Porter
Tom Taylor

General Assembly Mission Council

Carol Adcock
Joey Bailey
Martha Clark
Roger Dermody
Susan Ezell
Thomas Gillespie
Esperanza Guajardo
Curtis Kearns
Carolyn Knight
Michael Kruse
Carolyn McLarnan

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

Deborah Block
Marc Lewis

Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program

James Hudson
Nancy E Muth

Other Participants with Assigned Seating

Presbytery Administrative Staff

Abingdon	Bruce Ford
Alaska	David Dobler
Albany	Cass L Shaw
Arkansas	Bill Galbraith
Baltimore	Peter Nord
Beaver-Butler	Alan Adams
Blackhawk	John Rickard
Boise	Edward Dunn
Boston	R Wayne Parrish
Carlisle	Mark Englund-Krieger
The Cascades	John Mahon
Cayuga-Syracuse	Marianne Rhebergen
Central Florida	Paige McRight
Central Nebraska	Robert Houser
Central Washington	G David Lambertson
Charleston-Atlantic	Donnie Woods
Charlotte	Samuel Roberson
Cherokee	Rebecca Blackwell
Chicago	Robert Reynolds
Cimarron	Jim Bellatti
Cincinnati	James DiEgidio
Coastal Carolina	David A Walker
de Cristo	Sue Westfall
Denver	Thomas Sheffield
Des Moines	Philip Barrett
Detroit	Allen Timm

Donegal	Erin Cox-Holmes
East Iowa	Harry D Olthoff
East Tennessee	William Judson Shaw
Eastern Korean	Samuel Kim
Eastern Oklahoma	Greg Coulter
Eastern Oregon	Linda W Toth
Eastern Virginia	Donald F Bickhart
Eastminster	Dan Schomer
Elizabeth	Greg Albert
Flint River	Paul Luthman
Foothills	Mary Morrison
Genesee Valley	Linda Badger Becker
Geneva	Joelle S Davis
Giddings-Lovejoy	Paul T Reiter
Grace	Janet DeVries
Grand Canyon	Dave Wasserman
Great Rivers	Susan D Krummel
Greater Atlanta	Thomas E Evans
Hanmi	In Yang
Heartland	Charles W Spencer
Holston	Richard Fifield
Homestead	Richard O Wyatt
Hudson River	Susan Andrews
Huntingdon	K Joy Kaufmann
The Inland Northwest	Sheryl Kinder-Pyle
The James	H Carson Rhyne Jr
John Calvin	Mary Newbern-Williams

Other Participants with Assigned Seating

The John Knox	Ken Meunier	San Fernando	Gerald O North
Kendall	James L Kennedy Jr	San Francisco	Katherine J Runyeon
Kiskiminetas	Wayne A Yost	San Gabriel	Ruth Santana-Grace
Lackawanna	Barbara Smith	San Joaquin	Rick Irish
Lake Erie	David Oyler	San Jose	Joseph Lee
Lake Huron	Louise Brokaw	Presbiterio De San Juan	Aurelio Garcia
Lake Michigan	John Best	Santa Barbara	Jan B Armstrong
Lehigh	Steven H Shussett	Santa Fe	Sallie Watson
Long Island	Marie Zupka-Ludder	Savannah	Kenneth McKenzie
Los Ranchos	Steven Yamaguchi	Scioto Valley	Dana Knapp
Mackinac	Patricia Megregian	Seattle	Scott Lumsden
Maumee Valley	Susan Meier	Shenandoah	Sally Hinchman
Miami Valley	Dennis Piermont	Shenango	David Dawson
Mid-Kentucky	Betty Meadows	Sheppards And Lapsley	Harvey Jenkins
Mid-South	Jimmie Lancaster	Sierra Blanca	Sallie Watson
Middle Tennessee	Therese Howell	South Alabama	Wm Samford Turner
Midwest Hanmi	Heahwan Rim	South Dakota	Evelyn D Reynen
Milwaukee	Gregg Neel	South Louisiana	Marvin Groote
Minnesota Valleys	Sue Coller	Southeastern Illinois	Jeff Hutcheson
Mission	Hilary Shuford	Southern Kansas	Donald Owens
Mississippi	Michael Herrin	Southern New England	Dana Lindsley
Missouri River Valley	Kevin Keaton	Presbiterio Del Suroeste	Ruben Ortiz-Rodriguez
Monmouth	Carlos Wilton	Stockton	Keith Drury
Muskingum Valley	Deborah Rundlett	Susquehanna Valley	Cheryl Ann Elfond
National Capital	G Wilson Gunn Jr	Tampa Bay	Gerry Tyer
New Brunswick	Lowell Trent Knauss	Transylvania	Richard T Smith
New Castle	James Leslie Moseley	Tres Rios	Jose Luis Casal
New Covenant	Mike Cole	Trinity	Alan Arnold
New Harmony	Franklin Colclough	Tropical Florida	Arlene W Gordon
New Hope	Barbara Campbell Davis	Twin Cities Area	Chaz Ruark
New York City	Annie Rawlings	Upper Ohio Valley	Royce Browder
Newark	Kevin Richard Yoho	Utah	Laura Stellmon
Newton	Judith Kolwicz	Utica	Harry Young
North Alabama	Warner Durnell	Wabash Valley	Linda Long
North Puget Sound	Corey Schlosser-Hall	Washington	Charles Perrine
Northeast Georgia	Kenyon G Meeks	West Jersey	Deborah G Brincivalli
Northern Kansas	Edward J Thompson	West Virginia	Stephen Melton
Northern New England	Cliff Creel	Western Colorado	James W Cory
Northern New York	Pieter Visscher	Western Kentucky	Richard Cooper
Northern Plains	Michael Lochow	Western New York	Bronwen Boswell
Northern Waters	Sharon Johnson	Western North Carolina	Barbara White
Presbiterio Del Noroeste Gerardo	Lopez-Vigo	The Western Reserve	Liza Hendricks
Ohio Valley	Susan McGhee	Whitewater Valley	T Alan Thames
Olympia	Lynn E Longfield	Winnebago	Lucille Rupe
The Pacific	Linda Culbertson	Wyoming	Fred Feth
Palisades	Joseph Faragalla	Yellowstone	Kathy Goodrich
Palisades	Bruce Tischler	Yukon	Curtis Karns
Palo Duro	Richard Schempp		
Peace River	Graham Hart	<u>Synod Stated Clerks</u>	
The Peaks	Nancy B Dawson	Boriquen En Puerto Rico	Antonio Roldan
Philadelphia	Bruce A Barstow	Rodriguez	
Pines	Joe Hill	Covenant	George Baird
Pittsburgh	Sheldon Sorge	Lakes And Prairies	Jay Wilkinson
Plains And Peaks	Daniel Saperstein	Mid-America	Ronald Lavoie
Prospect Hill	John Pehrson	Pacific	Wendy Warner
Providence	T Mark Verdery	Rocky Mountains	Don Patterson
Pueblo	Gary R Weaver	S California & Hawaii	Fried Wilson
Redstone	Stephen Benz	Sun	Raafat Zaki
The Redwoods	Robert E Conover	Trinity	Lesley Shoup
Riverside	Anita Hendrix		
Sacramento	Mary Elva Smith		
St Andrew	Gregory A Goodwiller		
St Augustine	John Ragsdale		
Salem	Sam P Marshall III		
San Diego	Clark D Cowden		

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Presbytery Stated Clerks

Albany
 Arkansas
 Baltimore
 Blackhawk
 Boise
 Boston
 Carlisle
 The Cascades
 Central Washington
 Chicago
 Cimarron
 Cincinnati
 Denver
 Detroit
 Donegal
 East Iowa
 Eastern Oklahoma
 Eastern Oregon
 Eastern Virginia
 Eastminster
 Elizabeth
 Flint River
 Genesee Valley
 Grace
 Grand Canyon
 Greater Atlanta
 Hanmi
 Heartland
 Homestead
 Hudson River
 Huntingdon
 The Inland Northwest
 John Calvin
 The John Knox
 Kiskiminetas
 Lackawanna
 Lake Erie
 Lake Huron
 Lake Michigan
 Los Ranchos
 Maumee Valley
 Miami Valley
 Mid-Kentucky
 Middle Tennessee
 Midwest Hanmi
 Minnesota Valleys
 Monmouth
 Muskingum Valley
 New Brunswick
 New Castle
 New Covenant
 New York City
 Newark
 Newton
 Northern New England
 Northern New York
 Northern Plains
 Presbiterio Del Noroeste
 Ohio Valley
 Olympia
 The Pacific

Dan Rogers
 Cathy Ulrich
 Catherine Blacka
 John Huff
 Ruth R Hicks
 Catherine MacDonald
 James E Speedy
 Catherine Quackenbush
 Kenneth A Gasper
 Barbara Bundick
 Betty Bays
 Janis Adams
 Anne Bond
 Edward Koster
 William Netting
 Rebecca Blair
 Dana Bailey
 Peter H Wells
 Donald F Bickhart
 Dale Riley
 Paul Rack
 Jerry Watts
 Val Fowler
 Connie Tubb
 Dick Coffelt
 Donna E Wells
 Seung-nam Kim
 Maryann Farnsworth
 Harold Rainey
 Harriet Sandmeier
 Virginia Rainey
 Forrest Claassen
 Melana Scruggs
 Alyson Janke
 Marilyn Tully
 Bob Bryden
 Douglas Megill
 Theodore McCulloch
 Janet Magennis
 W Keith Geckeler
 Dean McGormley
 Doris Arnett Whitaker
 Kenneth Hockenberry
 Therese Howell
 Heahwan Rim
 Pamela Prouty
 Carlos Wilton
 Martin Radcliff
 D Paul LaMontagne
 Reid K Beveridge
 Diane Prevary
 Cornell Edmonds
 Warren McNeill
 Deane P Higgs
 Cliff Creel
 Pieter Visscher
 Michael Lochow
 Gerardo Lopez-Vigo
 Lawrence Jackman
 Tony Cook
 Steve Smith

Palisades
 Philadelphia
 Pines
 Plains and Peaks
 Prospect Hill
 Redstone
 Riverside
 Sacramento
 St Augustine
 San Diego
 San Francisco
 San Gabriel
 Presbiterio De San Juan
 Santa Fe
 Savannah
 Scioto Valley
 Seattle
 Sheppards qnd Lapsley
 South Dakota
 Southeastern Illinois
 Southern Kansas
 Southern New England
 Presbiterio Del Suroeste
 Stockton
 Susquehanna Valley
 Transylvania
 Tres Rios
 Twin Cities Area
 Upper Ohio Valley
 Utica
 Wabash Valley
 West Jersey
 West Virginia
 Western Kentucky
 Western New York
 Western North Carolina
 The Western Reserve
 Winnebago
 Wyoming
 Yukon

William Chapman
 Bruce A Barstow
 Daniel Hignight
 Lynn Smit
 John Pehrson
 Gary Close
 Sue Berry
 Carolyn Knight
 Paul K Hooker
 Linda Therien
 Katherine J Runyeon
 Robert Wendel
 Aurelio Garcia
 David Preininger
 Russell Gladding
 Richard Hays
 Dennis Hughes
 Beverly Dodson
 Evelyn D Reynen
 Cindy Bean
 Rebecca New
 William Thomas
 Ruben Ortiz-Rodriguez
 Keith Drury
 Janet Adair Hansen
 Jim Rucker Sr
 Patty Lane
 Nancy Grittmann
 Thomas Armstrong
 Harry Young
 Linda Long
 John T Ash III
 Frank Mansell Jr
 Evan Evans
 Bronwen Boswell
 Bert Sigmon
 Jody LeFort
 Michael Lukens
 Fred Feth
 Sharon Rayt

Parliamentarian Recorders

George Baird
 Dick Berry
 Rebecca Blair
 Bronwen Boswell
 Barbara Bundick
 Dick Coffelt
 Robert E Conover
 Gretchen Denton
 Nancy Grittmann
 Kenneth Hockenberry
 Therese Howell
 Michael Lukens
 Rebecca New
 Virginia Rainey
 H Carson Rhyne Jr
 Dan Rogers
 Steve Smith
 Doris Arnett Whitaker

Ecumenical and Interfaith Guests to the Assembly

The Presbyterian Church (USA) understands that we are part of a wider body of Christ and are intentional in our relationships with other Christian churches both in the United States and globally. The General Assembly is delighted to welcome visitors from other churches and the world community.

There are three categories of ecumenical visitors.

Each year, the General Assembly votes to invite fifteen churches to name **ecumenical advisory delegates** to the following year's assembly. Five of these churches are based in the United States, and ten are based outside the USA. Occasionally, circumstances prevent one or more of the churches from sending a delegate in the designated year. The 11 ecumenical delegates at this assembly are listed on page 8. As advisory delegates, they have a voice in plenary and voice and vote in committee.

Denominations are invited to name one **ecumenical representative** to act as an official observer of the General Assembly. In addition three national organizations of other religious traditions in the US are invited to name an **Interfaith representative** to the General Assembly. Unofficial visitors are welcomed as **ecumenical guests**. These two categories participate in a wide range of self-selected activities during their stay.

The following ecumenical delegates, representatives and visitors will be in attendance:

Ecumenical Advisory Delegates:

Elder Robson Nyirenda
Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP)
The Right Rev. Eugene Sutton
Episcopal Church
Rev. P. Noe Bernier
Episcopal Diocese of Haiti
Rev. Francis Amenu
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana
Rev. Ivan Haroldo Paz Andrade
National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala
Therese M. Miller
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Rev. Dr. Arthur James
The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
Ms. Clara Maria Millenaar
Reformed Church in Argentina
Rev. Siarhei Hardun
Orthodox Church of Belarus
Rev. Jamespar Tap Hon
Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church
Father Leo Walsh
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Interfaith Representatives

Rabbi Barry Cytron
National Council of Synagogues
Dr. Sayyid Syeed
Islamic Society of North America
Rev. Jennie Lightfoot
Lake Superior Band of Ojibway

Ecumenical Representatives

Bishop John White
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Dr. Bangchong Chompoowong
The Church of Christ in Thailand
Rev. Cheryl Dudley
Church World Service
Rev. Haitham Jazrawi, Moderator
Evangelical Presbyterian Churches of Iraq
Rev. Rimas Mikalauskas
Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania
Rev. Festus Gitonga
Presbyterian Church of East Africa
Rev. Dr. Herman Weinlick
Moravian Church (Northern Province & Southern Province)
Rev. Mzukisi Faleni
Presbyterian Church of Africa
Rt. Rev. Dr. Festus Asana
Presbyterian Church of Cameroon
Elder Javier Rodriguez
Presbyterian Church of Colombia
Right Rev. Yaw Frimpong-Manso
Presbyterian Church of Ghana
Rev. Jung Suh Kim
Presbyterian Church of Korea
Rev. Dr. Elisée Musemakweli
Presbyterian Church of Rwanda (EPR)
Rev. Elisa Muñoz de Bulmes
Presbyterian Church of Venezuela
Rev. David Baak
Reformed Church in America

Rev. Martha Raquel Nino Duran
Reformed Synod of Columbia
Rev. Refat Fathy Remon Gergis
Synod of the Nile of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt
Rev. Enoc Teixeira Wenceslau
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil—IPU
Rev. Dr. Mary-Anne Plaatjies-Van Huffel
Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
Rev. Michel Nseir
World Council of Churches
Elder Fares Dagher
The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
Mr. Kurt Kaboth
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

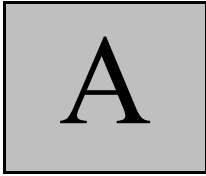
Ecumenical and Interfaith Guests

Rev. Dr. Seth Agidi
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana
Mrs. Renata Mikalauskiene
Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania
Mr. Mohamed El-sanousi
Islamic Society of North America
Rev. Dr. Seong Gi Cho
Presbyterian Church of Korea
Mrs. Kyung Hwa Do
Presbyterian Church of Korea
Rev. Jose Roberto Cavalcante
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil
Elder Helis Barraza Dias
Presbyterian Church of Colombia
Mrs. Josephine Musemakweli
Presbyterian Church of Rwanda

Standing Rules of the General Assembly

[AS AMENDED BY THE 219TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2010).]

STANDING RULES FOR MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Sources of Business for the Meeting

1. **Papers in General**
 - a. Papers to Be Considered
 - b. Received Less Than 60 Days Prior to General Assembly
2. **Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees**
 - a. Reports Deadline
 - b. Budget Consultation
 - c. Appropriate Background Information
 - d. Report Length
3. **Overtures**
 - a. Definition
 - b. Writing Overtures
 - c. Submitting Overtures
 - d. Distributing Overtures
 - e. Overture Advocate
4. **Communications and Resource Material**
 - a. Provide Comment or Advice
 - b. Forty-five Day Deadline
 - c. Resource Materials
 - d. Advice and Counsel Memoranda
5. **Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report**
 - a. Report
 - b. Presented Directly to General Assembly
6. **Entity and Synod Minutes**
 - a. Submit for Review
 - b. Review Process
7. **Presbytery Reports**
8. **Commissioners' Resolutions**
 - a. Who May Propose
 - b. Deadline
 - c. Existing General Assembly Policy
 - d. May Not Amend *Book of Order*
 - e. Already Before Assembly
 - f. Same Issues as Previous Assembly
 - g. Referral
 - h. Referral Declined

1. Papers in General

Papers to Be Considered

a. The General Assembly shall consider only those papers delivered to the Stated Clerk in compliance with Standing Rule A and any other papers whatsoever that have been delivered to the Stated Clerk. Ordinarily, such papers shall have been forwarded to the Stated Clerk postmarked no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly.

Received Less Than 60 Days Prior to General Assembly

b. All papers intended for consideration by the General Assembly that are forwarded to the Stated Clerk and postmarked less than sixty days, but no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be reviewed by the Stated Clerk, who shall determine whether or not to refer them to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The Stated Clerk shall report to the committee regarding those papers not referred.

2. Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees

Reports Deadline

a. All reports from entities, commissions, and committees of the General Assembly shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk on or before 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall publish these reports (print or electronic) and distribute them so that they shall reach the commissioners thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly.

Budget Consultation

b. An entity, commission, or committee submitting a report with a recommendation that affects the work or budget of another entity(ies) shall submit evidence that a consultation has been held with the affected entity(ies).

Appropriate Background Information

c. Committees, agencies, or corporations presenting reports shall provide the appropriate background information necessary to interpret or understand the recommendations or responses to referrals to the members of the General Assembly committees to which the business is referred. Any and all documents or publications referred to in these reports that require approval by the assembly for publication and distribution to the church, including but not limited to curriculum, study papers/guides, position papers, and program resources, shall be made available to commissioners at the time the reports are published.

Report Length

d. All reports shall be limited to ten thousand words except the report of the General Assembly Mission Council, the length of which shall be determined by the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council. A request for an exception to the length of a report shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no later than forty-five days prior to the deadline for the submission of the report and shall include the anticipated length of the report. The Stated Clerk may assess a fee of the entity or committee whose report exceeds ten thousand words for the costs incurred in printing and distributing the excess pages. Payment of the fee shall be submitted to the treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. If the Stated Clerk and the representatives of any body are unable to agree, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the length of the report.

3. Overtures

Definition

a. Overtures are items of business that must have been approved by a presbytery or a synod and shall request the General Assembly to take a particular action, or approve or endorse a particular statement or resolution. (See *Book of Order*, G-11.0103t(3).)

Writing Overtures

b. The stated clerk of a presbytery or synod considering an overture to the General Assembly shall:

(1) Examine the most recently published *Minutes of the General Assembly* to determine if a similar overture has already been passed.

(2) Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether the desired action has been voted by any previous General Assembly.

(3) Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether a similar overture has already been proposed in order that the presbytery or synod may concur with the existing overture.

(4) Draft the overture in the following form:

“The Presbytery of _____ overtures the [# of the assembly] General Assembly [(year)] of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action the General Assembly is asked to take].”

To this shall be appended a rationale, stating the reasons for submitting the overture.

**Submitting
Overtures**

c. Submitting Overtures

(1) Overtures proposing an amendment to the *Constitution* or requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* (see *Book of Order*, G-18.0301a and G-13.0112c) must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk postmarked no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, and shall be promptly referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (see *Book of Order*, G-13.0112d and G-18.0300).

(2) All overtures that have financial implications for current or future years' budgets must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk postmarked no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. Overtures with financial implications not received within the designated time limit shall not be considered, but shall be returned to the originating governing body.

(3) All other overtures intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

(4) Overtures not received within the designated time limits shall not be considered, but shall be returned to the originating governing body for reconsideration.

(5) Presbyteries or synods submitting overtures with a recommendation(s) that affects the work or budget of a General Assembly entity(ies) shall submit evidence that the affected entity(ies) has (have) been consulted. If such evidence is not submitted, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the overture be received and referred to a future session of the General Assembly so that consultation may take place.

(6) In the event that the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly receives an overture similar to one already proposed (excluding the rationale), she or he shall inquire of the presbytery or synod in question whether it would be willing to concur with that existing overture or desires to withdraw the overture. A presbytery or synod concurring with an overture may submit additional rationale for its action, provided that it does not duplicate the rationale provided by the overturing body. The concurrence and any additional rationale will be printed with the original overture in the Reports to the General Assembly.

**Distributing
Overtures**

d. Overtures that do not propose constitutional amendment or interpretation, and that are postmarked at least sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be published (print or electronic) in the reports distributed by the Stated Clerk. Overtures received in the same manner, postmarked no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be distributed to the commissioners before the convening of the General Assembly.

**Overture
Advocate**

e. Overture Advocate

(1) Each presbytery or synod that submits an overture shall notify the Stated Clerk of the name of a commissioner or some other person in attendance at the General Assembly who has been designated as the advocate for the overture. The overture advocate shall be available to provide information on the background and intent of the overture to any assembly committee to which the overture may be referred. (See Standing Rule E.2.)

(2) In the event that the assembly refers an overture to a General Assembly entity for further consideration (and not simply for implementation), the presbytery or synod submitting the overture shall be invited by the Stated Clerk to designate an overture advocate for the assembly meeting at which the entity's response to the overture is presented. The overture advocate shall be available to provide information on the background and intent of the overture to any assembly committee to which the overture may be referred. (See Standing Rule E.2.)

4. Communications and Resource Material**Provide
Comment or
Advice**

a. Communications and resource material provide comment or advice on business already under consideration by the assembly and shall neither contain nor constitute business to be considered by the assembly. Communications may be directed to the General Assembly

(1) by entities of the General Assembly that desire to comment on a single item of business coming before the General Assembly from any source other than their own entity, but which do not introduce new business,

(2) by organizations in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) holds membership, and

(3) by other denominations in correspondence with the General Assembly.

**Forty-five Day
Deadline**

b. All communications intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

**Resource
Materials**

c. Resource material (except for previously published books), including advice and counsel memoranda from advocacy and advisory committees, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall not exceed 1,000 words on each item of business referred. This material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the assembly meeting, who shall then publish (print or electronic) and distribute the material to all commissioners prior to the assembly.

**Advice and
Counsel
Memoranda**

d. Advice and counsel memoranda are resources prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns for the purpose of providing information about existing policy, current work on specific topics, recent developments, and other factors useful to commissioners as they consider issues before the assembly.

5. Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report

Report

a. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report to the General Assembly its findings along with its recommendations on all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*, including proposals for constitutional change. “The General Assembly shall vote on the recommendations, and may amend or decline to approve them” (*Book of Order*, G-13.0112d). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report any editorial changes made to the *Book of Order* since its last report to the General Assembly.

**Presented
Directly to
General
Assembly**

b. The report of the committee shall be presented directly to the General Assembly. The General Assembly may take action on the recommendations immediately, or it may refer them to an assembly committee for consideration by that committee and report to the General Assembly for action later during the same session of the General Assembly.

6. Entity and Synod Minutes

**Submit for
Review**

a. Entities and synods required to submit minutes for review by the General Assembly shall submit such minutes on a calendar year basis so as to present minutes of all meetings for the calendar year (from January 1 through December 31) preceding the year in which is held the session of the General Assembly to which such minutes are submitted. The minutes shall contain the attestation that they have been approved by the entity or synod submitting them in the manner regularly in use within that body.

Review Process

b. Minutes of General Assembly entities will be reviewed in accordance with the “Guidelines for Preparation of Minutes of Agencies” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Minutes of the synods will be reviewed in accordance with “Guidelines for Reviewing Synod Records” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. In addition, the provisions of *Book of Order*, G-9.0409, shall apply, including whether:

- (1) The proceedings have been correctly recorded;
- (2) The proceedings have been regular and in accordance with the *Constitution*;
- (3) The proceedings have been prudent and equitable;
- (4) The proceedings have been faithful to the mission of the whole church;
- (5) The lawful injunctions of the General Assembly have been obeyed. (*Book of Order*, G-9.0409)

7. Presbytery Reports

Each presbytery shall act upon all papers sent to the presbytery to be voted upon in ample time to permit the stated clerk of the presbytery to mail the results to the Stated Clerk so that they are received no later than two weeks before the convening of the General Assembly. The response of the presbytery shall be mailed to the Stated Clerk by certified mail.

8. Commissioners' Resolutions

Who May Propose

a. Any two commissioners may propose an item of new business, known as a commissioners' resolution, for assembly consideration by delivering it in writing to the Stated Clerk or the Stated Clerk's designee. No commissioner may sign more than two resolutions.

Deadline

b. The Stated Clerk shall determine and announce at the first meeting at which business is conducted the deadline for receipt of commissioners' resolutions. The deadline shall not be earlier than twenty-four hours after the assembly has convened.

Existing GA Policies

c. In the preparation of a resolution, commissioners are urged to be aware of existing General Assembly policies relevant to their proposal and, where appropriate, to make reference to these policies.

May Not Amend *Book of Order*

d. Commissioners' resolutions shall not contain business that requires an amendment to or interpretation of the *Constitution* (see *Book of Order*, G-18.0301(a)).

Already Before Assembly

e. The Stated Clerk shall not transmit as new business any resolution that deals with matters of business already before the General Assembly, nor transmit any resolution whose purpose can be achieved by the regular process of amendment and debate.

Same Issues as Previous Assembly

f. Should the commissioners' resolution deal with substantially the same issue considered by one of the two previous sessions of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures take one of the following actions on the commissioners' resolution: "refer to a subsequent assembly," "decline for consideration," or "take no action."

Referral

g. If the proposed resolution does deal with new business, the Stated Clerk shall transmit it to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures with a recommendation for its referral.

Referral Declined

h. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may decline to refer proposed items of new business if it decides that the matters proposed are already before the assembly or that the purpose of the proposals can be reached by the process of amendment and debate. Proposed items of business not referred, whether declined by the Stated Clerk or the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall be identified in the first report of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures distributed to commissioners after the period docketed for committee meetings, with a brief description of the content and a statement of the reasons for declining the proposed business. Twenty-five percent of commissioners present and voting is required to overturn action of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to decline, take no action, or refer a commissioners' resolution to a subsequent assembly. If a commissioners' resolution affects a substantial change in an existing social witness policy, the Stated Clerk should recommend to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures that it be referred to the next General Assembly.

B

Commissioners, Delegates, and Other Participants at the Meeting

1. **Commissioners**
 - a. Election
 - b. List Delivered by 120 Day Deadline
 - c. Able to Attend
 - d. Entitlements, Expenses
 - e. Newly Created Presbytery's Commissioners
 - f. Missionary Advisory Delegate
 - g. Ecumenical Advisory Delegate
2. **Advisory Delegates**
 - a. Definition
 - b. Categories
 - c. Voting Privileges
 - d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates
 - e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates
 - f. Missionary Advisory Delegates
 - g. Ecumenical Advisory Delegates
3. **Corresponding Members**
 - a. Definition
 - b. Entitled to Speak, Not Vote
4. **Advisory Committee on the Constitution**
5. **Other Participants**
 - a. Special Guests
 - b. Ecumenical Representatives
 - c. Resource Persons
 - d. Presbytery Staff
 - e. Ecumenical Visitors
 - f. Interfaith Representatives
6. **List of Participants**

1. Commissioners	
Election	a. Each presbytery shall elect commissioners to the General Assembly in accordance with <i>Book of Order</i> , G-13.0102. The number of commissioners attending General Assembly will be based on the number of active members, including resident clergy members of presbytery. The figures for active members will be taken from the information recorded in <i>Minutes of the General Assembly</i> , Part II, <i>Statistics</i> of the year in which per capita apportionment is assessed for the year in which General Assembly meets.
List Delivered by 120 Day Deadline	b. Presbyteries shall elect commissioners in sufficient time to permit the list of commissioners to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 120 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are commissioned.
Able to Attend	c. Ministers and elders considered for election as commissioners must be able to be in attendance for the duration of the General Assembly.
Entitlements, Expenses	d. Commissioners shall be entitled to speak under the rules, and to vote and present motions in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees to which they are assigned. Commissioners shall be reimbursed for approved expenses.
Newly Created Presbytery's Commissioners	e. In the case of a newly created presbytery, the presbytery shall be entitled to elect commissioners to the General Assembly if the qualifying enrollment of ministers and congregations in that presbytery shall have been completed by December 31 of the year preceding the assembly meeting (see <i>Book of Order</i> , G-13.0102).

Alternates f. Presbyteries may elect alternates in number up to, but not exceeding, the number of commissioners to which the presbytery may be entitled. Such alternates shall be seated with other visitors to the assembly.

2. Advisory Delegates

Definition a. Advisory delegates are persons who are active members in one of the constituent churches or governing bodies of the General Assembly (or, in the case of ecumenical advisory delegates, of a denomination of Christians designated by the General Assembly) who are selected to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in an advisory role so that the assembly may be assured of hearing and taking cognizance of their special viewpoints.

Categories b. There shall be four categories of advisory delegates: youth, theological student; missionary, and ecumenical. The expenses of each advisory delegate shall be paid by the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.) on the same basis as the expenses of commissioners (see Standing Rule B.2.f.(2) below for exception).

Voting Privileges c. Advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees as voting members and shall have the privilege of the floor of the General Assembly without vote. Only voting members shall have the privilege of proposing or seconding a motion. When certain issues come before a plenary session of the General Assembly, the advisory delegates may be polled prior to the vote of commissioners to determine their advice.

Young Adult Advisory Delegates d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates
(1) Each presbytery shall appoint an active member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who shall be between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three years on the date the General Assembly convenes, to be a young adult advisory delegate.

(2) Each presbytery will request each candidate for young adult advisory delegate to submit an application/questionnaire and be interviewed by an appropriate presbytery committee in order to ensure the selection of the best qualified person to serve as young adult advisory delegate. The youth ministries staff shall prepare and distribute to each presbytery a sample/suggested questionnaire for use in reviewing candidates for election as young adult advisory delegates.

(3) Presbyteries shall elect young adult advisory delegates in sufficient time to permit the list of advisory delegates to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 120 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected.

Theological Student Advisory Delegate e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates
There shall be a delegation of theological student advisory delegates each year: two from each of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); one from each of the theological institutions in a covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and one each from three selected other theological seminaries. The selection process for these delegates is as follows:

(1) Each theological institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate three students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. Two of these students shall be designated by the institution as delegates and the other student shall be designated as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery, or a student nominated by the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 120 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the names of the two students to be delegates to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(2) Each theological institution in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate two students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. One of these students shall be

designated by the institution as the delegate and the other student as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 120 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(3) All non-Presbyterian theological schools represented by corresponding members on the Committee on Theological Education and one additional non-Presbyterian theological seminary shall be asked to nominate one theological student advisory delegate and one alternate. The additional non-Presbyterian seminary shall be chosen on a rotating basis, descending alphabetically, from those that have at least twelve Presbyterian enrollees (either inquirers or candidates under the care of a presbytery) as of October 1 in the year preceding the assembly. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 120 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(4) Nominated students shall have at least one more year of study following the assembly remaining in their degree program. The Stated Clerk shall forward the name of the nominated students to the presbyteries of jurisdiction for election and confirmation.

**Missionary
Advisory
Delegates**

f. Missionary Advisory Delegates

(1) There shall be eight missionary advisory delegates who shall be chosen by the Worldwide Ministries Division from persons who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and mission personnel assigned by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in another country in which this church is engaged in mission. To the degree possible, the selection shall provide a global geographical representation with no two delegates representing the same country or geographical area and rotating the geographical representation. The Worldwide Ministries Division shall notify the Stated Clerk at the time these persons are named.

(2) The expenses to the General Assembly of each missionary advisory delegate shall include transportation only from the point of entry or domicile of the delegate in the United States and return.

**Ecumenical
Advisory
Delegates**

g. Ecumenical Advisory Delegates

There shall be up to fifteen ecumenical advisory delegates. Ten of these delegates shall be from churches outside of the United States. No more than five shall be from member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Ecumenical advisory delegates shall be selected by the highest ecclesiastical authorities of their churches, in response to the invitation of a previous General Assembly. The assembly shall extend such invitations at the recommendation of the General Assembly Mission Council upon nomination by the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations.

3. Corresponding Members

Definition

a. The following persons shall be corresponding members: Moderators of earlier General Assemblies; the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other members of the staff of the Office of the General Assembly as designated by the Stated Clerk; the members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; the members of the GAMC Executive Committee and staff of the General Assembly Mission Council, and of the divisions and related entities designated by the council; all members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution; the executives of synods; one person designated by each entity reporting directly to the General Assembly, including permanent, special, and advisory committees (additional persons may be designated by such bodies if authorized by the Moderator of the preceding General Assembly in consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly); and the presidents (or their designee) of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and seminaries related by covenant agreement.

Entitled to Speak, Not Vote b. Corresponding members shall be entitled to speak, under the rules, in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees on matters related to the work of the body represented, but they may neither vote nor present motions.

4. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

During the General Assembly, three or more members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution [this committee] shall be present at the session of the General Assembly to advise the General Assembly and its Moderator on constitutional matters (*Book of Order*, G-13.0112e).

5. Other Participants

Special Guests a. The assembly, out of honor, courtesy, recognition, and the need for information and resource material, may recognize other persons as guests or observers. As such, they may be invited by the General Assembly to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying greetings or messages, or bringing enlightenment or information germane to the decision-making process. An assembly committee may extend a similar invitation at its own meeting.

Ecumenical Representatives b. Ecumenical representatives are individuals sent at the initiative of another church to be the official representative of that church. The Stated Clerk shall announce to member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches the date and place of the next meeting of the General Assembly. When officially certified through appropriate ecclesiastical channels at least forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, these persons shall be welcomed as guests of the General Assembly and introduced to the governing body through the report of the assembly committee addressing ecumenism. The assembly shall assume the expense and housing of such guests on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

Resource Persons c. The assembly may welcome persons invited by the General Assembly Mission Council or another entity of the General Assembly for the purpose of establishing or affirming particular ecumenical, mission, or program relationships, or assisting the entity in the presentation of particular items of business. Any expense reimbursement shall be the responsibility of the inviting entity.

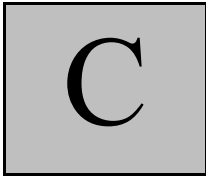
Presbytery Staff d. The presbytery's executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery's stated clerk shall be supplied with all reports and materials related to the General Assembly, but shall not be entitled to speak in plenary meetings or in meetings of assembly committees unless called upon by a moderator to provide information.

Ecumenical Visitors e. Ecumenical visitors are individuals attending a session of the General Assembly at their own initiative. These persons are welcomed to the assembly as unofficial visitors. The assembly shall assume no expenses for these ecumenical visitors.

Interfaith Representatives f. Interfaith Representatives—Three observers of other faiths or religious traditions, who shall be representatives chosen by recognized religious bodies of non-Christian religious traditions and/or faith communities shall be present at the assembly at the invitation of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations. The interfaith representatives shall be present with the church in its deliberations, and to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying greetings or messages, or bringing information germane to the decision-making process. The assembly shall assume the expense of housing and on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

6. List of Participants

Upon request, the Stated Clerk shall make available the list of participants registered for a session of the General Assembly to entities of the General Assembly, governing bodies of the denomination, educational institutions, ministers of the Word and Sacrament, elders, and independent organizations composed primarily of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A fee will be charged for lists or mailing labels to cover the costs incurred for printing, postage, and handling.



Formation of Committees and Referral of Business

1. **Assembly Committee Structure**
 - a. Number and Designation of Assembly
 - b. Committee Assistants
 - c. Assembly Committee Moderator and Vice Moderator
 - d. Assembly Committee on Business Referral
 - e. Orientation
2. **Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees**
 - a. Committee Assignments
 - b. Notification of Assignment
 - c. Assignment List Provided
 - d. Random Selection Process
3. **Referring Business**
 - a. Recommendation for Referral of Business
 - b. General Assembly Action on Referrals
 - c. How Referred
 - d. Referral Considered by One Committee
 - e. Referring Overtures to Committees
4. **Tentative Docket**

Number and Designation of Assembly Committees

Committee Assistants

Assembly Committee Moderator and Vice Moderator

Assembly Committee on Business Referral

1. Assembly Committee Structure

a. The Stated Clerk shall propose the number and designation of assembly committees to the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall present the proposed committee structure to the General Assembly for consideration and ratification at the first assembly meeting at which business is transacted. In making these proposals, the Stated Clerk shall consult with the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities, and may consult with other persons.

b. The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly for appointment the names of persons to serve as committee assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before recommending persons to serve as committee assistants. Persons proposed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly or any person who is a member of the General Assembly Mission Council or any person who is a member of any other entity of the General Assembly. A committee assistant shall be appointed to provide staff services to each assembly committee. The appointments shall be made in accordance with *Book of Order*, G-4.0403.

c. The Moderator of the preceding General Assembly shall appoint a commissioner to be moderator and a second to be vice moderator of each committee. Final appointment shall be made only after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and then also with representatives of the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding the inclusivity mandated in the *Book of Order*, G-4.0403 and G-9.0104. The moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees, including any committees dealing with finance and budgets, shall be elders. The moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees should be women. No more than one person from any one presbytery may be appointed to serve as a moderator or vice moderator. All synods shall be equitably represented.

d. The moderators and vice moderators of the assembly committees, as a group, shall function as the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall function as the moderator and vice moderator of this committee as well. This committee shall report to the assembly for its action at the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

Orientation e. The Stated Clerk shall conduct an orientation for moderators, vice moderators, and committee assistants of assembly committees no less than three weeks prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The orientation shall include information regarding business likely to be referred to each committee; suggested procedures for dealing with business referred to committees, especially the use of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*; utilization of available resources, both persons and materials; and preparation and presentation of assembly committee reports. The Stated Clerk, following consultation with the General Assembly Mission Council, may invite persons designated by the council as General Assembly resource coordinators to participate in the orientation. During this orientation, the Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall meet and carry out the duties given it by these rules. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall also meet, if necessary, just prior to the convening of the assembly and its function shall end at the convening of the assembly.

2. Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees

Committee Assignments a. Forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner and advisory delegate to one of the assembly committees by the random selection process described in this standing rule.

Notification of Assignment b. No later than thirty days before the convening of the assembly, commissioners shall receive the number and designation of committees. At the same time that the number and designation of committees is communicated, the Stated Clerk shall notify each person of the assignment, the time of their first meeting, and the necessity to confirm appropriate housing and travel arrangements.

Assignment List Provided c. The Stated Clerk shall provide a list of the assignments to those who need it to facilitate the work of the General Assembly.

Random Selection Process d. Commissioners and advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees by random selection as follows:

(1) The Stated Clerk shall divide the presbyteries into six regional districts. Each district shall be composed of one or more presbyteries so arranged that, insofar as possible, the presbyteries in the district have contiguous boundaries and the numbers of commissioners in the several districts are approximately equal. Within each district the presbyteries shall be arranged alphabetically. The commissioners from each presbytery shall be listed alphabetically in two parallel lists: the first containing the names of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament; the second, the elders. In those cases where the presbytery has not designated commissioners, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified. The names of moderators and vice moderators of assembly committees shall be removed from the list and the names below them shall be moved up to fill the vacated positions. The minister commissioners and vacant positions for minister commissioners shall be numbered in sequence. The list of elder commissioners in each district shall be rotated downward so that no elder commissioner is opposite a minister commissioner from the same presbytery. Separate lists of groups identified in *Book of Order*, G-4.0403, shall be prepared, insofar as it may be practical, to assure the most equitable distribution of such commissioners to the various committees in accordance with *Book of Order*, G-4.0402.

(2) The Stated Clerk shall list the young adult advisory delegates in one list arranged in the alphabetical order of the presbyteries that designated the delegates. In any case where the presbytery has not designated a young adult advisory delegate, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified.

(3) The Moderator shall pick by lot a number from one to ten. This number shall identify the number of the name in the first column of names in each district in which the assignment will begin. It will also identify the number of the young adult advisory delegates in which assignment will begin.

(4) The Moderator shall then pick by lot a second number equal from one to the number equaling the total number of committees. This number shall identify the assembly committee in the order in which the committees are arranged in the standing rules to which the first assignment of members shall be made.

(5) The assignment of members of the assembly committees shall then proceed in sequence. When initial assignments have been made to all committees in sequence so that the committees with the fewest number of commissioners are full, additional assignment shall be made to the other committees in the same manner, until all commissioners and young adult advisory delegates have been assigned to committees.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall assign missionary advisory delegates and ecumenical advisory delegates to assembly committees in consultation with those delegates. Ordinarily not more than two persons in each of these categories shall be assigned to any one assembly committee.

(7) Theological student advisory delegates will be assigned to committees at the same time and in the same way as are commissioners to ensure their full participation and attendance.

(8) Names of commissioners and advisory delegates received after these assignments have been made shall be inserted in the appropriate position in the original list and assigned to the committee to which that position was assigned.

3. Referring Business

Recommendation for Referral of Business

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a recommendation for the referral of all items of business coming before the General Assembly.

General Assembly Action on Referrals

b. After making any necessary changes, this committee shall present the prepared referrals to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend referrals to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business. Ordinarily, this committee shall recommend referrals to the General Assembly for its action. When the General Assembly is not scheduled to meet in time to act on its recommendation, the committee may refer business. Such referrals shall be reported to the General Assembly at its next business meeting.

How Referred

c. Items of business to be considered by the General Assembly shall be referred in one of the following ways:

(1) for consideration by an assembly committee and recommendation for action by the General Assembly;

(2) for consideration and action by an assembly committee with a report of the action to the General Assembly;

(3) for consideration by the General Assembly through its inclusion in a consent agenda;

(4) for consideration by the General Assembly in a plenary business session.

Referral Considered by One Committee

d. Each item of business referred to a committee shall ordinarily be considered by only one assembly committee, but in no case should there be more than one committee making a recommendation on an item of business. Business of a related nature shall be assigned to a single committee insofar as possible.

Referring Overtures to Committees

e. The Stated Clerk shall present such items of business to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with a recommendation for their referral. In the event that the presbytery or synod disagrees with the referral recommendation, this procedure shall be followed: The presbytery or synod shall be entitled to submit a written statement regarding the background and intent of the overture at the time the overture is initially being considered

for referral by the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. If, after that committee makes its recommendation, the presbytery or synod still disagrees with the referral recommendation, the presbytery or synod shall notify the Stated Clerk, in writing, of its disagreement. The overture advocate will then be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture at a special meeting of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral that shall be held no more than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the convening of the assembly.

4. Tentative Docket

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a tentative docket. After making any necessary adjustments, this committee shall present a proposed docket to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend the docket to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

b. The reports and recommendations of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly regarding the initial docket of the General Assembly and referrals of business shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with any items of business not included in them (see Standing Rules I.4.b.(3) and I.4.b.(4)). Review of the minutes of the synods pursuant to G-13.0103I and of statement(s) of compliance with decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission by governing bodies, reported by the Stated Clerk pursuant to IV.B.2.d. of the *Organization for Mission*, shall be assigned to the same assembly committee. Following the convening of the assembly, such matters shall be directed to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.



Beginning of the General Assembly Meeting

1. Registration and Seating

- a. Registration of Commissioners and Delegates
- b. Commissioners with Disabilities
- c. Assigned Seats
- d. Alternates
- e. Ecumenical Representatives
- f. Presbytery Staff Seating
- g. Access to Commissioner and Advisory Delegate Seating

2. Quorum

3. Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting

1. Registration and Seating

Registration of Commissioners and Delegates

a. The Stated Clerk shall enroll commissioners and delegates on the opening day of the General Assembly and at such other times as may be necessary. The Stated Clerk shall determine any question that may arise regarding registration of commissioners and delegates. Any complaints regarding such decision shall be received by the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures.

Commissioners with Disabilities

b. A commissioner certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be entitled to designate a person to function as an assistant without vote during all proceedings of the General Assembly, including executive sessions and committee meetings, in order that the commissioner may fully participate in those proceedings. The expenses of the assistant shall be paid for by the General Assembly on the same basis as expenses of commissioners. The Stated Clerk shall also enroll assistants to commissioners who have been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance.

Assigned Seats

c. The Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner, advisory delegate, and corresponding member to a seat in advance of the meeting. They shall occupy the assigned seats during each meeting of the General Assembly at which business may be transacted. An assistant to commissioner who has been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be assigned a seat adjacent to the commissioner. The Stated Clerk shall assign seats to commissioners and delegates in a manner that shall assure that the most favorable seats, with regard to the platform, will be assigned to delegations from the various presbyteries in turn through an annual rotation of space assignments.

Alternates

d. When a principal commissioner is replaced by an alternate prior to or during the course of an assembly session, whether for the remainder of the session or for a period of time during the session, the alternate shall assume that assembly committee position and seat assignment.

Ecumenical Representatives

e. Ecumenical representatives shall be seated on the floor of the assembly in a section clearly designated for such guests.

Presbytery Staff Seating

f. The presbytery's executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery's stated clerk shall be provided assigned seating in proximity to the area that corresponding members are seated.

**Access to
Commissioner
and Advisory
Delegate Seating**

g. The only persons who shall be permitted access to the commissioner and advisory delegate seating area during plenary sessions are commissioners, advisory delegates, assistants enrolled by the Stated Clerk to assist commissioners having a disability warranting assistance, the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other staff and assembly assistants who are assigned responsibilities that require access to this area, including assisting at the floor microphones, delivery of official messages to commissioner and advisory delegates, and locating commissioners who are needed on the platform. The Stated Clerk will provide special credentials for the particular staff and assembly assistants who are authorized to enter the commissioner/advisory delegate seating area. Registered presbytery staff may have access to the seating area to contact their commissioners and advisory delegates during breaks in business.

2. Quorum

At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business, the Stated Clerk shall recommend to the General Assembly that the roll call of commissioners be established by registration. Alternately, the Stated Clerk may call the roll of commissioners and advisory delegates by calling the names of absentees as they appear on the roll. After any needed corrections have been made, the Stated Clerk shall announce whether or not a quorum is present (see *Book of Order*, G-13.0105). When commissioners and advisory delegates subsequently register, they shall be seated by the General Assembly. A commissioner who has not registered may not be seated and may not vote.

3. Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting

The Office of the General Assembly shall, on the first business day of the assembly, before committees meet to consider business, organize a forum where assembly committee moderators shall meet with overture advocates to discuss procedures for participation in committee discussion of business related to the overture that they are advocating.

E

Committee Meetings

1. **Committee Leadership and Support**
 - a. Moderator and Vice Moderator
 - b. Recorder
 - c. Committee Assistant
2. **Procedures for Assembly Committees**
 - a. Open Meeting
 - b. Parliamentary Procedures
 - c. Use of Resources
 - d. Preparation of Resource Material
 - e. Privilege of Floor
 - f. Overture Advocates/
Signer of Commissioners' Resolution
 - g. Responsibilities of Overture Advocate
3. **New Business**
 - a. Consider Only Matters Referred
 - b. Proposing Amendment to *Constitution*
 - c. Constitutional Matters
 - d. Approval Requirement
 - e. Presentation of
 - f. Referral to Advisory Committee
4. **Organizational Meeting**
5. **Public Hearings**
 - a. Schedule
 - b. Time Limits for Presentations
 - c. Hearing Form
6. **Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures**
 - a. Responsible for Referral of Business
 - b. Coordination Between Committees
 - c. Distribution of Materials
 - d. Requests to Schedule Event
7. **Reports of Assembly Committees**
 - a. Writing the Report
 - b. Content
 - c. Fiscal Implications
 - d. Identify Entity
 - e. GAMC to Determine Entity
 - f. Votes Recorded
 - g. Confer with Entity Affected by Action
 - h. Minority Report

1. Committee Leadership and Support

Moderator and Vice Moderator

a. The moderator shall preside over the committee's deliberations. The moderator may request the vice moderator to preside and to assist in the work of the committee.

Recorder

b. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a recorder appointed by the Stated Clerk. The recorder shall be appointed from a pool of individuals who will already be attending the General Assembly, including staff members, local volunteers, and others. The recorder shall keep an accurate record of the actions of the committee with the votes on each indicating the number of committee members voting in the affirmative, or negative, or those abstaining; and shall assist in drafting the committee report.

Committee Assistant

c. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a committee assistant. The committee assistant may address the committee offering suggestions regarding procedure, but shall not participate in its deliberations on any issue before the committee as an advocate of one position or view regarding its action. The committee assistant shall assist the committee in securing desired resources.

2. Procedures for Assembly Committee Meetings

- Open Meetings** a. Meetings of assembly committees shall be open to the public (as space permits) provided, however, that the committee may go into executive session at any time in accordance with the Open Meeting Policy, printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Ordinarily, the committee assistant will be expected to remain with the committee in executive session.
- Parliamentary Procedure** b. The deliberations of the committee shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.
- Use of Resources** c. Each committee shall determine the use to be made of the resource material or resource persons available to assembly committees. Each assembly committee shall determine whether or not to permit the distribution of particular materials to the committee members.
- Preparation of Resource Material** d. Resource material (except for previously published books or interpretive brochures), including advice and counsel memoranda, that provides background or advice on items of new business, including commissioners' resolutions, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall not exceed 1,000 words on each item of business referred. This material shall be submitted to the assembly committee leadership team prior to presentation to the assembly committee to which the business has been referred. A hard copy of this resource material, accompanied by a disk copy, shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall consider any request that is made to distribute this resource material to the full assembly.
- Privilege to Speak** e. During the deliberations of the committee, in contrast to public hearings, only the following persons, having been recognized by the moderator, may speak:
- (1) Members of the committee;
 - (2) Committee assistant;
 - (3) Persons with special expertise, including elected members or staff members of General Assembly entities;
 - (4) Overture advocates and signers of commissioners' resolutions;
 - (5) Persons invited by the committee through a majority vote of the committee; and
 - (6) Representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, who may speak to overtures, commissioners' resolutions, or other business on which the Advisory Committee on the Constitution has presented advice or recommendations, or matters that propose amendments to the *Constitution*, or that affect compatibility with other provisions of the *Constitution*.
 - (7) In the event that business being considered by an assembly committee has been referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for advice, representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall be entitled to speak.
 - (8) The committee moderator shall provide that the total time allotted to persons, other than members of the committee, who speak for or against a recommendation be equal so far as possible.
- Overture Advocates/ Signer of Commissioners' Resolution** f. Overture advocates and one signer of each commissioners' resolution shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by any assembly committee considering the matter. The overture advocate or one of the signers of a commissioners' resolution shall be entitled to speak, as an individual (or in cooperation with other overture advocates in a pre-arranged presentation), to the background and intent of the overture or resolution immediately after the motion is made and seconded, placing the overture or resolution on the floor of the committee or subcommittee.

Responsibilities of Overture Advocate g. Overture advocates who have been designated by their presbytery or synod to speak to the response from a General Assembly entity to a referral of an overture shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by the assembly committee considering the response. The overture advocate shall be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture” or as asked for clarification by the committee concerning the original intent of the overture.

3. New Business

Consider Only Matters Referred a. Each assembly committee shall consider only matters referred to it by the General Assembly. No assembly committee may initiate new business except as it relates to the business of the particular assembly committee.

Proposing Amendment to Constitution b. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G-18.0301b and G-13.0112c) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

Constitutional Matters c. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters (*Book of Order*, G-13.0112e) shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter so referred and report its findings and recommendations, which may include proposals for constitutional change, to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The assembly committee shall vote on the recommendations and may amend or decline to approve them. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

Approval Requirement d. Recommendations and reports to the assembly regarding such new business must be approved in assembly committees by three-fourths of the committee members voting on the matter.

Presentation of e. New business, other than that described in this standing rule, must be presented in accordance with Standing Rule A.8.

Referral to Advisory Committee on the Constitution f. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution (*Book of Order*, G-18.0301a and b) or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G-13.0112c) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters (*Book of Order*, G-13.0112e) shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter referred and report its findings and recommendations (which may include proposals for constitutional change) to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

4. Organizational Meeting

a. Ordinarily, the initial meeting of each assembly committee shall be an organizational meeting in private session for up to one hour for the purpose of developing intergroup dynamics and determining procedural matters, such as approval of the committee’s agenda and consideration of the style in which the committee plans to operate.

b. During this executive session, business items before the committee shall not be discussed or acted upon.

5. Public Hearings

Schedule

a. Each committee, with the exception of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall schedule at its convenience one or more public hearings on matters before it.

Time Limits for Presentations

b. The committee may limit the time for the presentation by any person during a public hearing, including an elected member or staff member of an entity of the General Assembly. If the time allotted for the public hearing is not sufficient to accommodate all the persons wishing to speak, a method shall be approved by the assembly committee that ensures that an equal number of persons on each side of an issue have an opportunity to speak. Any person denied the right to speak at the hearing may appeal to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures on the basis that the method employed in selecting speakers was not fair.

Hearing Form

c. Any person who wishes to be heard in a public hearing shall sign up on a hearing form, posted in a public place in the building in which the assembly is being held, no later than the close of business on the second day of the General Assembly or one hour after the subsequent referral of business to the committee by the General Assembly. The location of hearing forms shall be announced during the first session of the assembly. In the event that an issue is expected to be controversial, those wishing to speak shall be asked to indicate whether they wish to speak for or against the recommendation.

6. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures

Responsible for Referral of Business

a. This committee shall neither retain any items of business for its own consideration, nor suppress any matter that comes before it. However, business that substantially duplicates matters already before the assembly may be declined by this committee and reported to the assembly with a statement of the committee's action.

Coordination Between Committees

b. This committee shall keep itself informed of the subjects being considered by the other assembly committees, and, when any subject is taken up by more than one committee, this committee shall advise the moderators of those committees regarding ways to avoid redundant or inconsistent recommendations.

Distribution of Materials

c. This committee shall determine whether or not particular materials may be distributed to the commissioners and delegates to the General Assembly, and specify the time and manner of distribution of any authorized by it. Particular materials distributed in assembly committees shall not be distributed to the full assembly without the approval of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, including the time and manner of distribution.

Requests to Schedule Event

d. The committee shall review requests from entities of the General Assembly, governing bodies, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate, to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.

7. Reports of Assembly Committees

Writing the Report

a. The moderator, vice moderator, committee assistant, and recorder, together with such other persons as the moderator may designate, shall draft the report of the committee following the sample form provided by the Stated Clerk.

Content	b. The reports of assembly committees shall contain only (1) the recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly, and, where necessary, a brief statement of the committee's reasons for such recommendations, and (2) the actions taken by the committee on items referred to the committee for action. Material necessary to identify the item of business and brief explanations may be included in the report. Extensive background information and detail contained in other documents in the hands of the commissioners shall not be included.
Fiscal Implications	c. Each assembly committee shall include with each recommendation or action in its report statements advising the General Assembly whether or not the recommendation or action has fiscal implications affecting any budget under consideration by the assembly.
Identify Entity	d. Recommendation for assembly action, or action taken by the committee, shall identify the entity that is directed to carry out and report back to the General Assembly regarding the matter dealt with by the recommendation or action.
GAMC to Determine Entity	e. When the entity to which an assembly action is directed is a part of the General Assembly Mission Council, such as a division or related entity, the Stated Clerk shall automatically amend the language so that the action is directed to the General Assembly Mission Council. The council shall determine which entity shall carry out the responsibility and report to the assembly on the matter.
Votes Recorded	f. The votes recorded in the assembly committee on each recommendation or action shall be included in the report for the information of the commissioners, but shall be omitted from the <i>Journal</i> of the General Assembly.
Confer with Entity Affected by Action	g. If the report of an assembly committee proposes or records an action affecting the interests of an entity of the General Assembly or of a governing body other than the General Assembly, it shall be the responsibility of that assembly committee to confer with the representative(s) designated by the entity or governing body concerned before proposing such action to the General Assembly or taking such an action.
Minority Report	h. Minority Report <p style="margin-left: 40px;">(1) A minority of the members of an assembly committee, or an individual member of an assembly committee, may submit in writing views that differ from those in the committee report. If the moderator of the committee shall affirm in writing that the positions expressed as recommendations for action by the assembly in a written minority report were presented to the whole committee during its consideration of the matter, the Stated Clerk shall reproduce the minority report and distribute it with the report of the committee.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">(2) A minority report must be appropriate for consideration as a substitute motion (see <i>Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 2000</i>, p. 510).</p>

F

General Assembly Plenary Meeting

- 1. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports**
 - a. Report at Beginning of Each Meeting
 - b. Limits on Debate/Changes in Docket
 - c. Review Minutes
 - d. Requests for Communicating with Assembly
 - e. Referral of Protests
- 2. Reports of Assembly Committees**
 - a. Distribution
 - b. Adequate Docket Time
 - c. Committee Moderators
 - d. Financial Implication
- 3. Minority Reports**
 - a. Must Stand as Full and Complete Substitute
 - b. Reasons Supporting Committee's Recommendation
- 4. Committee Reports on the Budget**
 - a. Per Capita Budget
 - b. Amended Per Capita Budget
- 5. Plenary Meeting Procedures**
 - a. Debate
 - b. Voting Methods
 - c. Mindful of Effort Required to Fulfill Recommendations
 - d. Constitutional Questions
 - e. Cellular Telephones
 - f. Emergency Messages
 - g. Confidentiality
- 6. General Assembly Nominating Committee**
 - a. Presentation of Nominations
 - b. May Decline to Submit Nomination
 - c. Nominating from the Floor
- 7. Docket Time for Special Greetings**
 - a. Head of Communion
 - b. Assignment of Docket Time
- 8. Announcements and Nonofficial Printed Materials**
 - a. Approval for Announcements
 - b. Nonofficial Printed Material
- 9. Distributing Study Documents**
 - a. Distribution
 - b. Responsible Entity Identified
- 10. Forming Social Policy**
- 11. Peaceful Demonstrations**
 - a. Where Allowed
 - b. Prohibited in Building

1. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports

Report at Beginning of Each Meeting

a. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall report at the beginning of each meeting, recommending any necessary changes in order of business and any referrals it may have considered since its last report.

Limits on Debate/Changes in Docket

b. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may, at any time, recommend limits on debates or changes in the docket to facilitate the handling of business. The reports of the committee shall take precedence over any other business, including orders of the day.

Review Minutes	c. This committee shall review the minutes of the General Assembly daily, report to the General Assembly any suggested corrections, and recommend approval of the minutes. The minutes shall be posted on the church's website and two printed copies of the minutes shall be posted in different places during the following day for examination by commissioners. The minutes of the meetings of the General Assembly during the last two days of its session shall be submitted for review and approval within ten days after the adjournment of the General Assembly to a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.
Requests for Communicating with Assembly	d. Requests for the privilege of communicating with the General Assembly shall be referred to this committee, which shall confer with persons making such requests about the time and the manner in which their concerns may be brought to the attention of the General Assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall recommend to the General Assembly a response regarding any possible presentation to the assembly. At the time any such recommendation is acted upon, any commissioner may request that an opposing view be heard, and the assembly shall consider and act upon the matter.
Referral of Protests	e. Protests expressing disagreement with an action or failure to act on the part of the General Assembly shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, which shall decide whether or not the protest is decorous and respectful. Should the committee decide the protest is decorous and respectful, the protest shall be entered in the Minutes. The committee may prepare an answer to be printed with any protest so entered (see <i>Book of Order</i> , G-9.0304).
2. Reports of Assembly Committees	
Distribution	a. Copies of the reports of assembly committees (print or electronic) shall ordinarily be distributed to commissioners no later than the close of the meeting prior to the one at which they are to be considered. The Stated Clerk shall arrange for the reproduction and distribution of reports.
Adequate Docket Time	b. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Stated Clerk, shall docket adequate time for the reports of committees, including ample time for debate and action. If a report requires more time than docketed, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall consult with the committee for additional time to complete consideration of the report.
Committee Moderators	c. Committee moderators should move the approval of recommendations with minimum comment, and material in the commissioners' printed resources shall not be read.
Financial Implication	d. The financial effect of each recommendation on budgets previously approved or under consideration shall be clearly presented at the time that the recommendation is considered by the assembly.
3. Minority Reports	
Must Stand as Full and Complete Substitute	a. In order to be considered by the assembly, a minority report shall not only set aside the majority report but also be able to stand as a full and complete substitution for the majority report recommendations. A minority report shall be moved as a substitute only after the majority report has first been moved. When this happens, the assembly shall first consider (and may amend) the majority report. When consideration of the majority report is completed, the assembly may then consider (and may amend) the minority report. Further efforts to perfect each report shall be held to a minimum in order that the assembly can concentrate instead on the issue of whether to make the proposed substitution.
Reasons Supporting Committee's Recommendation	b. The moderator of the committee, or another member of the committee, shall present reasons supporting the committee's recommendation. They may be presented before any minority report is moved or presented during the narrative report of the committee, or presented during debate on the question of whether or not the substitution shall become the main motion. (See also Standing Rule E.7.h.)

4. Committee Reports on the Budget

Per Capita Budget

a. At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business following the meetings of assembly committees, the assembly shall hear a report on the per capita budget from the committee that has reviewed that budget.

Amended Per Capita Budget

b. On the final day of the assembly, an amended per capita budget that incorporates the financial implications of actions taken by the assembly shall be presented to the assembly for approval.

5. Plenary Meeting Procedures

Debate

a. In debate on any pending matter, no commissioner or delegate shall be allowed to speak more than three minutes until all other commissioners or delegates who desire to speak on the pending matter have been heard.

Voting Methods

b. The General Assembly shall ordinarily decide questions by electronic voting. The Moderator may also call for unanimous consent by voice vote or show of hands. Assembly committees may recommend the use of a consent agenda for portions of their reports. In all cases, the right of any commissioner to call for one of the other forms of voting or to remove any item from the consent agenda shall be preserved.

Mindful of Effort Required to Fulfill Recommendations

c. In view of the relative ease in which studies and programs may be approved, commissioners and other assembly committee members are cautioned to be mindful of the effort required of staff and elected members to carry out the General Assembly's instructions.

Constitutional Questions

d. When the General Assembly is in plenary session, questions that touch upon constitutional matters, including rulings on questions of order involving constitutional matters requested by the Moderator, shall be handled in accordance with *Book of Order*, G-13.0112e. These questions shall be referred in writing by the Moderator to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall consider each matter referred and make recommendations directly to the General Assembly through the Moderator.

Cellular Telephones

e. Use of cellular telephones is prohibited during meetings of the General Assembly and meetings of the assembly committees. During these meetings, pagers may be used only in the silent mode.

Emergency Messages

f. Emergency messages will be relayed to a commissioner or advisory delegate during plenary meetings by way of a written message delivered by one of the Stated Clerk's designated staff or assembly assistants.

Confidentiality

g. Any person permitted to remain during any executive session is expected to agree to be bound by the confidentiality required of commissioners.

6. General Assembly Nominating Committee

Presentation of Nominations

a. Unless the General Assembly shall have made some other provision, the nominating committee shall present to each session of the General Assembly a nominee for election to each vacancy on the entities of the General Assembly that shall exist because of a scheduled end of term, resignation, death, incapacity to act, change of residence, or any other reason.

May Decline to Submit Nomination

b. The General Assembly Nominating Committee may decline to submit a nomination(s) to a particular vacancy(s) when requested to do so by the affected entity because of an expected merger of entity or a transfer of duties between entities in order to reduce the number of persons serving on a particular entity(s).

Nominating from the Floor

c. Nominating from the Floor

(1) Nominations by commissioners shall be in order unless the vacancy is required to be filled upon nomination from some other source.

(2) When any nomination for service on a General Assembly committee, council, or board comes from the floor of the assembly, the commissioner making the nomination will provide the General Assembly Nominating Committee, no later than 48 hours after the convening of the General Assembly, with pertinent information about the person whose name is being presented, as well as the name of the particular person nominated by the nominating committee whose nomination is being challenged. Such information shall be provided on the “Nomination by Commissioner Form” provided for use at the assembly and available from the Stated Clerk.

(3) In the event that there are nominations from the floor, the election shall proceed as follows:

(a) The General Assembly will deal with one challenged position at a time.

(b) The name of the General Assembly Nominating Committee’s nominee shall be placed in nomination by its moderator. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall call upon the commissioner who is placing a nomination from the floor to put that name in nomination.

(c) Once the names are placed in nomination, the order of speaking shall be first, the commissioner or a designee speaking on behalf of the floor nominee and second, the General Assembly Nominating Committee member or a designee speaking to its nominee. Both the commissioner (or designee) and the General Assembly Nominating Committee member (or designee) shall speak from the platform. Such speech shall not exceed three minutes in length. There shall be no other speeches seconding the nomination of any nominee.

(d) Without further discussion or debate, the General Assembly will move to vote.

7. Docket Time for Special Greetings

Head of Communion

a. When the Head of Communion of a member church of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, or the National Council of Churches is in attendance at a session of the General Assembly as an ecumenical advisory delegate or as an ecumenical representative, and proper notice is provided, the assembly shall provide up to five minutes of docket time to each such Head of Communion to present a greeting to the assembly.

Assignment of Docket Time

b. The placing of this greeting on the docket will be assigned by the Stated Clerk.

8. Announcements and Nonofficial Printed Materials

Approval for Announcements

a. Only announcements connected directly with the business of the General Assembly shall be read from the platform and all notices shall be submitted either to the Moderator or the Stated Clerk for approval. Telegrams and special letters shall be reported to the General Assembly only at times to be designated by the Moderator.

Nonofficial Printed Material

b. Printed materials that are not official business before the General Assembly may be distributed at authorized booths in the General Assembly Exhibit Hall. Other distribution is permitted in the mailboxes provided for commissioners and advisory delegates, and also can be handed out twenty-five feet or more from entrances to the building in which the General Assembly meets.

9. Distributing Study Documents

Distribution

a. Whenever the General Assembly itself shall require the distribution of a document for study (whether the proposal originates through the recommendation of an entity, the presentation of an overture or resolution, or arises during the conduct of the assembly's business) with a request for a response (whether the response is sought from individuals, congregations, governing bodies, organizations of any kind, or any combination of these), the study document shall be accompanied by resource materials, bibliography, and aids as set forth in the document "Forming Social Policy," Section 5, printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Along with a response instrument and the resource materials, bibliography, and aids, the document shall be distributed on a schedule that provides for the study guide and all accompanying material to be in the possession of the proposed respondents for a minimum of twelve months before the due date of the response.

Responsible Entity Identified

b. The entity to be responsible for receiving the responses and reporting to the General Assembly the summary of the responses shall be identified in the material. The report on the responses to the study may be presented no earlier than to the General Assembly that convenes in the second year after the session of the General Assembly that approves the study.

10. Forming Social Policy

The entities of the General Assembly, including its committees, commissions, and special committees, shall be governed by the document, "Forming Social Policy" printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*, when that entity is considering making a social witness policy.

11. Peaceful Demonstrations

Where Allowed

a. Peaceful demonstrations shall be allowed twenty-five or more feet outside of the entrances to the building in which General Assembly meets.

Prohibited in Building

b. Spontaneous or planned demonstrations by individuals or groups are prohibited inside the building where the General Assembly meets. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall declare all demonstrations that occur in plenary session out of order and, if demonstrators fail to immediately disband and desist, may recess the General Assembly to a fixed time and place. This rule does not prohibit the spontaneous or planned celebration of an action of the General Assembly or of any event in the life of the church.



General Assembly Meeting Worship

Services of Worship

- a. Moderator of Preceding General Assembly Responsible for Planning
- b. Ecumenical Worship
- c. In Conformity with Directory for Worship

Services of Worship

Moderator of Preceding General Assembly Responsible for Planning

a. The Moderator of the preceding General Assembly shall plan daily worship at the General Assembly, and a worship service including the celebration of the Lord's Supper; and shall provide, in advance, suitable leadership for these periods of worship. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at the first service of worship of the General Assembly session, and the Moderator shall preside on this occasion and preach a sermon or deliver an address. The Moderator shall seek advice to ensure inclusivity in the planning of appropriate daily worship periods. The Moderator shall assure adequate transmittal of information about the planning of worship periods to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Ecumenical Worship

b. The Stated Clerk shall plan an ecumenical period of worship and provide, in advance, suitable leadership for this period of worship.

In Conformity with Directory for Worship

c. The various acts of worship planned for the session of the General Assembly shall be in conformity with the requirements of the Directory for Worship, and shall be developed and led according to the guidance of the document, "Presbyterians at Worship in Mass Assemblies." In the preparation and conduct of all worship services, care shall be taken that all language, sight, hearing, accessibility, and other barriers be eliminated so that there can be full participation of all attendees. [Example: That printed orders of service also be printed in braille and that signing be available.]



Officers and Elections

1. **Moderator of the General Assembly**
 - a. Title/Functions
 - b. Election
 - c. Vice Moderator
 - d. Vacancy

2. **Stated Clerk of the General Assembly**
 - a. Title/Functions
 - b. Election
 - c. Acting Stated Clerk
 - d. Associate Stated Clerks

1. Moderator of the General Assembly

Title/Functions

- a. Title and Functions of the Moderator at the General Assembly

(1) The Moderator of the General Assembly is an ecclesiastical officer, along with the Stated Clerk, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A). The ministry of the Moderator is grounded in the ministry of baptized persons and in the particular ordained ministry of elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

(2) The title of the Moderator is “The Moderator of the [number] General Assembly [(year)] of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”

(3) The Moderator of the General Assembly is a commissioner of the General Assembly.

(4) When the Moderator presides at the assembly, it is to be a sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church. During the period between assemblies, the Moderator serves as an ambassador of the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, telling the story of the church’s life and upholding the people of God through prayer.

(5) The Moderator shall preside over the General Assembly that elects him or her, and over the meetings of the next General Assembly until a successor is elected. The Moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the governing body (*Book of Order*, G-9.0202).

(6) The Moderator and the Vice Moderator shall submit a written report of their work to the session of the General Assembly at which their successors are installed.

Election

- b. Election of the Moderator

(1) Each person nominated to serve as Moderator of the General Assembly must be a commissioner to the General Assembly. Action by presbyteries to endorse candidates for Moderator of the General Assembly shall not take place until after the adjournment of the immediately preceding assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall provide resourcing and orientation for Moderatorial candidates.

(2) Ordinarily, no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the assembly, the Moderatorial candidates will announce the name of a commissioner each has selected to offer to the assembly to confirm as Vice Moderator.

(3) The following campaign procedures shall be observed:

(a) Candidates should budget campaign spending of no more than \$1,500, excluding travel and meeting expenses related to their candidacy. Each candidate shall submit to the Stated Clerk an itemized statement of expenses, including travel and meeting expenses related

to his/her candidacy and in kind contributions. This statement shall be submitted to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly prior to the convening of the General Assembly. This information shall be distributed to commissioners and advisory delegates prior to the election of the Moderator. The statement of expenses of all candidates shall be kept on file in the Office of the General Assembly following the meeting of the General Assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall not reimburse a candidate for campaign expenses, but shall assume expenses involved in printing and distributing material submitted for information packets as outlined in Standing Rule H.1.b.(3)(e).

(b) In order to encourage reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit in the selection of the Moderator, no candidate shall send a mailing of any campaign materials, print or electronic, to commissioners and/or advisory delegates or permit such a mailing to be sent, nor shall candidates or their advocates contact commissioners and/or advisory delegates by telephone.

(c) Distribution of written campaign materials at General Assembly outside of the candidate's room shall be limited to printed materials placed in mailboxes.

(d) On the day of the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall provide a room for each candidate where commissioners and advisory delegates may meet and talk with the candidate.

(e) Not less than fifteen days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish for commissioners and advisory delegates an electronic information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Moderator who is known to the Stated Clerk and who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate that includes a statement regarding the candidate's sense of call to the office,

(ii) A written presentation by the presbytery having jurisdiction over the candidate, if that governing body has endorsed the candidate,

(iii) An announcement of the commissioner each candidate has selected to be presented to the assembly for confirmation as Vice Moderator if the candidate is elected,

(iv) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the Stated Clerk.

The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but all material including photographs submitted for each presentation shall be provided in electronic format as well as print. The material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no less than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution, and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Moderator, if elected.

Each proposed Vice-Moderator candidate who wishes to be included may send biographical information and a photograph in electronic format.

(4) The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be elected in the following manner:

(a) When the General Assembly is ready to elect its Moderator, only one speech shall be made placing in nomination the name of each nominee. The speech shall be made by a commissioner to the General Assembly. Such speech shall not exceed five minutes in length. There shall be no speeches seconding the nomination of any nominee. The order of speaking shall be determined by lot, the drawing conducted by the most recent Moderator attending the General Assembly.

(b) After nominations are closed, each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to address the General Assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the concerns that nominee feels to be the most important for the church. The nominees shall speak in the same order as the presentation of nominating speeches.

(c) At the conclusion of all the presentations by the nominees, they shall respond to questions from the floor. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who spoke first

in the original presentation, and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they spoke earlier. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly.

(d) Where there is only one nominee for Moderator, the election may be by acclamation. Where there is more than one, the election may be by secret ballot in one of the following ways:

(i) Each commissioner shall vote by means of an electronic voting system. The Stated Clerk shall advise the Moderator of the totals. The Moderator shall announce the result of the vote as tabulated. If no nominee has received a majority of the whole vote, another vote shall be taken in the same manner. When one nominee shall have received a majority, the Moderator shall announce the result and declare the nominee to be elected.

(ii) If the assembly votes to use paper ballots, the Stated Clerk shall provide ballots and assign no fewer than ten commissioners to act as tellers, collecting and counting the ballots. The results shall be given to the Stated Clerk who shall report the totals to the Moderator who shall announce them to the assembly.

(5) The Stated Clerk shall provide a service of installation for the newly elected Moderator as the last item of business at the session in which the Moderator is elected. The family of the newly elected Moderator and all present previous Moderators shall be invited to the platform. The service shall use the order of service for “Installation of Governing Body Officers and Staff” from the *Book of Occasional Services*. The processional banner of the Moderator shall precede the newly elected Moderator into the assembly. The Moderator’s cross and stole shall be presented by the most recent serving Moderator. A representative of the presbytery of the Moderator’s membership shall ask the questions of installation. The newly elected Moderator invites a person to lead the prayer of installation. The most recent serving Moderator gives the charge, a hymn is sung by the assembly, and the newly elected Moderator gives the benediction.

Vice Moderator

c. Vice Moderator

(1) Ordinarily, no later than forty-five days before the convening of the assembly, a Moderatorial candidate shall announce the selection of a commissioner who will be proposed to serve as Vice Moderator. At the next business session of the assembly following the election of the Moderator, the Moderator shall propose to the assembly the name of the commissioner for Vice Moderator. After a brief speech by the person selected, the assembly shall immediately proceed to vote on his or her confirmation. Should there be no confirmation, the Moderator shall bring another commissioner’s name for confirmation to the next business session of the assembly. The Stated Clerk shall provide a service of installation for the newly elected Vice Moderator.

(2) The Vice Moderator represents the assembly at the request of the Moderator. When the Vice Moderator serves in this capacity, all those duties incumbent on the Moderator shall be expected of him/her.

(3) The Moderator may request the Vice Moderator to preside and to assist in the performance of other functions of the Moderator during and following the General Assembly.

Vacancy

d. Vacancy in the Office of the Moderator or Vice Moderator

(1) Should the office of the Moderator of the General Assembly become vacant, the Vice Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator. In such circumstance, all constitutional obligations and functions as prescribed by the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and the *Book of Order* shall be incumbent upon the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly.

(2) Should the office of the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly also become vacant, the most recent living Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator as specified in the *Constitution* of the church.

2. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Title/Functions

a. Title and Functions of the Stated Clerk at the General Assembly

(1) The title of the Stated Clerk is “The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and may be used by the incumbent until a successor is elected and takes office.

(2) The Stated Clerk is accountable, through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, to the General Assembly for the performance of the duties of the office, and shall present to each meeting of the General Assembly a report on the state of the church.

(3) The Stated Clerk is responsible for all matters related to the sessions of the General Assembly and all other matters relative to and arising from the General Assembly for which no other assignment has been made.

(4) The Stated Clerk shall also be responsible for guidance of the procedures for candidates seeking the office of Moderator, and for supervision of the election of each Moderator.

(5) In accordance with directives from previous General Assemblies and in consultations with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Mission Council, and other General Assembly agencies, the Stated Clerk is authorized to decide on matters pertaining to facilities and special events that must be established before the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall receive all reports, communications, overtures, and any other materials appropriate for General Assembly consideration. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, for presentation to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, a referral of such items of business coming before the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.3.e.).

(7) The Stated Clerk shall prepare for consideration of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a proposed docket for the General Assembly’s consideration of its business (Standing Rule C.4.a.). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall present the proposed docket to the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures so that it may recommend a docket to the commissioners at the first business session. The docket presented to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall provide a time early in the General Assembly for a report by the Stated Clerk on the state of the church, and for a report by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

(8) The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly the number of assembly committees and a name for each committee after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities (Standing Rule C.1.). The Stated Clerk shall present the committee structure to the General Assembly for ratification at the first business session. Each commissioner and advisory delegate shall be assigned by random selection to one assembly committee at least forty-five days before the opening date of the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.2.).

(9) The Stated Clerk shall provide opportunity for orienting the commissioners, advisory delegates, and others taking part in the session of the General Assembly. The use of *Robert’s Rules of Order*, sources of parliamentary advice, and the availability of resource persons and materials to facilitate their work should be part of the orientation.

(10) The Stated Clerk shall be the parliamentarian for the meetings of the General Assembly, or arrange for the service of a professional parliamentarian.

(11) The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the governing bodies and agencies of the assembly, persons who presented business to the assembly, and others affected by the assembly’s actions, a report on actions of the General Assembly on matters pertaining to their concerns. The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the presbyteries all assembly actions on which the presbyteries are requested to take action.

(12) As soon as practicable after the adjournment of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish the assembly's proceedings and other documents as the assembly may direct in an appropriate format (i.e. print or electronic) to be determined by the Stated Clerk.

Election

b. Election of the Stated Clerk

(1) The *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* requires the election of a Stated Clerk and the standing rules describe the procedures for the election. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected for a term of four years and is eligible for reelection to additional four-year terms. The Stated Clerk is accountable to the General Assembly for the performance of the assigned functions.

(2) The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected in the manner described in this standing rule. No member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly or other persons involved in this procedure as a member of the search committee or as a person providing staff services to the committee may be considered for nomination as Stated Clerk. The incumbent Stated Clerk may not participate in any way in the election process described in this standing rule. In the year there is an election of a Stated Clerk, the Moderator shall appoint a temporary Stated Clerk during the period of the election at the General Assembly.

(3) The General Assembly that meets prior to the end of the term of a Stated Clerk shall elect a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(a) The slate of nominees for the review/nomination committee shall consist of the following: three members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (nominated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, one of whom shall serve as moderator of the committee), one member of the General Assembly Mission Council (nominated by the General Assembly Mission Council), and five at-large members nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee in the following categories: one governing body stated clerk and four persons (two elders and two clergy) from among commissioners who have attended an assembly in the past six years. The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall present to the assembly for election the slate of nominees for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. The slate presented shall reflect the denomination's commitment to inclusiveness.

(b) Nominations from the floor for the nomination committee shall be in order following the distribution of the printed list of proposed nominees by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and a declaration by the Moderator that the names are in nomination. Names placed in nomination from the floor shall be in opposition to a particular name of an at-large member placed in nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and must be in the same category (H.2.b.(3)(a)). More than one person may be placed in nomination from the floor in opposition to an at-large nominee.

(c) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for providing the nomination committee with an up-to-date position description.

(d) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will ensure that an adequate budget for the nomination process is provided in the Office of the General Assembly and shall designate staff services for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(e) The nomination committee shall begin its work no later than 300 days before the start of the assembly that will elect the Stated Clerk.

(f) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for conducting the end-of-term evaluation of the Stated Clerk.

(g) The nominating committee shall announce that persons seeking the position of Stated Clerk shall file a completed application form and a resume or personal information form (PIF) with the committee 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly.

If the incumbent wants to be considered, he or she will notify the committee in

writing and submit a current resume or PIF 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall provide a copy of the end-of-term evaluation to the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee.

(h) Additional written material may be requested by the committee. No one may be nominated to serve as Stated Clerk who has not provided an application to the committee.

(i) The committee shall review and evaluate all applications to determine the constitutional eligibility of the candidates. Any candidate who is determined to not be eligible will be notified in writing within forty-five days of receipt of their resume or PIF.

(j) The committee shall interview all eligible candidates using the same methodology and select one as the committee's recommendation. All members of the committee shall ordinarily participate in the interview. The committee shall declare its nominee no later than sixty days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(k) Any of the applicants for the position of Stated Clerk, including the incumbent Stated Clerk if not the nominee of the committee, who wish to be placed in nomination against the nominee of the committee shall declare their intention to the committee to do so no later than forty-five days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(l) At the convening of the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly shall distribute to commissioners and advisory delegates an information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Stated Clerk who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate, including a statement regarding the candidate's sense of call to the office,

(ii) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the committee based upon issues that will be before the church as presented in business to be considered by the General Assembly.

(iii) The material submitted shall be typewritten on paper 8-1/2 x 11 inches in size. The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but the copy submitted for each presentation shall be provided in one color on one side of one sheet. The material shall be submitted to the Office of the General Assembly no less than thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(m) The candidates may not distribute any other materials, print or electronic, including flyers, buttons, tokens or other objects that would denote a campaign for the office of Stated Clerk.

(n) Other organizations supporting the candidacy of a particular candidate may not distribute materials electronically, through the mail, or at the General Assembly with the knowledge, support, or permission of that candidate. Should a candidate discover that an organization is advocating or campaigning for him or her, it is expected that the candidate will request that organization to cease its activities. The same expectation will be true of organizations that are critical of a particular candidate for Stated Clerk.

(o) Each candidate will be provided a place to meet and talk with commissioners and advisory delegates two days before the election. Only information provided by the Office of the General Assembly may be distributed in those rooms. Other materials, apart from that packet, are not permitted. Each candidate for Stated Clerk will be allowed to post the times when he/she will be available for conversation in that room.

(p) Any questions concerning interpretation of the election process outlined in H.2.b. shall be determined by the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(4) The General Assembly, by majority vote, shall elect the Stated Clerk in the following manner:

(a) Within forty-eight hours of the convening of the assembly, the Stated Clerk Review/Nomination Committee shall place in nomination a single nominee.

(b) The Moderator shall then invite other nominations from those who have completed the nomination process. Only one speech, made by a commissioner or a member of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee not to exceed five minutes in length, shall be made to nominate each nominee. There shall be no speech seconding any nomination. Each person nominated from the floor shall reaffirm a willingness to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(c) In the event there are no other nominations, the election shall proceed immediately as follows:

(i) The nominee for Stated Clerk shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee's views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

(ii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. Time allocated shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominee for Stated Clerk. The time allocated should not exceed fifteen minutes, after which the voting shall take place.

(d) In the event there are other nominations, the election shall proceed as follows:

(i) The election of the Stated Clerk shall take place as the first order of business on the next to last day of the assembly's session.

(ii) Each nominee shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee's views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The nominees shall speak in the same order as the presentation of nominating speeches.

(iii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominees for Stated Clerk. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who was nominated first and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they were nominated. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly, after which the voting shall take place.

(5) Should there be a vacancy in the office of the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose to the assembly, if the assembly is in session, members for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee, or shall propose to the Moderator for appointment, if the assembly is not in session, to a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. This committee shall be composed of members as outlined in Standing Rule H.2.b. and begin the process of a search for a candidate for Stated Clerk. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an acting Stated Clerk until such time as a Stated Clerk is elected.

(6) The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee shall be dismissed at the adjournment of the session of the General Assembly at which the committee presents a nominee for Stated Clerk.

(7) A new Stated Clerk shall normally assume office thirty days after the adjournment of the assembly. A longer period of transition between Stated Clerks may be negotiated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, but shall not exceed ninety days.

**Acting Stated
Clerk**

c. Acting Stated Clerk

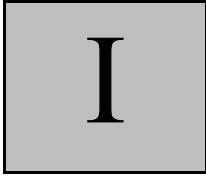
In case of the incapacity, resignation, or death of the Stated Clerk, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an Acting Stated Clerk until such time as the

Stated Clerk is able to resume the duties or the General Assembly elects a new Stated Clerk. The person so designated may be one of the Associate Stated Clerks or another person eligible for election as Stated Clerk.

Associate Stated Clerks

d. Associate Stated Clerks

The General Assembly may elect one or more Associate Stated Clerks as the General Assembly shall determine. The Stated Clerk shall nominate persons to fill each such office after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be four years, subject to reelection at the pleasure of the General Assembly.



General Assembly Arrangements

1. **Date and Place of Meeting**
 - a. Determining Date and Place
 - b. Presbytery Invitations
 - c. Criteria
 - d. Rotating the Place of the Meeting
 2. **Meeting Arrangements**
 - a. Arrangements and Housing
 - b. Assembly Assistants
 - c. Simultaneous Interpretation
 - d. Sponsorship of Events
 3. **Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses**
 - a. Reimbursement/Per Diem
 - b. Reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner
 4. **Assembly Meeting Work Group**
 - a. Membership
 - b. Responsibilities
-

1. Date and Place of Meeting

Determining Date and Place

a. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall meet on the date and at the place fixed by the preceding General Assembly for a period, which shall be known as a session of the General Assembly, preferably between May 15 and July 31, subject to the possibility of change (see Standing Rule I.4.b.(10) and *Book of Order*, G-13.0104, for exceptions). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall recommend to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any necessary changes in dates and places of meetings previously set. Should action regarding date or place of meeting become necessary at a time when the General Assembly is not in session, this committee is empowered to fix a new date or place of meeting.

Presbytery Invitations

b. The host body for any session of the General Assembly shall be a presbytery(s) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Any presbytery that desires to invite the General Assembly to meet within its bounds shall forward an invitation to the Stated Clerk no later than May 1 of the year that is seven years prior to the earliest effective date of the invitation.

Criteria

c. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the criteria that render a place an eligible site for a meeting of the General Assembly, including the requirement that all meeting arrangements shall be made to facilitate full participation by persons with disabilities. These criteria may be obtained from the Office of the General Assembly.

Rotating the Place of the Meeting

d. In order to distribute the benefits experienced from hosting a General Assembly meeting throughout the church, the place of meeting shall be rotated among the following four areas (unless prevented by financial or other practical considerations):

- Area A: Synod of Alaska/Northwest, Synod of the Pacific, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Synod of the Rocky Mountains, Synod of the Southwest;
 - Area B: Synod of the Sun, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Synod of Mid-America;
 - Area C: Synod of Living Waters, Synod of Lincoln Trails, Synod of the Covenant;
 - Area D: Synod of South Atlantic, Synod of Puerto Rico, Synod of the Northeast, Synod of the Trinity, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.
-

2. Meeting Arrangements

Arrangements and Housing

a. The Stated Clerk shall oversee all arrangements for the meeting and housing of the General Assembly, including: the assignment of time and place for all special events and public meetings connected with or scheduled at the time of the General Assembly; the assignment of time and place for exhibits at the General Assembly; and the assignment of commissioners, advisory delegates, and others to hotels and other accommodations.

Assembly Assistants

b. The Stated Clerk shall appoint persons to serve as assembly assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. Persons appointed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly. Assembly assistants shall be assigned to particular tasks to facilitate the work of the General Assembly. The appointments shall be made in accordance with *Book of Order*, G-4.0403.

Simultaneous Interpretation

c. The Stated Clerk shall arrange for the simultaneous interpretation of proceedings into Spanish and Korean languages for any participant during plenary meetings of the General Assembly. This service shall also be provided during assembly committee meetings, services of worship, and other events during the assembly for commissioners, advisory delegates, ecumenical guests, and, when possible, for other participants.

Sponsorship of Event

d. An event scheduled before, during, or immediately following a session of the General Assembly and extending an invitation to any or all participants of the assembly shall clearly identify the sponsor or sponsoring organization(s) in any invitations, announcements, or other publicity about the event.

3. Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses

Reimbursement/ Per Diem

a. The approved reimbursement for the travel expenses, food, lodging, and other approved expenses of commissioners at the sessions of the General Assembly shall be paid by the treasurer or the treasurer's designee. The treasurer shall have the authority to deposit funds for such purposes in a bank or trust company where the General Assembly is to be in session. Commissioners shall be reimbursed by means of individual checks upon receipt of a voucher on a form provided by the treasurer. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly the amount of any per diem. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall set the per diem, and the Stated Clerk shall publish such per diem in the materials (print or electronic) provided to the commissioners. The treasurer shall determine the manner in which such checks shall be distributed and shall announce the place or places where such checks may be cashed.

Reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner

b. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse an alternate commissioner for cost of meals (as specified in the per diem expenses for the particular session of the assembly to which the person is commissioned) during the period in which the alternate is actually seated as a commissioner. The total of the payments to the two persons shall not be larger than payment to a single commissioner attending the full assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse either the original commissioner or the alternate who replaced the original commissioner for the costs of transportation and other approved expenses, but not both. It shall be the responsibility of the two individuals, with the assistance of the presbytery that elected them, to determine an appropriate division of the costs, whether reimbursement was in cash or a prepaid ticket was provided. Both persons shall be listed in the *Journal* as commissioners, with an indication of the period during which they served.

4. Assembly Meeting Work Group

Membership

a. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall establish a work group on assembly arrangements to be composed of designated members from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council. The moderator of the

Committee on Local Arrangements, and the moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures (when selected) shall be nonvoting members of the committee at all meetings in which matters will be considered that affect their particular work. This work group shall be assigned responsibilities (1) through (10) in this Standing Rule I.4.b.

Responsibilities**b. Responsibilities**

- (1) Review the evaluation of each General Assembly session secured by the Stated Clerk.
- (2) Outline the programs for future General Assemblies sufficiently in advance to ensure an orderly progression of themes and emphases and to ensure the appointment of significant speakers and other program participants.
- (3) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed docket for the next session of the General Assembly.
- (4) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed referral of each item of business to an appropriate assembly committee.
- (5) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee.
- (6) Consult with the Moderator regarding the planning of all worship at the General Assembly.
- (7) Coordinate the programmatic aspects of each General Assembly session, ensuring that adequate time is provided for the business that must be transacted.
- (8) Review requests from entities of the General Assembly, governing bodies, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.
- (9) Prepare a report, including recommendations on the docket and the referral of assembly business, to be printed and distributed with other materials provided to commissioners.
- (10) Review and present to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any changes in dates and places of meetings previously set.



Special Meetings of the General Assembly

1. Method of Calling

- a. Petition's Subject Matter
- b. Resolution Form
- c. Not Called for Discussion Only
- d. Resolved 1 or 2 Days
- e. Full Text on Each Page of Petition
- f. Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- g. 120-day Requirement

2. Signatures

- a. Verification of PC(USA) Membership
- b. Verification of Signature
- c. Removal Request
- d. Failure to Reply
- e. Verification Process Report

3. Date and Location

- a. Report of Decision to Call Meeting
- b. COGA Sets Date and Place
- c. Expense Plan
- d. Letter of Notification

1. Method of Calling

The *Book of Order* permits the calling of special meetings of the General Assembly (G-13.0104). The method of calling a special meeting is the required number of commissioners submitting a petition with the full text of the resolution to the Moderator of the General Assembly.

Petition's Subject Matter

a. A special meeting may be called providing the petition's subject matter falls within the General Assembly's responsibilities. (G-13.0103).

Resolution Form

b. The urgent matter shall be brought in the form of a resolution or resolutions, stating the specific action proposed to be taken by the commissioners at the special meeting and shall include the reasons for proposing the decision to be made.

Not Called for Discussion Only

c. A special meeting may not be called for the purpose of discussion only.

Resolved in 1 or 2 Days

d. The matters should be able to be resolved in a session of one or two days.

Full Text on Each Page of Petition

e. The full text of the resolution shall appear on each page of the signed petitions.

Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures

f. The Moderator may consult with the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution meets the criteria for a called meeting or concerning the specific actions in the proposed resolution. This may take place by conference call.

120-day Requirement

g. Resolutions requiring or proposing constitutional interpretation are subject to the 120-day requirement in G-13.0112c. The 120-day requirement begins upon receipt of the petition by the Moderator. The Moderator may consult with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution requires a constitutional interpretation.

2. Signatures

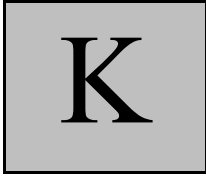
The *Book of Order* establishes the minimum number of signatures to require a called meeting. The Moderator, upon receipt of the petition, shall ask the Stated Clerk to complete the following within thirty days:

- Verification of PC(USA) Membership Verification of Signature**
- a. Send each presbytery stated clerk or clerk of session a letter verifying the current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) membership of the individual signatory to the petition.
- b. Send each signatory to the petition a letter of verification asking the commissioner to verify the signature on the petition and if the commissioner concurs with the purpose of the request as stated in the resolution.
- Removal Request**
- c. During the verification process, a commissioner may request removal of his or her name from the petition by notifying the Stated Clerk.
- Failure to Reply**
- d. After all reasonable efforts to establish contact have been made, the name of a commissioner failing to reply to the letter of verification shall be removed from the petition.
- Verification Process Report**
- e. The Stated Clerk shall report to the Moderator the results of the verification process.

3. Date and Location

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has the responsibility to fix the date and place of a meeting of the General Assembly when the General Assembly is not in session.

- Report of Decision to Call Meeting**
- a. Upon receiving certification from the Stated Clerk that the petition has met the requirements of the *Book of Order* and the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, the Moderator shall report to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) the decision to call the meeting.
- COGA Sets Date and Place Expense Plan**
- b. The COGA shall set the date and place of a called meeting.
- c. The COGA shall submit to the called meeting a plan to pay for its expenses. This plan shall be considered to be part of the business of the special meeting.
- Letter of Notification**
- d. The letter of notification of the called meeting will be mailed to the commissioners no later than sixty days before the start of the meeting.



Commissions, Special Committees, and Special Administrative Review

- | | |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commissions and Special Committees <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Purpose b. Considerations for Creating c. Appointed by Moderator d. Length of Existence and Reports e. Review f. Representation at General Assembly and Funding g. Coordination h. Staff Services | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Special Administrative Review of Synods <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Three Ways to Review b. Written Request for Review |
|---|---|

1. Commissions and Special Committees

Purpose

a. Unless otherwise specified in the assembly’s action, any body or group established by the General Assembly to carry out decisions of the assembly, or instructed to report to the assembly, or make recommendations to the assembly, or both, shall be known as a commission or special committee (see *Book of Order*, G-9.0500). The purposes of a special committee must be ones that cannot be undertaken by the work of an existing corporation or entity under its assigned responsibilities. Due to the financial and staffing implications, before authorizing the establishment of a special committee, the assembly shall hear a report from the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, which shall have consulted with the most closely related entity and a member designated from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, as to whether the work to be assigned to the special committee could more effectively and economically be assigned to that entity.

Considerations for Creating

b. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall be notified by any assembly committee whenever there is discussion about the creation of a special committee. In discussing the possible creation of a special committee, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall hear from related corporation or entity representatives as well as representatives from the assembly committee considering the proposal. Financial implications of special committees should accompany any recommendation for action by the assembly. The written comment of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures must be incorporated as background in the report of the assembly committee containing a recommendation to create a special committee.

Appointed by Moderator

c. Any commission or special committee authorized by the General Assembly, unless otherwise designated, shall be appointed by the Moderator in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee. The Moderator is also authorized to fill by appointment any vacancies that may occur in any of such commissions or committees. No minister, elder, or other person shall be appointed to serve on more than one such commission or committee except by consent of the General Assembly.

Length of Existence and Reports

d. Special committees shall complete their work within two years unless the General Assembly that authorized its establishment specifies a different period. Special committees shall submit a written report to the General Assembly that shall include a recommendation to extend its existence (if beyond the period authorized), or, at the conclusion of its work, a

recommendation for dismissal. Special committees shall also publish interim reports, no less than annually, by electronic or print means. Such interim reports shall indicate the progress made by the special committee on its assigned tasks and offer a timeline and process for completing its work. When a special committee requests an extension of its existence, the request shall be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. After consultation with the most closely related assembly entity, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will recommend to the assembly whether the project shall be reassigned to the entity, remain with the special committee, or be terminated. Any extension to its existence shall require a two-thirds vote of the commissioners.

Review

e. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall review the work of each special committee and include in its report to each session of the General Assembly a summary of the work being carried out by each special committee, including any recommendation to transfer the work assigned to a special committee elsewhere, or to dismiss the committee. A special committee shall not consider matters currently referred to another special committee or entity.

Representation at General Assembly and Funding

f. The expenses of one member of a special committee or commission to attend the General Assembly session to make any oral presentation of the report of the committee or commission that may be docketed, and to respond to questions concerning that report shall be paid by the General Assembly through the regular budget of the committee or commission. This member shall be designated as the corresponding member. The exceptions to this rule are as follows:

(1) At the General Assembly meeting in which the final report of the committee or commission is presented, the moderator, who shall serve as the corresponding member of the committee or commission, and one other designated member of the committee or commission shall attend to present the report and serve as resource to the committee considering the report. Unless otherwise approved in advance by the Moderator of the preceding General Assembly in consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (due to special circumstances), only the expenses of these two authorized representatives shall be reimbursed by the General Assembly through the regular budget of the committee or commission.

(2) In the event of a minority report, a designated member of the committee's or commission's minority shall also be invited to attend. The expenses of this member shall be reimbursed by the General Assembly through the regular budget of the committee or commission.

(3) Other members of special committees or commissions, not otherwise referred to in this standing rule, shall be reimbursed for attendance at a General Assembly session only if they are individually involved in hearings or other official purposes.

Coordination

g. Any such commission or committee shall consult with and advise the General Assembly Mission Council on the progress of its work in order to assist the council in its responsibility for coordinating the work of the entities of the General Assembly and the work of presbyteries and synods.

Staff Services

h. The Stated Clerk shall provide staff services and other assistance to such commissions and committees in order to facilitate and coordinate their work. The work of commissions and special committees shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly.

2. Special Administrative Review of Synods**Three Ways to Review**

a. The General Assembly has authority to undertake special administrative review of synods (*Book of Order*, G-13.0103k). There are three ways the General Assembly could be requested to consider such review:

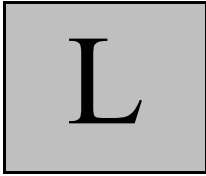
(1) by an overture from a presbytery or synod (G-11.0103t(3); G-12.0102o(2); Standing Rule A.3.;

(2) by request from one of the General Assembly entities (Standing Rule A.2.); or

(3) By a commissioners' resolution (Standing Rule A.8.). If such overture, request, or resolution is acted on favorably by the General Assembly, the General Assembly could undertake Special Administrative Review (G-9.0408–.0410) through commission or special committee as provided for in Standing Rule K.5. and G-9.0501–.0503.

**Written Request
for Review**

b. Special administrative review of an alleged synod irregularity or delinquency may occur when a written request for such review is received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly from another synod or a presbytery within the synod of the alleged irregularity or delinquency. If the request relates to an alleged delinquency, the request can only be filed with the Stated Clerk after the failure or refusal of the synod to cure the alleged delinquency at its next meeting, having been requested to do so in writing prior to the meeting. When the request for special administrative review is received, the Stated Clerk shall convene a meeting of the Moderator of the General Assembly, the moderator of the General Assembly Mission Council, and the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. If the request is in order and all the moderators agree that for the good of the church the special administrative review needs to be undertaken before the next meeting of the General Assembly (when the request could be considered by the whole General Assembly), the Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a special committee (Standing Rule K.5.) to conduct a special administrative review in accordance with G-9.0408–.0410 and report its findings and recommendations to the next General Assembly.



Amendment or Suspension of the Standing Rules

1. **Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules**
 2. **Amending the Standing Rules**
 3. **Suspending the Standing Rules**
-

Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules

1. In consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend to the next session of the General Assembly any changes in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly deemed necessary. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before proposing to the General Assembly any amendment to the standing rules.

Amending the Standing Rules

2. The Standing Rules of the General Assembly may be amended by a majority vote of the commissioners present and voting. A motion to amend the rules is debatable.

Suspending the Standing Rules

3. A motion to suspend the standing rules is not debatable and shall require a two-thirds vote of the total enrollment of the commissioners.

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838-1869

A—SUCCESSION OF MODERATORS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1789-1837

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1789	*John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1789	*John Rodgers, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1790	*Robert Smith, D.D.	New Castle	Philadelphia, Pa.
1791	*John Woodhull, D.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1792	*John King, D.D.	Carlisle	Carlisle, Pa.
1793	*James Latta, D.D.	New Castle	Philadelphia, Pa.
1794	*Alexander McWhorter, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1795	*John McKnight, D.D.	New York	Carlisle, Pa.
1796	*Robert Davidson, D.D.	Carlisle	Philadelphia, Pa.
1797	*William Mackay Tennent, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1798	*John Blair Smith, D.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1799	*S. Stanhope Smith, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Winchester, Va.
1800	*Joseph Clark, D.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1801	*Nathaniel Irwin	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1802	*Azel Roe, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1803	*James Hall, D.D.	Concord	Philadelphia, Pa.
1804	*James Francis Armstrong	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1805	*James Richards, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1806	*Samuel Miller, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1807	*Archibald Alexander, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1808	*Philip Milledoler, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1809	*Drury Lacy	Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1810	*John Brodhead Romeyn, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1811	*Eliphalet Nott, D.D., LL.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1812	*Andrew Flinn, D.D.	Harmony	Philadelphia, Pa.
1813	*Samuel Blatchford, D.D.	Columbia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1814	*James Inglis, D.D.	Baltimore	Philadelphia, Pa.
1815	*William Neill, D.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1816	*James Blythe, D.D.	W. Lexington	Philadelphia, Pa.
1817	*Jonas Coe, D.D.	Columbia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1818	*Jacob Jones Janeway, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1819	*John Holt Rice, D.D.	Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1820	*John McDowell, D.D.	Jersey	Philadelphia, Pa.
1821	*William Hill, D.D.	Winchester	Philadelphia, Pa.
1822	*Obadiah Jennings, D.D.	Steubenville	Philadelphia, Pa.
1823	*John Chester, D.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1824	*Ashbel Green, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1825	*Stephen N. Rowan, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1826	*Thomas McAuley, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1827	*Francis Herron, D.D.	Ohio	Philadelphia, Pa.
1828	*Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1829	*Benjamin Holt Rice, D.D.	Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1830	*Ezra Fisk, D.D.	Hudson	Philadelphia, Pa.
1831	*Nathan S.S. Beman, D.D., LL.D.	Troy	Philadelphia, Pa.
1832	*James Hoge, D.D.	Columbus	Philadelphia, Pa.
1833	*William Anderson McDowell, D.D.	Charleston	Philadelphia, Pa.
1834	*Philip Lindsley, D.D.	W. Tennessee	Philadelphia, Pa.
1835	*William Wirt Phillips, D.D.	New York	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1836	*John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D.	Harmony	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1837	*David Elliott, D.D., LL.D.	Ohio	Philadelphia, Pa.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1838	*Wm. Swan Plumer, D.D., LL.D.	East Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1839	*Joshua Lacy Wilson, D.D.	Cincinnati	Philadelphia, Pa.
1840	*William Morrison Engles, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1841	*Robt. J. Breckenridge, DD, LLD	Baltimore	Philadelphia, Pa.
1842	*John Todd Edgar, D.D.	Nashville	Philadelphia, Pa.
1843	*Gardiner Spring, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1844	*George Junkin, D.D., LL.D.	Oxford	Louisville, Ky.
1845	*John Michael Krebs, D.D.	New York	Cincinnati, Ohio
1846	*Charles Hodge, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1847	*Jas. H. Thornwell, D.D., LL.D.	Charleston	Richmond, Va.
1848	*Alexander T. McGill, DD, L&D	Ohio	Baltimore, Md.
1849	*Nicholas Murray, D.D.	Elizabethtown	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1850	*Aaron W. Leland, D.D.	Charleston	Cincinnati, Ohio
1851	*Edward P. Humphrey, D.D., LL.D.	Louisville	St. Louis, Mo.
1852	*John Chase Lord, D.D.	Buffalo City	Charleston, S.C.
1853	*John Clark Young, D.D.	Transylvania	Philadelphia, Pa.
1854	*Henry Augustus Boardman, D.D.	Philadelphia	Buffalo, N.Y.
1855	*Nathan Lewis Rice, D.D.	St. Louis	Nashville, Tenn.
1856	*Francis McFarland, D.D.	Lexington	New York, N.Y.
1857	*Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D.D.	Burlington	Lexington, Ky.
1858	*Wm. Anderson Scott, D.D., LL.D.	California	New Orleans, La.
1859	*William L. Breckenridge, D.D.	Louisville	Indianapolis, Ind.
1860	*John Williams Yeomans, D.D.	Northumberland	Rochester, N.Y.
1861	*Jno. Chester Backus, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Philadelphia, Pa.
1862	*Charles C. Beatty, D.D., LL.D.	Steubenville	Columbus, Ohio
1863	*John Hunter Morrison, D.D.	Lodiana	Peoria, Ill.
1864	*James Wood, D.D.	Madison	Newark, N.J.
1865	*John Cameron Lowrie, D.D.	New York	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1866	*Robert Livingstone Stanton, D.D.	Chillicothe	St. Louis, Mo.
1867	*Phineas Densmore Gurley, D.D.	Potomac	Cincinnati, Ohio
1868	*George W. Musgrave, D.D., LL.D.	Phila. Central	Albany, N.Y.
1869	*M.W. Jacobus, D.D., LL.D.	Ohio	New York, N.Y.
1869	*M.W. Jacobus, D.D., LL.D.	Ohio (Nov. 12)	Pittsburgh, Pa.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838	*Samuel Fisher, D.D.	Newark	Philadelphia, Pa.
1839	*Baster Dickinson, D.D.	Cincinnati	Philadelphia, Pa.
1840	*William Wisner, D.D.	Cincinnati	Philadelphia, Pa.
1843	*Ansel Doan Eddy, D.D.	Newark	Philadelphia, Pa.
1846	*Samuel Hanson Cox, D.D., LL.D.	Brooklyn	Philadelphia, Pa.
1849	*Philip Courtlandt Hay, D.D.	Tioga	Philadelphia, Pa.
1850	*David H. Riddle, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Detroit, Mich.
1851	*Albert Barnes	Philadelphia, 4th	Utica, N.Y.
1852	*William Adams, D.D., LL.D.	New York, 4th	Washington, D.C.
1853	*Diarca Howe Allen, D.D.	Cincinnati	Buffalo, N.Y.
1854	*Thomas H. Skinner, D.D., LL.D.	New York, 3rd	Philadelphia, Pa.
1855	*William Carpenter Wisner, D.D.	Niagara	St. Louis, Mo.
1856	*Laurens P. Hickok, D.D., LL.D.	Troy	New York, N.Y.
1857	*Samuel W. Fisher, D.D., LL.D.	Cincinnati	Cleveland, Ohio
1858	*Matthew L. P. Thompson, D.D.	Buffalo	Chicago, Ill.
1859	*Robert Wilson Patterson, D.D.	Chicago	Wilmington, Del.
1860	*Thornton Anthony Mills, D.D.	Indianapolis	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1861	*Jonathan Bailey Condit, D.D.	Cayuga	Syracuse, N.Y.
1862	*George Duffield, D.D.	Detroit	Cincinnati, Ohio
1863	*Henry B. Smith, D.D., LL.D.	N. York, 4th	Philadelphia, Pa.
1864	*Thomas Brainerd, D.D.	Philadelphia, 4th	Dayton, Ohio
1865	*James Boylan Shaw, D.D.	Rochester	Brooklyn, N.Y.

* Deceased
Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1866	*Samuel Miles Hopkins, D.D.	Cayuga	St. Louis, Mo.
1867	*Henry Addison Nelson, D.D.	St. Louis	Rochester, N.Y.
1868	*Jonathan French Stearns, D.D.	Newark	Harrisburg, Pa.
1869	*Philemon Halsted Fowler, D.D.	Utica	New York, N.Y.
1869	*Philemon Halsted Fowler, D.D.	Utica (Nov. 12)	Pittsburgh, Pa.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1926	*William O. Thompson, D.D., LL.D.	Columbus	Baltimore, Md.
1927	‡*Robert E. Speer, D.D., LL.D.	Jersey City	San Francisco, Calif.
1928	*Hugh Kelso Walker, D.D., LL.D.	Los Angeles	Tulsa, Okla.
1929	*Cleland Boyd McAfee, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	St. Paul, Minn.
1930	*Hugh Thomson Kerr, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Cincinnati, Ohio
1931	*Lewis Seymour Mudge, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1932	*Charles William Kerr, D.D.	Tulsa	Denver, Co.
1933	*John McDowell, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Columbus, Ohio
1934	*William Chalmers Covert, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Cleveland, Ohio
1935	*Joseph Anderson Vance, D.D., LL.D.	Detroit	Cincinnati, Ohio
1936	*Henry Buck Master, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.	Fort Wayne	Syracuse, N.Y.
1937	*William Hiram Foulkes, D.D., LL.D.	Newark	Columbus, Ohio
1938	*Charles Whitefield Welch, D.D.	Louisville	Philadelphia, Pa.
1939	‡*Sam Higginbottom, LL.D., Philan.D.	Cleveland	Cleveland, Ohio
1940	*William Lindsay Young, D.D., LL.D.	Kansas City	Rochester, N.Y.
1941	*Herbert Booth Smith, D.D., LL.D.	Los Angeles	St. Louis, Mo.
1942	*Stuart Nye Hutchison, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Milwaukee, Wis.
1943	*Henry Sloane Coffin, D.D., Litt.D., LL.D.	New York	Detroit, Mich.
1944	*Roy Ewing Vale, D.D., LL.D.	Indianapolis	Chicago, Ill.
1945	*William Blakeman Lampe, D.D.	St. Louis	Minneapolis, Minn.
1946	*Frederick W. Evans, D.D.	Troy	Atlantic City, N.J.
1947	‡*Wilbur LaRoe Jr., LL.D.	Washington City	Grand Rapids, Mich.
1948	*Jese Hays Baird, D.D., LL.D.	San Francisco	Seattle, Wash.
1949	*Clifford E. Barbour, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D.		Union Buffalo, N.Y.
1950	*Hugh Ivans Evans, D.D., S.T.D.	Dayton	Cincinnati, Ohio
1951	*H. Ray Anderson, S.T.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Cincinnati, Ohio
1952	*Hermann Nelson Morse, D.D., LL.D.	Brooklyn-Nassau	New York, N.Y.
1953	*John Alexander Mackay, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D., L.H.D.	New Brunswick	Minneapolis, Minn.
1954	*Ralph Waldo Lloyd, DD, LLD, Litt.D.		Union Detroit, Mich.
1955	*Paul S. Wright, D.D., L.H.D.	Portland	Los Angeles, Calif.
1956	‡*David W. Proffitt, LL.D.	Union	Philadelphia, Pa.
1957	*Harold R. Martin, D.D., LL.D.	Bloomington	Omaha, Neb.
1958	*Harold R. Martin, D.D., LL.D.	Bloomington	Pittsburgh, Pa.

REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS

1870-1958

1870	*J. Trumbull Backus, DD., LL.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1871	*Zephaniah Moore Humphrey, D.D.	Philadelphia	Chicago, Ill.
1872	*Samuel J. Niccolls, D.D., LL.D.	St. Louis	Detroit, Mich.
1873	*Howard Crosby, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Baltimore, Md.
1874	*Samuel J. Wilson, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	St. Louis, Mo.
1875	*Edward D. Morris, D.D., LL.D.	Cincinnati	Cleveland, Ohio
1876	*Henry Jackson Van Dyke, D.D.	Brooklyn	Brooklyn, N.Y.
1877	*James Eells, D.D., LL.D.	San Francisco	Chicago, Ill.
1878	*Francis L. Patton, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1879	*Henry Harris Jessup, D.D.	Lackawanna	Saratoga, N.Y.
1880	*William M. Paxton, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Madison, Wis.
1881	*Henry Darling, D.D., LL.D.	Albany	Buffalo, N.Y.
1882	*Herrick Johnson, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Springfield, Ill.
1883	*Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.	New York	Saratoga, N.Y.
1884	*George P. Hays, D.D., LL.D.	Denver	Saratoga, N.Y.
1885	*Elijah R. Craven, D.D., LL.D.	Newark	Cincinnati, Ohio
1886	*David C. Marquis, D.D., LL.D.	St. Louis	Minneapolis, Minn.
1887	*Joseph T. Smith, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Omaha, Neb.
1888	*Charles L. Thompson, D.D., LL.D.	Kansas City	Philadelphia, Pa.
1889	*William Chas. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	New York, N.Y.
1890	*William Eves Moore, D.D., LL.D.	Columbus	Saratoga, N.Y.
1891	*W. Henry Green, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Detroit, Mich.
1892	*William C. Young, D.D., LL.D.	Transylvania	Portland, Ore.
1893	*Willis Greer Craig, D.D., LL.D.	Iowa	Washington, D.C.
1894	*S.A. Mutchmore, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Saratoga, N.Y.
1895	*Robert Russell Booth, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1896	*John Lindsay Withrow, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Saratoga, N.Y.
1897	*Sheldon Jackson, D.D., LL.D.	Alaska	Winona Lake, Ind.
1898	*Wallace Radcliffe, D.D., LL.D.	Washington City	Winona Lake, Ind.
1899	*Robert F. Sample, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Minneapolis, Minn.
1900	*Charles A. Dickey, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	St. Louis, Mo.
1901	*Henry Collin Minton, D.D., LL.D.	San Francisco	Philadelphia, Pa.
1902	*Henry van Dyke, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	New York, N.Y.
1903	*Robert F. Coyle, D.D., LL.D.	Denver	Los Angeles, Calif.
1904	*J. Addison Henry, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Buffalo, N.Y.
1905	*James D. Moffat, D.D., LL.D.	Washington	Winona Lake, Ind.
1906	*Hunter Corbett, D.D., LL.D.	Shantung	Des Moines, Iowa
1907	*William H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Columbus, Ohio
1908	*Baxter P. Fullerton, D.D., LL.D.	St. Louis	Kans. City, Mo.
1909	*James M. Barkley, D.D., LL.D.	Detroit	Denver, Colo.
1910	*Charles Little, D.D., LL.D.	Muncie	Atl. City, N.J.
1911	*John F. Carson, D.D., LL.D.	Brooklyn	Atl. City, N.J.
1912	*Mark A. Matthews, D.D., LL.D.	Seattle	Louisville, Ky.
1913	*John Timothy Stone, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Atlanta, Ga.
1914	*Maitland Alexander, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Chicago, Ill.
1915	*J. Ross Stevenson, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Rochester, N.Y.
1916	*John Abner Marquis, D.D., LL.D.	Cedar Rapids	Atl. City, N.J.
1917	*J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Dallas, Tex.
1918	*J. Frank Smith, D.D.	Dallas	Columbus, Ohio
1919	‡*John Willis Baer, LL.D., Litt.D.	Los Angeles	St. Louis, Mo.
1920	*Samuel S. Palmer, D.D.	Columbus	Philadelphia, Pa.
1921	*Henry C. Swearingen, DD, LL.D.	St. Paul	Winona Lake, Ind.
1922	*Calvin C. Hays, D.D., LL.D.	Blairsville	Des Moines, Iowa
1923	*Charles F. Wishart, D.D., LL.D.	Wooster	Indianapolis, Ind.
1924	*Clarence Edward Macartney, DD.	Philadelphia	Grand Rapids, Mich.
1925	*Charles R. Erdman, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Columbus, Ohio

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1829-1906

1829	*Thomas Calhoun	Lebanon	Princeton, Ky.
1830	*James B. Porter	Elk	Princeton, Ky.
1831	*Alexander Chapman	Logan	Princeton, Ky.
1832	*Samuel King	Barnett	Nashville, Tenn.
1833	*Thomas Calhoun	Lebanon	Nashville, Tenn.
1834	*F.R. Cossitt, D.D.	Princeton	Nashville, Tenn.
1835	*Samuel King	Lexington	Princeton, Ky.
1836	*Reuben Burrow	Forked Deer	Nashville, Tenn.
1837	*Robert Donnell	Tennessee	Princeton, Ky.
1838	*Hiram A. Hunter	Indiana	Lebanon, Tenn.
1840	*Reuben Burrow, D.D.	Union	Elkton, Ky.
1841	*William Ralston	Richland	Owensboro, Ky.
1842	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Union	Owensboro, Ky.
1843	*A.M. Bryan, D.D.	Pennsylvania	Owensboro, Ky.
1845	*Richard Beard, D.D.	Princeton	Lebanon, Tenn.
1846	*M.H. Bone, D.D.	Tennessee	Owensboro, Ky.
1847	*Hiram A. Hunter, D.D.	Ohio	Lebanon, Ohio
1848	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Morgan	Memphis, Tenn.
1849	*John L. Smith	Nashville	Princeton, Ky.
1850	*Reuben Burrow, D.D.	Madison	Clarksville, Tenn.

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1851	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Kentucky	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1852	*David Lowry	Chapman	Nashville, Tenn.
1853	*H.S. Porter, D.D.	Memphis	Princeton, Ky.
1854	*Isaac Shook	Elk	Memphis, Tenn.
1855	*M.H. Bone, D.D.	Nashville	Lebanon, Tenn.
1856	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Princeton	Louisville, Ky.
1857	*Carson P. Reed	Richland	Lexington, Mo.
1858	*Felix Johnson, D.D.	McGready	Huntsville, Ala.
1859	*T.B. Wilson	Marshall	Evansville, Ind.
1860	*S.G. Burney, D.D.	Oxford	Nashville, Tenn.
1861	*A.E. Cooper	Hopewell	St. Louis, Mo.
1862	*P.G. Rea	New Lebanon	Owensboro, Ky.
1863	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Morgan	Alton, Ill.
1864	*Jesse Anderson	Ohio	Lebanon, Ohio
1865	*Hiram Douglass	Georgia	Evansville, Ind.
1866	*Richard Beard, D.D.	Lebanon	Owensboro, Ky.
1867	*J.B. Mitchell, D.D.	McGee	Memphis, Tenn.
1868	*G.W. Mitchell	Richland	Lincoln, Ill.
1869	*S.T. Anderson, D.D.	Miami	Murfreesboro, Tenn.
1870	*J.C. Provine, D.D.	Nashville	Warrensburg, Mo.
1871	*J.B. Logan, D.D.	Vandalia	Nashville, Tenn.
1872	*C.H. Bell, D.D.	Oxford	Evansville, Ind.
1873	*J.W. Poindexter, D.D.	Ohio	Huntsville, Ala.
1874	*T.C. Blake, D.D.	Nashville	Springfield, Mo.
1875	*W.S. Campbell, D.D.	Rushville	Jefferson, Tex.
1876	*J.M. Gill, D.D.	Davis	Bowling Green, Ky.
1877	*A.B. Miller, D.D.	Pennsylvania	Lincoln, Ill.
1878	*D.E. Bushnell, D.D.	California	Lebanon, Tenn.
1879	*J.S. Grider, D.D.	Logan	Memphis, Tenn.
1880	*A. Templeton, D.D.	Kirkpatrick	Evansville, Ind.
1881	*W.J. Darby, D.D., LL.D.	Indiana	Austin, Tex.
1882	*S.H. Buchanan, D.D.	Searcy	Huntsville, Ala.
1883	*A.J. McGlumphy, D.D.	Mackinaw	Nashville, Tenn.
1884	‡*John Frizzell	Lebanon	McKeesport, Pa.
1885	*G.T. Stainback, D.D.	McMinnville	Bentonville, Ark.
1886	*E.B. Crisman, D.D.	Kirkpatrick	Sedalia, Mo.
1887	‡*Nathan Green	Lebanon	Covington, Ohio
1888	*W.H. Black, D.D., LL.D.	St. Louis	Waco, Tex.
1889	*J.M. Hubbert, D.D.	Lebanon	Kansas City, Mo.
1890	*E.G. McLean, D.D.	Walla Walla	Union City, Tenn.
1891	‡*E.E. Beard	Lebanon	Owensboro, Ky.
1892	*W.S. Danley, D.D.	Mackinaw	Memphis, Tenn.
1893	*W.T. Ferguson, D.D.	Sangamon	Little Rock, Ark.
1894	*F.R. Earle, D.D.	Arkansas	Eugene, Ore.
1895	*M.B. DeWitt, D.D.	Springfield	Meridian, Miss.
1896	*A.W. Hawkins	Decatur	Birmingham, Ala.
1897	*H.S. Williams, D.D.	Memphis	Chicago, Ill.
1898	‡*H.H. Norman	McMinnville	Marshall, Mo.
1899	*J.M. Halsell, D.D.	San Jacinto	Denver, Colo.
1900	*H.C. Bird, D.D.	Union	Chattanooga, Tenn.
1901	*E.E. Morris, D.D.	New Lebanon	West Point, Miss.
1902	*S.M. Templeton, D.D.	Red River	Springfield, Mo.
1903	*R.M. Tinnon, D.D.	Rocky Mtn.	Nashville, Tenn.
1904	‡*W.E. Settle	Logan	Dallas, Tex.
1905	*J.B. Hail, D.D.	Pennsylvania	Fresno, Calif.
1906	*Ira Landrith, D.D., LL.D.	Lebanon	Decatur, Ill.

**CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1869-1920**

1869	*William Hughes	Racine, Wis.	Columbus, Ohio
1870	*William Roberts	Scranton, Pa.	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1871	*William Roberts	Scranton, Pa.	New York, N.Y.
1873	*Howell Powell	Cincinnati, Ohio	Racine, Wis.
1875	*William Roberts	Scranton, Pa.	Hyde Park, Pa.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1877	*Rees Evans	Cambria, Wis.	Chicago, Ill.
1880	*Thomas Roberts	Newark, Ohio	Utica, N.Y.
1883	*G.H. Humphrey	Humphreys, NY	Oak Hill, Ohio
1886	*T.J. Phillips	Plymouth, Pa.	Milwaukee, Wis.
1889	*T.C. Davis	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
1892	*Joseph Roberts	Minneapolis, Minn.	Utica, N.Y.
1895	*J.R. Daniel	Engedi, Wis.	Minneapolis, Minn.
1899	*John R. Jones	Columbus, Wis.	Columbus, Ohio
1901	*Hugh Davis	Scranton, Pa.	Cambria, Wis.
1904	*W.R. Evans	Peniel, Ohio	Venedocia, Ohio
1907	*Daniel Thomas	Wild Rose, Wis.	Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
1910	‡*T. Solomon Griffith	Utica, N.Y.	Cotter, Iowa
1913	*John C. Jones	Chicago, Ill.	Utica, N.Y.
1916	*W.E. Evans	Mankato, Minn.	Lake Crystal, Minn.
1919	*John Hammond	Scranton, Pa.	Racine, Wis.
1920	*John Hammond	Scranton, Pa.	Columbus, Ohio

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

1858-1958

1858	*John T. Pressly, D.D.	Allegheny	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1859	*Peter Bullions, D.D.	Albany	Xenia, Ohio
1860	*Joseph Clokey, D.D.	Xenia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1861	*R.D. Harper, D.D.	Xenia	Monmouth, Ill.
1862	*J.T. Cooper, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1863	*A. Young, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Xenia, Ohio
1864	*D.A. Wallace, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Philadelphia, Pa.
1865	*John B. Clark, D.D.	Allegheny	Washington, Iowa
1866	*David R. Kerr, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Allegheny, Pa.
1867	*John B. Dales, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Xenia, Ohio
1868	*James Harper, D.D., LL.D.	First N.Y.	Argyle, N.Y.
1869	*R.A. Browne, D.D., LL.D.	Mercer	Monmouth, Ill.
1870	*T.S. Kendall, D.D.	Oregon	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1871	*R.A. McAyeal, D.D.	Des Moines	Xenia, Ohio
1872	*John S. Easton, D.D.	Westmoreland	Washington, Iowa
1873	*John Y. Scouler, D.D.	First Ohio	Philadelphia, Pa.
1874	*John G. Brown, D.D.	Monongahela	Monmouth, Ill.
1875	*W.W. Barr, D.D.	Philadelphia	Wooster, Ohio
1876	*James Brown, D.D.	Keokuk	Philadelphia, Pa.
1877	*Robert B. Ewing, D.D.	Monongahela	Sparta, Ill.
1878	*S.G. Irvine, D.D.	Oregon	Cambridge, Ohio
1879	*William Bruce, D.D.	Xenia	New Wilmington, Pa.
1880	*E.T. Jeffers, D.D., LL.D.	Mercer	Xenia, Ohio
1881	*David W. Carson, D.D.	Frankfort	Allegheny, Pa.
1882	*David Paul, D.D.	Muskingum	Monmouth, Ill.
1883	*W.H. McMilan, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1884	*William H. French, D.D.	First Ohio	St. Louis, Mo.
1885	*William Johnston, D.D.	College Springs	Topeka, Kans.
1886	*John T. Brownlee, D.D.	Chartiers	Hamilton, Ohio
1887	*Matthew M. Gibson, D.D.	San Francisco	Philadelphia, Pa.
1888	*Wm. T. Meloy, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Cedar Rapids, Iowa
1889	*E.S. McKittrick, D.D.	Allegheny	Springfield, Ohio
1890	*Andrew Watson, D.D., LL.D.	Egypt	Buffalo, N.Y.
1891	*Thos. J. Kennedy, D.D.	College Springs	Princeton, Ind.
1892	*David MacDill, D.D., LL.D.	Xenia	Allegheny, Pa.
1893	*James Bruce, D.D.	Delaware	Monmouth, Ill.
1894	*John A. Wilson, D.D., LL.D.	Mansfield	Albany, Ore.
1895	*J.B. McMichael, D.D.	Monmouth	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1896	*James White, D.D.	Kansas City	Xenia, Ohio
1897	*Thomas H. Hanna, D.D.	Monmouth	Rock Island, Ill.
1898	*R.G. Ferguson, D.D., LL.D.	Mercer	Omaha, Nebr.

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1899	*Wm. J. Robinson, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Philadelphia, Pa.
1900	*James P. Sankey, D.D.	Caledonia	Chicago, Ill.
1901	*J.A. Thompson, L.H.D., LL.D.	College Springs	Des Moines, Iowa
1902	*James C. Wilson, D.D., LL.D.	Lake	Allegheny, Pa.
1903	*James P. Cowan, D.D.	Indiana	Tarkio, Mo.
1904	*James W. Witherspoon, D.D.	Allegheny	Greenville, Pa.
1905	*Wm. C. Williamson, D.D., LL.D.	Keokuk	Washington, Iowa
1906	*J.K. McClurkin, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Richmond, Ind.
1907	*William T. Campbell, D.D.	Monmouth	Denver, Colo.
1908	*James G. Carson, D.D., LL.D.	Xenia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1909	*D.A. McClenahan, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Knoxville, Tenn.
1910	*James D. Rankin, D.D., LL.D.	Colorado	Philadelphia, Pa.
1911	*John C. Scouller, D.D.	Philadelphia	Washington, Pa.
1912	*Hugh H. Bell, D.D.	San Francisco	Seattle, Wash.
1913	*R.M. Russell, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Atlanta, Ga.
1914	*Joseph Kyle, D.D., LL.D.	Xenia	New Castle, Pa.
1915	*T.H. McMichael, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Loveland, Ohio
1916	*W.B. Smiley, D.D.	Chartiers	Cleveland, Ohio
1917	*W.E. McCulloch, D.D.	Monongahela	Boston, Mass.
1918	*W.M. Anderson, D.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1919	*James T. McCrory, D.D.	Monongahela	Monmouth, Ill.
1920	*F.M. Spencer, D.D., LL.D.	Ark. Valley	Sterling, Kans.
1921	*A.F. Kirkpatrick, D.D.	Puget Sound	Philadelphia, Pa.
1922	*J. Kelly Giffen, D.D.	The Sudan	Cambridge, Ohio
1923	*W.R. Sawhill, D.D.	Puget Sound	Buffalo, N.Y.
1924	*Charles H. Robinson, D.D.	Wheeling	Richmond, Ind.
1925	*W.I. Wishart, D.D.	Allegheny	Topeka, Kans.
1926	*R.A. Hutchison, D.D., LL.D.	Conemaugh	Sharon, Pa.
1927	*M.G. Kyle, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Washington, D.C.
1928	*Wm. A. Spalding, D.D.	Oregon	St. Louis, Mo.
1929	*John McNaugher, DD, LLD, Litt.D.	Allegheny	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1930	*T.C. Atchison, D.D.	Boston	Des Moines, Iowa
1931	*J. Knox Montgomery, DD, LL.D.	Muskingum	Youngstown, Ohio
1932	*Chas. S. Cleland, D.D.	Philadelphia	Beaver, Pa.
1933	*W.B. Anderson, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1934	*J. Alvin Orr, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Oxford, Ohio
1935	*E.C. McCown, D.D.	Monongahela	Akron, Ohio
1936	*Robert W. Thompson, DD, LL.D.	Wisconsin	Pittsburg, Kans.
1937	*A.R. Robinson, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Oak Park, Ill.
1938	*Ralph Atkinson, D.D.	Los Angeles	Cleveland, Ohio
1939	‡*Hon. H. Walton Mitchell, LL.D.	Monongahela	Philadelphia, Pa.
1940	*Homer B. Henderson, D.D.	Butler	Buffalo, N.Y.
1941	*R.L. Lanning, D.D., LL.D.	Beaver Valley	Indianapolis, Ind.
1942	*Thomas C. Pollock, D.D.	Philadelphia	Colombus, Ohio
1943	*W. Bruce Wilson, D.D.	Monongahela	New Wilmington, Pa.
1944	*James H. Grier, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	New Concord, Ohio
1945	*James M. Ferguson, D.D.	Allegheny	Monmouth, Ill.
1946	*Lytle Rodgers Free, D.D.	Philadelphia	Tarkio, Mo.
1947	‡*Samuel A. Fulton, LL.D.	Wisconsin	Sterling, Kans.
1948	*Albert H. Baldinger, D.D.	Butler	New Wilmington, Pa.
1949	‡*Tim J. Campbell, LL.D.	Des Moines	Buck Hill Falls, Pa.
1950	*J. Lowrie Anderson, D.D.	Upper Nile	New Concord, Ohio
1951	‡*W. Kyle George, LL.D.	Cleveland	Des Moines, Iowa
1952	*James Leon Kelso, D.D., ThD., LL.D.	Monongahela	Albany, Oregon
1953	*Samuel C. Weir, D.D.	Detroit	Carlisle, Pa.
1954	*Albert E. Kelly, D.D., LL.D.	Los Angeles	Akron, Ohio
1955	*George A. Long, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.	Monongahela	Monmouth, Ill.
1956	*Robert W. Gibson, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Knoxville, Tenn.
1957	*Robert N. Montgomery, D.D., LL.D.	Muskingum	New Concord, Ohio
1958	*Robert N. Montgomery, D.D., LL.D.	Muskingum	Pittsburgh, Pa.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

1958	*Theophilus M. Taylor, PhD., D.D.	Vermont	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1959	*Arthur L. Miller, D.D., LL.D.	Denver	Indianapolis, Ind.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1960	*Herman Lee Turner, D.D., LL.D.	Chattanooga	Cleveland, Ohio
1961	‡*Paul D. McKelvey	Los Angeles	Buffalo, N.Y.
1962	*Marshal L. Scott, Ed.D., D.D., LL.D.		Chicago Denver, Colo.
1963	Silas G. Kessler, D.D., LL.D.	Platte	Des Moines, Iowa
1964	*Edler G. Hawkins, D.D.	New York City	Oklahoma City, Okla.
1965	‡William P. Thompson, J.D., J.C.D., LL.D.		Wichita Columbus, Ohio
1966	*Ganse Little, D.D., LL.D., S.T.D.	Los Angeles	Boston, Mass.
1967	*Eugene Smathers, D.D.	St. Andrew	Portland, Ore.
1968	*John Coventry Smith, D.D.	Pittsburgh	Minneapolis, Minn.
1969	*George E. Sweazey, Ph.D.	St. Louis	San Antonio, Tex.
1970	*William R. Laws Jr., D.D.	Indianapolis	Chicago, Ill.
1971	‡*Lois H. Stair, L.H.D.	Milwaukee	Rochester, N.Y.
1972	‡C. Willard Heckel, LL.D.	Newark	Denver, Colo.
1973	Clinton M. Marsh, D.D.	Omaha	Omaha, Nebr.
1974	Robert C. Lamar, D.D.	Albany	Louisville, Ky.
1975	*William F. Keesecker, D.D., LL.D.	Southern Kansas	Cincinnati, Ohio
1976	‡Thelma C.D. Adair, Ed.D.	New York City	Baltimore, Md.
1977	*John T. Conner	Cascades	Philadelphia, Pa.
1978	William P. Lytle, D.D.	Alamo	San Diego, Calif.
1979	Howard L. Rice Jr.	San Francisco	Kansas City, Mo.
1980	Charles A. Hammond, D.D.	Wabash Valley	Detroit, Mich.
1981	*Robert M. Davidson	New York City	Houston, Tex.
1982	James H. Costen, D.D.	Georgia	Hartford, Conn.
1983	James H. Costen, D.D.	Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

1861-1983

1861	*Benj. M. Palmer	New Orleans	Augusta
1862	*J.L. Kirkpatrick	Concord	Montgomery
1863	*James A. Lyon	Tombeckbee	Columbia
1864	*John S. Wilson	Flint River	Charlotte
1865	*George Howe	Charleston	Macon
1866	*Andrew Hart Kerr	Memphis	Memphis
1867	*Thos. Verner Moore	East Hanover	Nashville
1868	*John N. Waddel	Chickasaw	Baltimore
1869	*Stuart Robinson	Louisville	Mobile
1870	*Robert L. Dabney	West Hanover	Louisville
1871	*William S. Plumer	Harmony	Huntsville, Ala.
1872	*Thomas R. Welch	Arkansas	Richmond
1873	*Henry Martyn Smith	New Orleans	Little Rock
1874	*John L. Girardeau	Charleston	Columbus, Miss.
1875	*Moses D. Hoge	East Hanover	St. Louis
1876	*Benjamin M. Smith	West Hanover	Savannah
1877	*C.A. Stillman	Tuscaloosa	New Orleans
1878	*T.E. Peck	Roanoke	Knoxville
1879	*Joseph R. Wilson	Wilmington	Louisville
1880	*T.A. Hoyt	Nashville	Charleston, S.C.
1881	*Robert P. Farris	St. Louis	Staunton
1882	*R.K. Smoot	Central Texas	Atlanta
1883	*T. Pryor	East Hanover	Lexington, Ky.
1884	*T.D. Witherspoon	Louisville	Vicksburg
1885	*H.R. Raymond	Tuscaloosa	Houston
1886	*J.H. Bryson	N. Alabama	Augusta
1887	*G.B. Strickler	Atlanta	St. Louis
1888	*J.J. Bullock	Maryland	Baltimore
1889	*H.G. Hill	Fayetteville	Chattanooga
1890	*James Park	Knoxville	Asheville
1891	*Hampden C. DuBose	Pee Dee	Birmingham
1892	*Samuel A. King	Central Texas	Hot Springs
1893	‡*J.W. Lapsley	N. Alabama	Macon

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1894	*James R. Graham	Winchester	Nashville
1895	*C.R. Hemphill	Louisville	Dallas
1896	*R.Q. Mallard	New Orleans	Memphis
1897	*Geo. T. Goetchius	Cherokee	Charlotte
1898	*E.M. Green	Transylvania	New Orleans
1899	*John F. Cannon	St. Louis	Richmond
1900	‡*Jos. W. Martin	Arkansas	Atlanta
1901	*Neander M. Woods	Memphis	Little Rock
1902	*William T. Hall	Bethel	Jackson, Miss.
1903	*Abner C. Hopkins	Winchester	Lexington, Va.
1904	*S.M. Neel	Upper Missouri	Mobile
1905	*J.T. Plunkett	Augusta	Fort Worth
1906	‡*Allen G. Hall	Nashville	Greenville, S.C.
1907	*J.R. Howerton	Asheville	Birmingham
1908	*W.M. Moore	West Hanover	Greensboro
1909	*William E. Boggs	Suwannee	Savannah
1910	*J.W. Bachman	Knoxville	Lewisburg, W. Va.
1911	*Russell Cecil	East Hanover	Louisville
1912	*Thos. S. Clyce	Dallas	Bristol
1913	*J.S. Lyons	Louisville	Atlanta
1914	‡*W.J. Martin	Concord	Kansas City
1915	*W. McF. Alexander	New Orleans	Newport News
1916	*C.W. Grafton	Mississippi	Orlando
1917	*Jno. M. Wills, Ph.D.	Wilmington	Birmingham
1918	*Jas. I. Vance	Nashville	Durant
1919	*A.M. Fraser	Lexington	New Orleans
1920	*W.L. Lingle	Concord	Charlotte
1921	*A.B. Curry	Memphis	St. Louis
1922	*R.C. Reed	Atlanta	Charleston, W. Va.
1923	*Alexander Spunt	Charleston	Montreat
1924	*Thornton Whaling	N. Alabama	San Antonio
1925	*Georgia Summey	New Orleans	Lexington, Ky.
1926	*J.W. Skinner	West. Texas	Pensacola
1927	*R.F. Campbell	Asheville	El Dorado
1928	*Harris E. Kirk	Potomac	Atlanta
1929	*W.R. Dobyns	Birmingham	Montreat
1930	*Thos. W. Currie	Central Texas	Charlottesville
1931	‡*R.A. Dunn	Mecklenburg	Montreat
1932	*William Crowe	St. Louis	Montreat
1933	*Ernest Thompson	Kanawha	Montreat
1934	‡*Samuel Hale Sibley	Cherokee	Montreat
1935	*Henry H. Sweets	Louisville	Montreat
1936	*P. Frank Price	Montgomery	Augusta
1937	*D. Clay Lilly	Winston-Salem	Montreat
1938	‡*Willis M. Everett	Atlanta	Meridian
1939	*Edward Mack, Ph.D.	East Hanover	Montreat
1940	*Frank C. Brown	Dallas	Chattanooga
1941	*Chas. E. Diehl	Nashville	Montreat
1942	‡*Chas. G. Rose	Fayetteville	Knoxville
1943	*Donald W. Richardson	Asheville	Montreat
1944	*Charles L. King	Brazos	Montreat
1945	*Thomas K. Young	Memphis	Montreat
1946	*J.B. Green	Meridian	Montreat
1947	*John R. Cunningham	Winston-Salem	Montreat
1948	*C. Darby Fulton	Enoree	Atlanta
1949	‡*W.E. Price	Mecklenburg	Montreat
1950	*Ben R. Lacy Jr.	Granville	Massanetta
1951	‡*James Ross McCain, Ph.D.	Atlanta	Orlando
1952	*W.A. Alexander Jr.	Red River	Charleston, W. Va.
1953	*Frank W. Price, Ph.D.	Lexington	Montreat
1954	*Wade H. Boggs	Red River	Montreat
1955	*J. McDowell Richards	Atlanta	Richmond
1956	*W. Taliaferro Thompson	Orange	Montreat
1957	*W.M. Elliott Jr., Ph.D.	Dallas	Birmingham
1958	‡*Philip F. Howerton	Mecklenburg	Charlotte
1959	*Ernest Trice Thompson	Hanover	Atlanta

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1960	Marion A. Boggs	Washburn	Jacksonville
1961	*Wallace M. Alston, Th.D.	Atlanta	Dallas
1962	‡*Edward D. Grant	Louisiana	Winston-Salem
1963	*William H. McCorkle	Holston	Huntington
1964	*Felix B. Gear, Ph.D.	Westminster	Montreat
1965	‡*Samuel J. Patterson	John Knox	Montreat
1966	*F.H. Caldwell, Ph.D.	Louisville	Montreat
1967	*Marshall C. Dendy	St. Johns	Bristol
1968	*P.D. Miller	Atlanta	Montreat
1969	*R. Matthew Lynn	TheSouthwest	Mobile, Ala.
1970	*William A. Benfield Jr.	Kanawha	Memphis, Tenn.
1971	*Ben Lacy Rose	Wilmington	Massanetta Springs, Va.
1972	‡*L. Nelson Bell	Asheville	Montreat, N.C.
1973	*Charles E.S. Kraemer	Mecklenburg	Fort Worth, Tex.
1974	*Lawrence W. Bottoms	Atlanta	Louisville, Ky.
1975	*Paul M. Edris	St. Johns	Charlotte, N.C.
1976	‡Jule C. Spach	Concord	Tuscaloosa, Ala.
1977	*Harvard A. Anderson	St. Johns	Nashville, Tenn.
1978	‡Sara Bernice Moseley	Covenant	Shreveport, La.
1979	Albert C. Winn	Hanover	Kansas City, Mo.
1980	*David L. Stitt	Brazos	MyrtleBeach, SC
1981	‡*Dorothy G. Barnard	Southeast Missouri	Houston, Tex.
1982	John F. Anderson Jr., D.D.	Grace Union	Columbus, Ga.
1983	John F. Anderson Jr., D.D.	Grace Union	Atlanta, Ga.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

1983—

1983	*J. Randolph Taylor, DD, LL.D., Ph.d.		Mecklenburg Atlanta, Ga.
1984	‡Harriet Nelson, L.H.D.	Redwoods	Phoenix, Ariz.
1985	‡William H. Wilson	Mission	Indianapolis, Ind.
1986	Benjamin M. Weir	San Francisco	Minneapolis, Minn.
1987	‡Isabel Wood Rogers	Hanover	Biloxi, Miss.
1988	C. Kenneth Hall	Beaver-Butler	St. Louis, Mo.
1989	Joan SalmonCampbell	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1990	‡Price H. Gwynn III	Charlotte	Salt Lake City, Utah
1991	Herbert D. Valentine	Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
1992	John M. Fife	de Cristo	Milwaukee, Wis.
1993	David Lee Dobler	Yukon	Orlando, Fla.
1994	Robert Wayne Bohl	Grace	Wichita, Kans.
1995	‡Marj Carpenter	Tres Rios	Cincinnati, Ohio
1996	John M. Buchanan	Chicago	Albuquerque, N.Mex.
1997	‡Patricia G. Brown	Cincinnati	Syracuse, N.Y.
1998	Douglas W. Oldenburg	Greater Atlla	Charlotte, N.C.
1999	‡Freda Gardner	New Brunswick	Fort Worth, Tex.
2000	Syngman Rhee	Atl. Kor. Amer.	Long Beach, Calif.
2001	Jack Rogers	San Gabriel	Louisville, Ky.
2002	Fahed Abu-Akel	Greater Atlanta	Columbus, Ohio
2003	Susan R. Andrews	National Calpital	Denver, Colo.
2004	‡Rick Ufford-Chase	De Christo	Richmond, Va.
2006	Joan S. Gray	Greater Atlanta	Birmingham, Ala.
2008	Bruce Reyes-Chow	San Francisco	San Jose, Calif.
2010	Cynthia Bolb ach	National Capital	Minneapolis, Minn.

B—SUCCESSION OF STATED CLERKS

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1789—1837**

A.D.	NAME
1789	*George Duffield, D.D.
1790	*Ashbel Green, D.D., LL.D.
1803	*Philip Milledoler, D.D.

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D. NAME

1806 *Nathaniel Irwin
1807 *Jacob Jones Janeway, D.D.
1817 *William Neill, D.D.
1825 *Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D.
1836 *John McDowell, D.D.

1839–1869

1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838 *John McDowell, D.D.
1840 *Wm. Morrison Engels, D.D.
1846 *Willis Lord, D.D., LL.D.
1850 *John Leyburn, D.D.
1862 *Alex T. McGill, D.D., LL.D.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838 *Erskine Mason, D.D.
1846 *Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.

(REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS)

1870–1958

1870 *Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.
1884 *Wm. H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.
1921 *Lewis S. Mudge, D.D., LL.D.
1938 *William Barrow Pugh, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.
1951 *Eugene Carson Blake, D.D. HH.D., LL.D., Litt.,D., D.Cn.L.

CLERKS

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1829–1906

1829 *F.R. Cossitt
1834 *James Smith
1841 *C.G. McPherson
1850 *Milton Bird
1872 ‡*John Frizzell
1883 *T.C. Blake, D.D.
1896 *J.M. Hubbert, D.D.

CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

1869–1920

1869 *M.A. Ellis
1870 *J.P. Morgan
1871 ‡*T.L. Hughes
1873 *M.A. Ellis
1875 *M.A. Ellis
1877 *T.C. Davis
1880 *James Jarrett
1883 *H.P. Howell
1886 *W. Machno Jones

A.D. NAME

1889 *John R. Jones
1892 *Edward Roberts
1895 *John Hammond
1898 *David Edwards
1901 *Joshua T. Evans
1904 *J.R. Johns
1907 *W.E. Evans
1910 *John E. Jones
1913 *W.O. Williams
1916 *R.E. Williams
1919 *J.O. Parry
1920 *J.O. Parry

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

1858–1958

1858 *Samuel Wilson, D.D.
1859 *James Prestley, D.D.
1863 *Jos. T. Cooper, D.D., LL.D.
1875 *Wm. J. Reid, D.D., LL.D.
1903 *David F. McGill, D.D., LL.D.
1931 *O.H. Milligan, D.D., LL.D.
1954 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1958–1983

1958 *Eugene Carson Blake, DD., HH.D., LL.D., Litt.D., D.Cn.L.
1966 ‡William P. Thompson, J.D., J.C.D., LL.D.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

1861–1983

1861 *John N. Waddel
1865 *Joseph R. Wilson
1898 *William A. Alexander
1910 *Thos. H. Law
1922 *J.D. Leslie
1935 *E.C. Scott (Acting 1935B36)
1959 *James A. Millard Jr., Th.D.
1973 *James E. Andrews

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

1983–

1983 ‡*William P. Thompson (Interim Co-Stated Clerk)
*James E. Andrews (Interim Co-Stated Clerk)
1984 *James E. Andrews
1988 *James E. Andrews
1992 *James E. Andrews
1996 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2000 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2004 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2008 Gradye Parsons

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

C—SUCCESSION OF
ASSOCIATE STATED CLERKS

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1958–1983

A.D. Name

1958 †*Henry Barraclough, LL.D. (Emeritus, 1961)
1958 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D. (Emeritus, 1974)
1972 †Otto K. Finkbeiner
1972 Robert F. Stevenson, D.D.
1973 *Robert Pierre Johnson, D.D.
1975 Robert T. Newbold Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983

1974 †*Donald A. Speck
1978 Flynn V. Long Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
1983–

1983 †Otto K. Finkbeiner
1983 Flynn V. Long Jr.
1983 Robert T. Newbold Jr.
1983 Robert F. Stevenson
1987 Margrethe B.J. Brown
1988 William B. Miller
1989 †Catherine McCorquodale Phillippe
1993 *C. Fred Jenkins
1993 J. Scott Schaefer
1993 Eugene G. Turner
1997 †Frederick J. Heuser
1997 Janet M. De Vries
2001 †Loyda Puig Aja
2001 Kerry Clements
2001 Grady Parsons
2001 Mark Tammen
2001 Gary Torrens
2001 Robina Winbush
2008 Jill Hudson
2008 Marcia Myers
2010 Thomas Hay

D—SUCCESSION OF
ASSISTANT STATED CLERKS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1907–1921, 1953–1958

1907 †*James M. Hubbert, D.D.
1953 †*Henry Barraclough, LL.D.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
1868–1913, 1952–1958

1868 —
1913 *A.G. Wallace, D.D., LL.D.
1914 Office discontinued

A.D. Name

1952 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D.
1954 *John M. Bald, Ph.D.
1956 *J.Y. Jackson, D.D.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1967–1972, 1981–1983

1967 †Otto K. Finkbeiner
1967 Robert F. Stevenson, D.D.
1981 †Mildred L. Wager

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983

1930 *E.C. Scott
1949 P.J. Garrison Jr.
1979 Joyce C. Tucker
1975 Flynn V. Long Jr.
1980 Ms. Lucille Scott Hicks
1980 Ms. Catherine M. Shipley
1982 Eugene D. Witherspoon Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
1983–

1983 Ms. Lucille S. Hicks
1983 †Ms. Catherine McCorquodale Phillippe
1983 †Ms. Mildred L. Wager
1983 Eugene D. Witherspoon Jr.
1987 Mrs. Juanita H. Granady
1990 Paul M. Thompson
1995 Ms. Maggie Houston
1995 Ms. Deborah Davies
1995 Kerry Clements
2001 Zane Buxton
2001 Dennis Cobb
2001 Jerry Houchens
2001 Carlos Malavé
2001 †Joan Richardson
2001 †Margery Sly
2001 †Valerie Small
2002 Laurie Griffith
2002 †Doska Ross Radebaugh
2003 Lesley A. Davies
2006 Chris Nicholas
2006 Julia Thorne
2006 Sharon Youngs
2007 Kerry Rice
2008 Evelyn Hwang
2008 Jewel McRae
2008 Joyce Lieberman
2008 Martha Miller

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

E—SUCCESSION OF
PERMANENT CLERKS

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1789–1837**

- 1802 *Nathaniel Irwin
- 1807 *John Ewing Latta
- 1825 *John McDowell, D.D.
- 1837 *John Michael Krebs, D.D.

**1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)
1838–1869**

A.D. Name

- 1838 *John Michael Krebs, D.D.
- 1845 *Robert Davidson, D.D.
- 1850 *Alex T. McGill, D.D., LL.D.
- 1862 *Wm. Edward Schenck, D.D.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

- 1838 *Eliphalet W. Gilbert, D.D.
- 1854 *Henry Darling, D.D., LL.D.
- 1864 *J. Glentworth Butler, D.D.

**REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS
1870–1921**

- 1870 *Cyrus Dickson, D.D.
- 1882 *Wm. H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.
- 1884 *Wm. Eves Moore, D.D., LL.D.
- 1900 *Wm. Brown Noble, D.D., LL.D.
- 1916 *Edward Leroy Warren, D.D.

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983**

- 1861 *Joseph R. Wilson
- 1866 *William Brown
- 1885 *Robert P. Farris
- 1905 *Thomas H. Law
- 1910 *J.D. Leslie

F—SUCCESSION OF
RECORDING CLERKS

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

- 1951 ‡*Henry Barraclough, L.L.D.
(Elected for this one General Assembly)

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

**Members of Entities Elected by the General Assembly
219th General Assembly (2010)**

Advisory Committee on the Constitution

Class of 2012

Rev. Paul K. Hooker, Presbytery of St. Augustine, Jacksonville, FL 32217 St Augustine, SA, W, M, C

Rev. Catherine T. R. MacDonald, 9 Independence Drive, Burlington, MA 01803 Boston, NE, W, F, C

Rev. Daniel Saperstein, 7257 W 4th St, Unit 4, Greeley, CO 80634 Plains And Peaks, ROC, W, M, C

Class of 2014

Ms. Susan Evans, 1807 N. 57th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19131 Philadelphia, TRI, B, F, E

Rev. Keith Geckeler, 3304 E Collins Ave Unit 21, Orange, CA 92867 Los Ranchos, SCH, W, M, C

Rev. Heahwan Rim, 8257 Harrison St., Rm 201, Niles, IL 60714 Midwest Hanmi, LIN, A, M, C

Class of 2016

Ms. Therese Howell, 1044 Beech Grove Road, Brentwood, TN 37027 Middle Tennessee, LW, W, F, E

Rev. Stewart Pollock, 236 Wayne Street Apt 318, Lower Burrell, PA 15068 Pittsburgh, TRI, W, M, C

Ms. Linda Therien, 3707 Udall St, San Diego, CA 92107 San Diego, SCH, W, F, E

Audit Committee

Class of 2012

Mr. Gordon Nielsen, 1500 South Frisco Avenue, Tulsa, OK 74119 Eastern Oklahoma, SUN, W, M, E

Mr. Richard Allen Turpen, 2500 Panorama Place, Birmingham, AL 35216 Sheppards And Lapsley, LW, W, M, E

The Board of Pensions

Class of 2012

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Ms. Anne Drennan, 302 Hart Alley, Newtown, PA 18940 Monmouth, NE, W, F, E

Mr. Alan D. Ford, 54 Country Acres Drive, Hampton, NJ 08827 Elizabeth, NE, W, M, E

Mr. Bob Gorsky, 194 Grace Ave, Elmhurst, IL 60126 Chicago, LIN, W, M, E

Ms. Judith A. Harris, The Paragon Centre Suite 300, Allentown, PA 18104 Lehigh, TRI, W, F, L

Mr. Richard Hodde, PO Box 220428, Charlotte, NC 28222 Charlotte, MAT, W, M, E

Rev. John Hougen, 231 Terrace Dr., Independence, IA 50644 East Iowa, LAK, W, M, C

Ms. Linda Jacobsen, 215-B Fulton Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147 Philadelphia, TRI, W, F, E

Mr. Frank James, 1576 Woodridge Place, Vestavia Hills, AL 35216 Sheppards And Lapsley, LW, B, M, E

Rev. Blythe Kieffer, 125 N. Hanley Road, St. Louis, MO 63105 Giddings-Lovejoy, MAM, W, F, C

Ms. Bettina Kilburn, 1132 Providence Place, Decatur, GA 30033 Greater Atlanta, SA, W, F, C

Mr. Joseph M. Kinard, 7647 Mission Gorge Rd #8, San Diego, CA 92120 San Diego, SCH, B, M, L

Mr. Christopher Mason, 320 E. 72nd Street #8B, New York, NY 10021 New York City, NE, W, M, E

Mr. Michael Neal, 454 Twin Creek Road, St. Louis, MO 63141 Giddings-Lovejoy, MAM, W, M, L

Ms. Susan Reimann, 8 Doran Court, Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852 New Brunswick, NE, W, F, L

Mrs. Nancy Rhodes, 1007 Monterey Valley Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27516 New Hope, MAT, W, F, L

Rev. Laird J. Stuart, Calvary Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, CA 94115 San Francisco, PAC, W, M, C

Class of 2014

Mr. Jesse Butler, 19501 E 18th Ter S, Independence, MO 64057 Heartland, MAM, B, M, E

Rev. Lindley DeGarmo, 109 Enfield Road, Baltimore, MD 21212 Baltimore, MAT, W, M, C

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Rev. Brian Ellison, 8005 N Congress Ave, Kansas City, MO 64152 Heartland, MAM, W, M, C
Mr. Bradley Fowler, 8721 SE 52nd Pl, Mercer Island, WA 98040 Seattle, ANW, W, M, E
Mr. John Hamm, 5228 Beckington Ln, Dallas, TX 75287 Grace, SUN, W, M, E
Rev. John A. Huffman, 1444 Santiago Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660 Los Ranchos, SCH, W, M, C
Ms. Jacqueline Jenkins, 170 Gates Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07042 Newark, NE, W, F, E
Mr. Peter Kalan, 8341 East Otero Circle, Centennial, CO 80112 Denver, ROC, W, M, O
Rev. Samuel D. Kim, 28 Tanager Court, Wayne, NJ 07470 Eastern Korean, NE, A, M, C
Mr. Claude Lilly, P.O. Box 311, Clemson, SC 29633 Foothills, SA, W, M, L
Ms. Angelica Michail, 17951 Calle Barcelona, Rowland Heights, CA 91748 San Gabriel, SCH, A, F, E
Mr. Thomas Paisley, Jr., 3015 Village Drive, Center Valley, PA 18034 Lehigh, TRI, W, M, E
Ms. Carol Sheffey Parham, 594 Pinedale Drive, Annapolis, MD 21401 Baltimore, MAT, B, F, L
Mr. Stephen Proctor, 1 Trinity Drive East, Ste 201, Dillsburg, PA 17019 Carlisle, TRI, W, M, E
Mr. Paul Volker, 403 Boone St., Boone, IA 50036 North Central Iowa, LAK, W, M, E
Mr. Lawrence Wright, 3861 Olympia, Houston, TX 77019 New Covenant, SUN, W, M, E

General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

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Rev. Rodney Petersen, Boston Theological Institute, Newton, MA 02459 Boston, NE, W, M, C
Rev. Staccato Powell, 1401 Boyer Street, Raleigh, NC 27610 Ecumenical/Non-Presby, B, M, C
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Class of 2014

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Rev. Gun Ho Lee, 4116 River Chase Dr., Greenville, NC 27858 New Hope, MAT, A, M, C
Rev. Jerrod Belton Lowry, Community Of Grace Presbyterian Church, Sandy, UT 84093 Utah, ROC, B, M, C
Ms. Damayanthi Niles, 475 East Lockwood Ave, St Louis, MO 63119 Giddings-Lovejoy, MAM, A, F, C
Rev. Paul Rader, 9439 Continental Drive, Knoxville, TN 37922 East Tennessee, LW, W, M, C

Climate for Change Task Force

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Ms. Yvonne Armstrong, 4705 Henry Hudson Parkway Apt 3B, Bronx, NY 10471 New York City, NE, H, F, E
Rev. Catherine (Cathy) Chang, 3428 Tilden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19129 Philadelphia, TRI, A, F, C
Rev. Hardy H. Kim, 1328 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30309 Greater Atlanta, SA, A, M, C
Rev. Al Masters, 102 E Woodburn Drive, Taylors, SC 29687 Foothills, SA, W, M, C
Rev. Diane Givens Moffett, 103 Castleton Place, Jamestown, NC 27282 Salem, MAT, B, F, C
Rev. Sarah Moore-Nokes, 5765 W Grande Market Dr Ste B, Appleton, WI 54913 Winnebago, LAK, W, F, C
Rev. Jose Olagues, 4423 No 24th St, Suite 200, Phoenix, AZ 85016 Grand Canyon, SW, H, M, C

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Mr. Dwayne G. Lee, 2207 Arrington Street, Durham, NC 27707 New Hope, MAT, W, M, E
Rev. Karen Stocks, 21910 Deer Canyon Dr, Garden Ridge, TX 78266 Mission, SUN, W, F, C
Rev. Donna C. Weddle, 3060 Hazelton St., Falls Church, VA 22044 National Capital, MAT, W, F, C

Class of 2014

Rev. Albert A. Hockaday, 20550 Huebner Road #416, San Antonio, TX 78258 Mission, SUN, B, M, C
Rev. Sidney Leak, 28633 Sampson Avenue, Orange Beach, AL 36561 South Alabama, LW, W, M, C
Rev. Jeffrey Mercer, 4317 S. Greenwich Ln, Independence, MO 64055 Heartland, MAM, W, M, C
Rev. Bill Nisbet, 4402 Nassau Way, Marietta, GA 30068 Greater Atlanta, SA, W, M, C

General Assembly Committee on Representation

Class of 2012

Ms. Angela L. Battle, 543 Wheeler St NW, Lenoir, NC 28645 Western North Carolina, MAT, B, F, E
Rev. Stanley Bhasker, 529 Church Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652 Huntingdon, TRI, A, M, C
Rev. John A. T. Gulden, 1368 Ouerbacker Court, Louisville, KY 40208 Mid-Kentucky, LW, W, M, C
Ms. Alma-Jean Marion, 5304 South Avon Street, Seattle, WA 98178 Seattle, ANW, B, F, E
Rev. Hector M. Rivera-Velez, 12235 Victory Palm, San Antonio, TX 78247 Mission, SUN, H, M, C
Mr. Issa Sayar, 1955 Indian Trail Rd Unit # 102, Norcross, GA 30071 Greater Atlanta, SA, M, M, E
Mr. Eliud Serrano Arroyo, PO Box 833, Vega-Alta, PR 00692 Presbiterio Del Noroeste, BPR, H, M, E
Mr. Cliff Yang, 1231 S Gloden West Ave Unit 22, Arcadia, CA 91007 San Gabriel, SCH, A, M, E

Class of 2014

Mr. Kenneth Bartlett-Preston, 1332 Glenfield Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602 San Francisco, PAC, B, M, L
Ms. Deborah Fair, 5530 Covington Ct, Dearborn, MI 48126 Detroit, COV, B, F, E
Ms. Dora V. Martinez, 3833 San Marcos NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111 Santa Fe, SW, H, F, E
Rev. Amy Mendez, 1447 So. Wolff Street, Denver, CO 80219 Denver, ROC, H, F, C
Mr. Patrick Nelson, P.O. Box 781, Stillwater, NY 12170 Albany, NE, W, M, E
Ms. Cindy Lou Ray, 3900 76th Street, Urbandale, IA 50322 Des Moines, LAK, W, F, E
Rev. Martha Ross-Mockaitis, 686 Foxdale Ave., Winnetka, IL 60093 Chicago, LIN, W, F, C
Rev. Heather Walchar, 2405 Berkshire Dr #14, St. Joseph, MO 64506 Heartland, MAM, W, F, C

Committee on Theological Education

Class of 2012

Rev. Mindy Douglas Adams, Chapel in the Pines, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 Salem, MAT, W, F, C
Ms. Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri, 101 Costa Rica St. Apt 801, San Juan, PR 00917 Presbiterio De San Juan, BPR, H, F, E
Rev. Roger J. Gench, 1313 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005 National Capital, MAT, W, M, C
Mrs. Terry Holland, 5125 N. Poplar Avenue, Fresno, CA 93704 San Joaquin, PAC, M, F, E
Mr. Max Sherman, 3505 Greenway, Austin, TX 78705 Mission, SUN, W, M, E
Rev. Landon Whitsitt, 116 W. Franklin, Liberty, MO 64068 Heartland, MAM, W, M, C
Ms. Kathryn Wolf Reed, 121 Sunnymede Drive, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122 Ohio Valley, LIN, W, F, L

Class of 2014

Rev. Alan Bancroft, 1305 Granville Road, Franklin, TN 37064 Middle Tennessee, LW, W, M, C
 Rev. Matthew Miles, P.O. Box 2164, Fort Davis, TX 79734 Tres Rios, SUN, W, M, C
 Mrs. Mary Elva Smith, 9985 Folsom Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95827 Mid-Kentucky, LW, W, F, E
 Rev. Chandler Stokes, 27 Library St NE #803, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 Lake Michigan, COV, W, M, C
 Rev. K. Nicholas Yoda, 3930 Sharon View Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45241 Cincinnati, COV, A, M, C

Educator Certification Council***Class of 2012***

Rev. Randy Branson, First Presbyterian Church, Graham, TX 76450 Palo Duro, SUN, W, M, C
 Rev. Kathy L. Dawson, Columbia Seminary, Decatur, GA 30031 Greater Atlanta, SA, W, F, C
 Ms. Holly Inglis, Wellshire Presbyterian Church, Denver, CO 80222 Denver, ROC, W, F, L
 Ms. Gay Mothershed, 4010 Seymour Lane, Cross Lanes, WV 25313 West Virginia, TRI, W, F, E
 Rev. Timothy Son, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA 15206 Pittsburgh, TRI, A, M, C

Class of 2014

Rev. Craig Foster, First Presbyterian Church, Spartanburg, SC 29302 Foothills, SA, W, M, C
 Rev. Donald Griggs, 800 E. Stanley Blvd Unit 122, Livermore, CA 94550 San Francisco, PAC, W, M, C
 Ms. Medora Hix, Cary Presbyterian Church, Cary, NC 27511 New Hope, MAT, W, F, E
 Ms. Debbie Hough, Derry Presbyterian Church, Hershey, PA 17033 Carlisle, TRI, W, F, E

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation***Class of 2012***

Ms. Lois A. Clarke, 1239 Lakeview Dock Road, Bristol, TN 37620 Abingdon, MAT, W, F, E
 Rev. David A. Davis, 61 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ 08542 New Brunswick, NE, W, M, C
 Ms. Enid Flores, 5-9 Ramirez de Arellano Blvd, Guaynabo, PR 00966 Presbiterio De San Juan, BPR, H, F, O
 Ms. Karen Garrett, Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP, Kansas City, MO 64105 Heartland, MAM, W, F, L
 Mr. Victor L. Hymes, PO Box 558, Alamo, CA 94507 San Francisco, PAC, B, M, E
 Mr. Paul E. Lee, 20078 Deer Chase Court, Barrington, IL 60010 Chicago, LIN, A, M, E
 Mr. Doug McArthur, 7230 East Geddes Place, Centennial, CO 80112 Denver, ROC, W, M, L
 Rev. D. Scott Weimer, North Ave Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, GA 30308 Greater Atlanta, SA, W, M, C
 Ms. Margaret West, 94 Union St. N, Concord, NC 28025 Charlotte, MAT, W, F, O
 Rev. Louise Westfall, 2757 Fairmount Blvd, Cleveland Hts, OH 44118 The Western Reserve, COV, W, F, C

Class of 2014

Mr. Harry Bartel, 600 West 6th Street, Suite 300, Fort Worth, TX 76102 Grace, SUN, W, M, E
 Mr. Steven Bass, 3447 37th Ave W, Seattle, WA 98199 Seattle, ANW, W, M, E
 Mr. Robert Crist, 1717 Bellevue Way, WA 98004, Bellevue, WA 98004 Seattle, ANW, W, M, O
 Ms. Elizabeth Dunning, 1270 Third Avenue, Salt Lake City, UT 84103 Utah, ROC, W, F, E
 Ms. Marilee K. Hopkins, 990 N Lake Shore Dr #17E, Chicago, IL 60611 Chicago, LIN, W, F, L
 Mr. Robert Olcott, 1830 Fountain Drive #1002, Reston, VA 20190 National Capital, MAT, W, M, L
 Mr. Roscoe Overton, 1701 East 21st Street, Austin, TX 78722 Mission, SUN, B, M, E
 Rev. Jane L. Searjeant Watt, 8 Lord Place, Old Saybrook, CT 06475 Albany, NE, W, F, C
 Rev. James Welch, 9257 Sea Oaks Court, Seminole, FL 33776 Tampa Bay, SA, W, M, C

General Assembly Mission Council***Class of 2011***

Mr. Robert James, 3601 Tindall Court, Fayetteville, NC 28311 Coastal Carolina, MAT, B, M, E

Class of 2012

Ms. Teresa A. Bryce, 731 S Hicks Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146 Giddings-Lovejoy, MAM, B, F, E

Ms. Jean Demmler, 1214 Detroit Street, Denver, CO 80206 Denver, ROC, W, F, E

Rev. Susan J. Ezell, 615 Main Street, Moosic, PA 18507 Lackawanna, TRI, W, F, C

Mr. Alan D. Ford, 54 Country Acres Drive, Hampton, NJ 08827 Elizabeth, NE, W, M, E

Rev. Thomas W. Gillespie, 508 Mt. Lucas Road, Princeton, NJ 08549 New Brunswick, NE, W, M, C

Rev. Philip L. Hougen, 114 North 7th Street, Iowa City, IA 52245 Ecumenical/Non-Presby, W, M, C

Rev. Aleida Jernigan, The Cascades, Portland, OR 97239 The Cascades, PAC, H, F, C

Mr. LaVert Jones, 220 Boulder Drive, Roswell, GA 30075 Greater Atlanta, SA, B, M, E

Rev. Michael Kinnamon, 475 Riverside Drive Room 880, New York, NY 10115 Ecumenical/Non-Presby, W, M, C

Mr. Michael W. Kruse, 911 W 32rd Street, Kansas City, MO 64111 Heartland, MAM, W, M, E

Ms. Jacquelin J. Lyman, 4437 Brighton Court, Hemet, CA 92544 Riverside, SCH, W, F, E

Ms. Carolyn McLaman, 107 Dovercliff Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39402 Mississippi, LW, W, F, E

Mr. Ethan R. Powell, 111 Washington Street, Geneva, NY 14456 Geneva, NE, W, M, E

Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, Mission Bay Community Church, San Francisco, CA 94112 San Francisco, PAC, A, M, C

Ms. Marta Rodriguez, 444 Condominio de Diego Apt 906, San Juan, PR 00923 Presbiterio De San Juan, BPR, H, F, E

Class of 2014

Mr. Steve Aeschbacher, 16219 224th Ave NE, Woodinville, WA 98077 Seattle, ANW, W, M, E

Mr. Clarence Antioquia, 1801 Piper Circle, Anacortes, WA 98221 North Puget Sound, ANW, N, M, L

Ms. Cynthia (Cindy) Bolbach, 1823 N Uhle Street, Arlington, VA 22201 National Capital, MAT, W, F, E

Rev. Arthur Canada, 14008 Erwin Road, Charlotte, NC 28273 Charlotte, MAT, B, M, C

Rev. Clark D. Cowden, 8440 Via Sonoma #78, La Jolla, CA 92037 San Diego, SCH, W, M, C

Rev. Melissa DeRosia, 215 N. Almer St., Caro, MI 48723 Lake Huron, COV, W, F, C

Rev. Roger J. Gench, 1313 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005 National Capital, MAT, W, M, C

Rev. Jack D. Hodges, 3520 SW Red Cedar Way, Lake Oswego, OR 97035 The Cascades, PAC, W, M, C

Ms. Jan Martin, 2601 W Cedar Lane, Milwaukee, WI 53217 Milwaukee, LAK, W, F, E

Rev. Cruz Alberto Negron-Torres, Calle 4 H1 Urb. Terrazas de Cupey, Trujillo Alto, PR 00976 Presbiterio De San Juan, BPR, H, M, C

Rev. Reginald V. Parsons, 13967 Summer Breeze Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32218 St Augustine, SA, W, M, C

Ms. Cathryn C. Piekarski, 111 Breantwood Street, Marietta, OH 45750 Muskingum Valley, COV, W, F, E

Rev. Matthew Schramm, 103 E. Midland, Bay City, WI 48706 Lake Huron, COV, W, M, C

Ms. Joyce A. Smith, 1756 N Star Rd, Columbus, OH 43212 Scioto Valley, COV, B, F, E

Class of 2016

Mr. Rob Brink, Synod of the Pacific, Petaluma, CA 94952 Sacramento, PAC, W, M, E

Mr. William W. Capel, 123R West Church Street, Champaign, IL 61820 Southeastern Illinois, LIN, W, M, E

Mr. Olanda Carr, 5649 Berry Ridge Drive, Harrisburg, NC 28075 Charlotte, MAT, B, M, E

Ms. Dhyana Cassie, 209 Taunton Blvd., Medford, NJ 08055 West Jersey, NE, W, F, E

Ms. Nancy Caudel, 111 Pentland Court, Greer, SC 29651 Foothills, SA, W, F, E

Ms. Jan Dowlearn, 4110 Paradise Drive, Blanchard, OK 73010 Indian Nations, SUN, W, F, E

Rev. Rachel Mihee Kim-Kort, 709 W Lafayette St, Easton, PA 18042 Lehigh, TRI, A, F, C

Mr. Kears Pollock, 2062 Kittanning Pike Box 471, Bruin, PA 16022 Pittsburgh, TRI, W, M, E

Mr. Heath K. Rada, P.O. Box 697, Montreat, NC 28757 Western North Carolina, MAT, W, M, E

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ms. Noelle Royer, 317 28th Street, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254 The Pacific, SCH, W, F, E

Mr. Glen Snider, 913 W Mohawk Drive, Safford, AZ 85546 de Cristo, SW, W, M, E

Ms. Connie M. Tubb, Grace Presbytery, Irving, TX 75039 Grace, SUN, W, F, E

General Assembly Nominating Committee

Class of 2012

Rev. Frank S. Deming, 301 King Charles Avenue, Rehboth Beach, DE 19971 New Castle, MAT, W, M, C

Ms. Cindy Edwards, 10 B Maksoutoff Street, Sitka, AK 99835 Yukon, ANW, W, F, L

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Rev. Cathryn Surgenor, 70 Denton Lake Rd, Holmes, NY 12531 Hudson River, NE, W, F, C
Ms. Tricia Dillon Thomas, 2095 Goldenrod St, Sarasota, FL 34239 Peace River, SA, W, F, L
Mrs. Lori Winblood, 62 W Apple Drive, Delta, CO 81416 Western Colorado, ROC, N, F, E

Class of 2014

Rev. Paul Bayerl, 141 W Washington, Summerville, GA 30747 Cherokee, SA, W, M, C
Mr. Cornelius Blanding, 2769 Church Street, East Point, GA 30344 Ecumenical/Non-Presby, B, M, L
Ms. Faye Chiou, 5252 Neosho Street, St. Louis, MO 63109 Giddings-Lovejoy, MAM, A, F, L
Mr. Michael Fagans, 15 Oleander Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93304 San Joaquin, PAC, W, M, L
Ms. Susan Freed-Held, PO Box 515, Colton, OR 97017 The Cascades, PAC, N, F, E
Rev. John Herndon, 3524 Nathalee Avenue NW, Huntsville, AL 35810 North Alabama, LW, B, M, C
Rev. Joseph L. Johnson, 1103 N Pontiac Ave, Dothan, AL 36303 South Alabama, LW, W, M, C
Rev. Dianne Kareha, 2616 W. Gordon Street, Allentown, PA 18104 Lehigh, TRI, W, F, C
Ms. Lisa Leverette, 2341 Sturtvant, Detroit, MI 48206 Detroit, COV, B, F, L
Miss Teresa McElwee, 1464 Falconcrest Blvd, Apopka, FL 32712 Ecumenical/Non-Presby, W, F, L
Rev. Johnnie Monroe, 1156 Brintell Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201 Pittsburgh, TRI, B, M, C
Ms. Sarah Jane Moore, 606 E Park St, Arlington Heights, IL 60005 Chicago, LIN, W, F, E
Mr. Reginald Ragland, 6540 W Chester Road, Glendale, AZ 85310 Grand Canyon, SW, B, M, E
Ms. Carline Seide-Murphy, P.O. Box 35, Niverville, NY 12130 Albany, NE, B, F, L
Ms. Maria J. Williams, 455 Madison Street, Westbury, NY 11590 Long Island, NE, B, F, E

Stewardship Committee

Class of 2012

Ms. Rebecca Cook, 4817 E Winsett Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85177 de Cristo, SW, W, F, E
Mr. Jack D. Shelver, 3232 Pera Alta Drive, Julian, CA 92036 San Diego, SCH, W, M, E

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

Class of 2012

Ms. Dianne L. Briscoe, 1585 S. Syracuse Street, Denver, CO 80231 Denver, ROC, B, F, E
Rev. David Cortes-Fuentes, 1562 Mural Drive, Claremont, CA 91711 San Gabriel, SCH, H, M, C
Ms. Christine M. Darden, 1028 Barry Court, Hampton, VA 23666 Eastern Virginia, MAT, B, F, E
Ms. Jean Demmler, 1214 Detroit Street, Denver, CO 80206 Denver, ROC, W, F, E
Rev. Marsha Fowler, 3207 Grandeur Avenue, Altadena, CA 91001 San Gabriel, SCH, W, F, C
Mr. William Saint, 3179 Colchester Brook Lane, Fairfax, VA 22031 National Capital, MAT, W, M, O

Class of 2014

Rev. Gloria Albrecht, 17354 Fairfield, Detroit, MI 48221 Detroit, COV, W, F, C
Rev. Arthur Canada, 14008 Erwin Road, Charlotte, NC 28273 Charlotte, MAT, B, M, C
Rev. Craig Howard, 545 North Star Drive, Madison, WI 53718 The John Knox, LAK, B, M, C
Ms. Kathryn Poethig, 859 Almond Drive, Watsonville, CA 95076 New York City, NE, W, F, L
Rev. Raafat Zaki, 1555 Starlight Drive, Cumming, GA 30040 Grace, SUN, M, M, C

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Class of 2012

Rev. Gradye Parsons, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202 Holston, LW, W, M, C

Central Committee World Council of Churches

Class of 2012

Rev. Judy Angleberger, 350 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver Fall, PA 15009 Beaver-Butler, TRI, W, F, C
Rev. Robina Winbush, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Louisville, KY 40202 New York City, NE, B, F, C

Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

Class of 2012

Rev. Terry Alexander, 168 Country Lane, Newland, NC 28657 Western North Carolina, MAT, W, M, C
Mr. F. William (Bill) Gray, 12 Saint James Place, Buffalo, NY 14222 Western New York, NE, W, M, E
Ms. Jan Martin, 2601 W Cedar Lane, Milwaukee, WI 53217 Milwaukee, LAK, W, F, E
Ms. Darcy Metcalfe, 1044 Alta Vista Rd, Louisville, KY 40205 Wabash Valley, LIN, W, F, E
Ms. Jerri Rodewald, 414 Alvarado Street, Redlands, CA 92373 Riverside, SCH, W, F, E
Ms. N'Yisrela Watts-Afriyie, 3516 West. 78th Street, Inglewood, CA 90305 The Pacific, SCH, B, F, E
Ms. Chris Wolf, 3651 South Sandusky Street, Peck, MI 48466 Lake Huron, COV, W, F, E

Class of 2014

Ms. Barbara Adams-Smelter, 2422 North 56th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19131 Philadelphia, TRI, B, F, E
Mr. Samuel Chung, 125 Mariposa Ave #302, San Anselmo, CA 94960 The Redwoods, PAC, A, M, O
Rev. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, 2001 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40205 Mid-Kentucky, LW, W, F, C
Rev. Joann Haejong Lee, 1055 Laurel Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104 Twin Cities Area, LAK, A, F, C
Ms. Belinda Rice, 5700 Executive Center Dr., Ste. 200, Charlotte, NC 28236 Charlotte, MAT, O, F, E

Item 09-A

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION**
CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

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AUDIT



REPORT OF INDEPENDENT AUDITORS

The Board of Directors
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

We have audited the accompanying consolidated statements of financial position of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (the "Organization") as of December 31, 2009 and 2008 and the related consolidated statements of activities and changes in net assets and cash flows for the years then ended. These consolidated financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation as of December 31, 2009 and 2008 and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Crowe Horwath LLP
Crowe Horwath LLP

Louisville, Kentucky
May 11, 2010

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2009 and 2008

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 5,715,113	\$ 6,599,515
Investments		
Investments and accrued income held by the Foundation	70,156,810	68,271,678
Other investments and accrued income	<u>45,573,185</u>	<u>43,857,582</u>
Total investments	115,729,995	112,129,260
Receivables		
Contributions from congregations	6,919,072	6,706,367
Mortgages and loans on churches and manses, including accrued interest, less allowance of \$4,800 and \$20,700 for 2009 and 2008, respectively	4,328,560	4,583,923
Receivables from related entities, mortgages and loans, less allowance of \$1,254,485 and \$1,597,210 for 2009 and 2008, respectively	6,670,519	7,023,757
Due from the Foundation	1,990,157	4,247,469
Other accounts receivable	<u>397,449</u>	<u>491,853</u>
Total receivables	20,305,757	23,053,369
Inventories, prepaid expenses and other assets	2,754,064	2,962,935
Property and equipment, net	24,963,175	27,694,203
Residual interest in annuity and life income funds held by the Foundation	7,549,710	7,040,974
Long-term investments held by the Foundation	294,268,989	261,046,515
Funds held in trust by others	<u>52,379,268</u>	<u>45,989,156</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 523,666,071</u>	<u>\$ 486,515,927</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 8,443,270	\$ 9,379,318
Amounts received from congregations and designated for others	883,713	1,055,153
Amounts held for missionaries and committed for projects	4,582,656	4,785,618
Amounts due to other agencies	6,724,051	7,131,940
Deferred revenue	757,520	814,445
Other	<u>202,027</u>	<u>476,216</u>
Total liabilities	21,593,237	23,642,690
Net assets		
Unrestricted		
Undesignated	40,621,263	12,173,762
Designated	<u>45,101,475</u>	<u>53,357,811</u>
Total unrestricted	85,722,738	65,531,573
Temporarily restricted	162,360,150	154,129,753
Permanently restricted	<u>253,989,946</u>	<u>243,211,911</u>
Total net assets	<u>502,072,834</u>	<u>462,873,237</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 523,666,071</u>	<u>\$ 486,515,927</u>

See accompanying notes.

2.

AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
Year ended December 31, 2009 with comparative 2008 totals

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2009	Total 2008
Revenue, gains and other support					
Contributions					
Congregations	\$ 23,866,522	\$ 3,982,083	\$ -	\$ 27,848,605	\$ 28,961,021
Presbyterian Women	916,287	15,000	-	931,287	1,023,381
Gifts, bequests, and grants	1,157,943	3,337,418	1,590,684	6,086,045	8,315,565
Special giving and special offering	(39,718)	23,027,438	-	22,987,720	27,136,861
Total contributions	25,901,034	30,361,939	1,590,684	57,853,657	65,436,828
Income from endowment funds					
held by the Foundation	2,848,943	2,412,699	104,082	5,365,724	8,169,957
Income on investments	885,935	726,653	107,919	1,720,507	1,797,435
Income from funds held by others	1,347,686	151,252	-	1,498,938	1,353,693
Realized and unrealized gains (losses) on investments, net	20,038,077	30,212,817	7,899,179	58,150,073	(143,384,625)
Interest income from loans	102,423	55,874	238,398	396,695	410,834
Change in value of beneficial interest in life income funds	-	(331,522)	840,258	508,736	(3,226,715)
Hubbard Press	1,681,184	-	-	1,681,184	1,672,872
Sales of resources and services	18,339,389	472,236	-	18,811,625	17,796,713
Other	1,379,982	-	(2,485)	1,377,497	2,347,675
	72,524,653	64,061,948	10,778,035	147,364,636	(47,625,333)
Net assets released from restrictions	46,684,932	(46,684,932)	-	-	-
Total revenue, gains, and other support	119,209,585	17,377,016	10,778,035	147,364,636	(47,625,333)
Expenses					
Programs					
Executive Administrator	2,206,432	-	-	2,206,432	2,106,137
Communication and Fund Development	8,172,687	-	-	8,172,687	8,204,921
Mission	57,579,309	-	-	57,579,309	63,548,940
Shared Services	9,230,224	-	-	9,230,224	10,013,919
Office of the General Assembly	10,273,178	-	-	10,273,178	12,937,716
General Assembly Council	2,185,696	-	-	2,185,696	2,358,431
Presbyterian Historical Council	452,275	-	-	452,275	429,016
Conference Center - Ghost Ranch	5,266,620	-	-	5,266,620	5,413,316
Conference Center - Stony Point	1,836,663	-	-	1,836,663	2,023,287
Church and Student Loans	2,640	-	-	2,640	67,754
Hubbard Press	1,652,506	-	-	1,652,506	1,807,533
Related Bodies and Other Programs	5,971,558	-	-	5,971,558	6,466,678
	104,829,788	-	-	104,829,788	115,377,648
General and administrative					
Shared	2,788,968	-	-	2,788,968	3,282,523
Other	546,283	-	-	546,283	4,255,537
	3,335,251	-	-	3,335,251	7,538,060
Total expenses	108,165,039	-	-	108,165,039	122,915,708
Change in net assets before transfer	11,044,546	17,377,016	10,778,035	39,199,597	(170,541,041)
Transfers to re-establish endowment funds	9,146,619	(9,146,619)	-	-	-
Change in net assets	20,191,165	8,230,397	10,778,035	39,199,597	(170,541,041)
Net assets at beginning of year	65,531,573	154,129,753	243,211,911	462,873,237	633,414,278
Net assets at end of year	\$ 85,722,738	\$ 162,360,150	\$ 253,989,946	\$ 502,072,834	\$ 462,873,237

See accompanying notes.

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
Year ended December 31, 2008

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Revenue, gains, and other support				
Contributions				
Congregations	\$ 24,660,023	\$ 4,300,998	\$ -	\$ 28,961,021
Presbyterian Women	999,381	24,000	-	1,023,381
Gifts, bequests, and grants	2,107,327	4,656,711	1,551,527	8,315,565
Special giving and special offering	-	27,136,861	-	27,136,861
Total contributions	<u>27,766,731</u>	<u>36,118,570</u>	<u>1,551,527</u>	<u>65,436,828</u>
Income from endowment funds				
held by the Foundation	4,280,086	3,688,857	201,014	8,169,957
Income on investments	393,454	1,267,010	136,971	1,797,435
Income from funds held by others	1,198,222	155,471	-	1,353,693
Realized and unrealized losses on investments, net	(61,875,607)	(60,981,548)	(20,527,470)	(143,384,625)
Interest income from loans	72,925	131,050	206,859	410,834
Change in value of beneficial interest in life income funds	-	(1,053,421)	(2,173,294)	(3,226,715)
Hubbard Press	1,672,872	-	-	1,672,872
Sales of resources and services	17,198,118	598,595	-	17,796,713
Other	1,285,098	1,077,800	(15,223)	2,347,675
	<u>(8,008,101)</u>	<u>(18,997,616)</u>	<u>(20,619,616)</u>	<u>(47,625,333)</u>
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>52,258,993</u>	<u>(52,258,993)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenue, gains, and other support	<u>44,250,892</u>	<u>(71,256,609)</u>	<u>(20,619,616)</u>	<u>(47,625,333)</u>
Expenses				
Programs				
Executive Administrator	2,106,137	-	-	2,106,137
Communication and Fund Development	8,204,921	-	-	8,204,921
Mission	63,548,940	-	-	63,548,940
Shared Services	10,013,919	-	-	10,013,919
Office of the General Assembly	12,937,716	-	-	12,937,716
General Assembly Council	2,358,431	-	-	2,358,431
Presbyterian Historical Council	429,016	-	-	429,016
Conference Center – Ghost Ranch	5,413,316	-	-	5,413,316
Conference Center – Stony Point	2,023,287	-	-	2,023,287
Church and Student Loans	67,754	-	-	67,754
Hubbard Press	1,807,533	-	-	1,807,533
Related Bodies and Other Programs	6,466,678	-	-	6,466,678
	<u>115,377,648</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>115,377,648</u>
General and administrative				
Shared	3,282,523	-	-	3,282,523
Other	4,255,537	-	-	4,255,537
	<u>7,538,060</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,538,060</u>
Total expenses	<u>122,915,708</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>122,915,708</u>
Change in net assets before transfer	(78,664,816)	(71,256,609)	(20,619,616)	(170,541,041)
Transfers for endowment funds with deficiencies	(9,146,619)	9,146,619	-	-
Change in net assets	(87,811,435)	(62,109,990)	(20,619,616)	(170,541,041)
Net assets beginning of year	<u>153,343,008</u>	<u>216,239,743</u>	<u>263,831,527</u>	<u>633,414,278</u>
Net assets end of year	<u>\$ 65,531,573</u>	<u>\$ 154,129,753</u>	<u>\$ 243,211,911</u>	<u>\$ 462,873,237</u>

See accompanying notes.

AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
Years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	\$ 39,199,597	\$ (170,541,041)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash from operating activities		
Depreciation	3,487,887	3,726,559
Net (recoveries) bad debts for losses on church loans	(15,900)	15,200
Contributions and revolving loan fund investment earnings restricted for long-term investment	(2,039,598)	(2,081,148)
Realized and unrealized (gains) losses on investments, net	(58,150,073)	143,384,625
Change in fair value of annuity and life income funds	(1,423,740)	2,530,822
Loss on disposal of property	-	2,852,427
Additions to annuity and life income funds	(36,710)	(39,250)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities		
Contributions from congregations	(212,705)	2,841,205
Due from the Foundation	2,257,312	(6,485,197)
Other accounts receivable	94,404	(328,509)
Inventories, prepaid expenses and other assets	208,871	1,439,010
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(936,048)	1,304,869
Amounts received from congregations and other liabilities	(648,591)	(1,253,062)
Amounts due to other agencies	(407,889)	(4,824,579)
Deferred revenue	(56,925)	(21,799)
Net cash from operating activities	<u>(18,680,108)</u>	<u>(27,479,868)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchases of investments	(157,048,572)	(174,954,071)
Sales of investments	171,985,324	203,430,353
New church loans issued	(349,000)	-
Payments received on church loans	616,260	730,677
Change in accrued interest receivable on church loans	4,003	3,666
Net change in receivables from related entities, mortgages and loans	353,238	734,604
Acquisition of property and equipment	<u>(756,859)</u>	<u>(2,283,610)</u>
Net cash from investing activities	14,804,394	27,661,619
Cash flows from financing activities		
Contributions and revolving loan fund investment earnings restricted for long-term investment	2,039,598	2,081,148
Maturities of annuity and life income funds	<u>951,714</u>	<u>735,143</u>
Net cash from financing activities	<u>2,991,312</u>	<u>2,816,291</u>
Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents	(884,402)	2,998,042
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>6,599,515</u>	<u>3,601,473</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	<u>\$ 5,715,113</u>	<u>\$ 6,599,515</u>

See accompanying notes.

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 1 - ORGANIZATION AND NATURE OF OPERATIONS

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), ("PCUSA") is an unincorporated body of Reformed Christians, who have agreed to conduct worship and other religious activities in conformity with the then current version of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Constitution, which contains among other things, in its Book of Order, a Form of Government setting forth a detailed formal structure of the Church. As an ecclesiastical organization, PCUSA does not exist under any federal law. Central to the structure of PCUSA is the concept of governing bodies. At the national level, the governing body is the General Assembly. The ecclesiastical work of the PCUSA at the General Assembly level is carried out by a number of ministry units and related agencies.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation ("PCUSA, A Corporation") is a corporate entity of the General Assembly of PCUSA, and is the principal corporation of the General Assembly. All voting members of the General Assembly Council are members of the Board of Directors of PCUSA, A Corporation. PCUSA, A Corporation receives and holds title to property and income at the General Assembly level related to mission activities; generally maintains and manages all real and tangible property, including the insuring of such property; effects short-term investment of funds prior to either their disbursement or transfer to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (the "Foundation") for longer-term investment; acts as the disbursing agent for all funds held for the General Assembly and for other governing bodies and entities upon their request; and provides accounting, reporting and other financial and related services as the General Assembly or General Assembly Council may direct or approve.

PCUSA, A Corporation is a tax-exempt religious corporation under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

NOTE 2 - BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Presentation: The accompanying consolidated financial statements reflect the consolidated operations of PCUSA, A Corporation and its constituent corporations, which are presented on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The constituent corporations of PCUSA, A Corporation are the following: General Assembly Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Inc.; The Hubbard Press; Pedco, Inc.; The Presbyterian Historical Society, Inc.; Presbyterian Life, Inc.; Presbyterian Publishing House of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.; The Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (formerly known as Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America) a New York corporation; Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and The Woman's Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a New York nonprofit corporation.

(Continued)

6.

AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

**NOTE 2 - BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT
ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

In order to ensure the observance of limitations and restrictions placed on the use of available resources, PCUSA, A Corporation maintains its financial accounts in accordance with the principles and practices of fund accounting. This is the procedure by which resources for various purposes are classified for accounting purposes into funds established in accordance with their nature or purpose.

For external reporting purposes, however, PCUSA, A Corporation's financial statements have been prepared to focus on the organization as a whole and to present balances and transactions classified in accordance with the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Net assets and related activity are classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted and permanently restricted as follows:

- Unrestricted Undesignated - net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions. Unrestricted undesignated net assets consist of the accumulation of certain contributions, gifts, bequests, and related income thereon, which are available for general church purposes.
- Unrestricted Designated - net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions. Unrestricted designated net assets consist of the accumulation of certain contributions, gifts, bequests, and related income thereon that have been designated for specific purposes by the General Assembly Council of the General Assembly.
- Temporarily Restricted - net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions that may or will be met either by actions of PCUSA, A Corporation or the passage of time. Temporarily restricted net assets primarily consist of contributions and related investment income.
- Permanently Restricted - net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions to be maintained permanently by PCUSA, A Corporation. Generally, the donors of these assets permit PCUSA, A Corporation to use all or part of the income earned on related investments for general or specific purposes. Permanently restricted net assets consist primarily of endowment funds and revolving loan funds.

Cash Equivalents: For purposes of reporting cash flows, PCUSA, A Corporation considers investments with an original maturity of three months or less when purchased to be cash equivalents.

Investments: Investments are recorded at fair value. Investment transactions are recorded on a trade-date basis. Realized gains and losses are recorded using the specific identification of securities sold on funds held by the Foundation and using the historical cost of securities sold on funds held by other investment managers.

The trustee believes that the carrying amount of its alternative investments is a reasonable estimate of fair value as of December 31, 2009 and 2008. Since alternative investments are not readily marketable, the estimated value is subject to uncertainty and, therefore, may differ from the value that would have been used had a ready market for the investments existed and such differences could be material.

(Continued)

7.

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 2 - BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT
ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Long-term investments held by the Foundation represent General Assembly endowment funds, which are generally not available for immediate use.

Contributions from Congregations: Contributions from congregations include amounts in-transit at year-end.

Allowance for Loan Losses: The allowance for loan losses is maintained at a level considered by management to be adequate to provide for loan losses inherent in the loan portfolio. Management determines the adequacy of the allowance based upon reviews of payment history, recent loss experience, current economic conditions, the risk characteristics of the various categories of loans and such other factors, which in management's judgment deserve current recognition in estimating loan losses. The allowance for loan losses is increased by the provision for loan losses and reduced by net loan charge-offs.

Annuity and Life Income Funds: PCUSA, A Corporation is an income beneficiary of trust funds held by the Foundation. In accordance with current accounting standards, PCUSA, A Corporation has recorded as an asset the net present value of the future income to be received from the funds.

Inventories: Inventories represent books, periodicals, and curriculum produced by PCUSA, A Corporation for distribution. These items are stated at average cost.

Property and Equipment: Property and equipment consists principally of the PCUSA, A Corporation headquarters building and related land and equipment, and domestic properties used for mission work, cemeteries, undeveloped land and property held for disposition.

The PCUSA, A Corporation headquarters building and related land and equipment are stated at cost, or fair value at the date of donation, if donated. The domestic properties used for mission work, cemeteries, racial ethnic schools, undeveloped land and other properties are recorded based on fair value at date of donation, appraisal value or replacement cost. Expenditures of greater than \$5,000 which increase values or extend the useful lives of the respective assets are capitalized. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets.

PCUSA, A Corporation holds title to various other foreign properties. Such properties include properties used for mission work, cemeteries, undeveloped land and property held for disposition. Shared Services has administrative responsibility for property taxes, insurance, maintenance and improvements for these properties. Generally, it is PCUSA, A Corporation's policy to exclude the cost or donated value of foreign properties from its financial records.

Deferred Revenue: PCUSA, A Corporation holds special events each year. Monies received to support future special events are recorded as deferred revenue.

(Continued)

8.

AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
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**NOTE 2 - BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT
ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

Collections: PCUSA, A Corporation's collections consist of works of art, ecclesiastical objects and papers, historical treasures, scientific specimens and other assets. The collections, which were acquired through purchases and contributions since PCUSA, A Corporation's inception, are not recognized as assets on the consolidated statements of financial position. Purchases of collection items are recorded as decreases in unrestricted net assets in the year in which the items are acquired, or as temporarily or permanently restricted net assets if the assets used to purchase the items are restricted by donors. Contributed collection items are not reflected on the consolidated financial statements. Proceeds from deaccessions or insurance recoveries are reflected as increases in the appropriate net asset classes.

Use of Estimates: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements. Estimates also affect the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. The more significant estimates made relate to the valuation of mortgages, loans, and contributions receivable and valuation of investments. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Income Taxes: PCUSA, A Corporation qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Accordingly, no income taxes have been provided in the accompanying financial statements.

PCUSA, A Corporation adopted guidance issued by the Financial Accounting Standards ("FASB") and with respect to accounting for uncertainty in income taxes as of December 31, 2009. A tax position is recognized as a benefit only if it is "more likely than not" that the tax position would be sustained in a tax examination, with a tax examination being presumed to occur. The amount recognized is the largest amount of tax benefit that is greater than 50% likely of being realized on examination. For tax positions not meeting the "more likely than not" test, no tax benefit is recorded. The adoption of this guidance had no effect on PCUSA, A Corporation.

PCUSA, A Corporation has no material uncertain income tax positions which would result in a liability. No interest or penalties on income taxes have been recognized in its statement of activities for the years ended December 31, 2009 or 2008. Due to its tax exempt status, PCUSA, A Corporation is not subject to U.S. federal income tax or state income tax. PCUSA, A Corporation does not expect the total amount of unrecognized tax benefits to significantly change in the next 12 months.

Recently Issued Accounting Pronouncements: In June 2009, the FASB codified existing accounting standards. The FASB Accounting Standards Codification ("ASC") is the source of authoritative U.S. generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP") recognized by the FASB and supersedes all existing non-SEC accounting and reporting standards. All ASC content carries the same level of authority and anything outside of the ASC is non-authoritative. The new ASC guidance was adopted by PCUSA, A Corporation for the year ended December 31, 2009, which changed the way accounting standards are referred to in the financial statement disclosures. Adoption of ASC will not impact PCUSA, A Corporation's financial results or financial position.

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MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 2 - BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Subsequent Events: Management has performed an analysis of the activities and transactions subsequent to December 31, 2009 to determine the need for any adjustments to and/or disclosures within the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2009. Management has performed their analysis through May 11, 2010, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

Reclassifications: Some items in the prior year consolidated financial statements were reclassified to conform with the current presentation.

NOTE 3 - TEMPORARILY AND PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Temporarily and permanently restricted net assets at December 31, 2009 and 2008 are available for the following purposes:

	2009		2008	
	Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	Permanently Restricted Net Assets	Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	Permanently Restricted Net Assets
Church loans	\$ 2,370,983	\$ 19,666,369	\$ 2,022,045	\$ 17,369,859
Jinishian Memorial Program	20,047,850	9,665,097	16,712,812	9,633,734
Education	20,606,089	16,661,920	18,953,974	16,350,844
Mission work	17,316,009	3,700,040	16,634,237	3,630,961
Presbyterian disaster assistance	14,065,208	-	18,432,734	-
Evangelism and church growth	16,871,094	5,232,060	16,950,578	5,134,378
Health	14,154,244	10,156,747	13,145,084	9,967,122
Missionary support	37,400,348	12,035,126	32,684,232	11,813,588
Christian education	11,239,374	11,508,703	10,356,909	11,303,782
Peace making/Justice	1,635,996	67,482	1,498,854	66,222
Hunger	1,501,149	324,535	1,117,888	318,476
Outside trusts/Life income funds	1,557,455	58,371,523	1,888,977	51,141,153
Racial ethnic	165,979	176,258	167,756	172,967
Women	631,236	81,114	647,986	79,600
Historical Foundation/Per capita	1,162,917	782,632	1,145,524	782,632
General endowments	-	104,781,640	-	104,780,563
Other	1,634,219	778,700	1,770,163	666,030
	<u>\$ 162,360,150</u>	<u>\$ 253,989,946</u>	<u>\$ 154,129,753</u>	<u>\$ 243,211,911</u>

(Continued)

AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 3 - TEMPORARILY AND PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS (Continued)

Net assets released from restrictions during the year ended December 31, 2009 and 2008, consisted of the following:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Jinishian Memorial Program	\$ 1,909,112	\$ 2,101,733
Education	3,813,746	4,257,469
Mission work	8,826,359	9,853,292
Evangelism and church growth	4,023,196	4,491,288
Health	2,683,851	2,996,113
Missionary support	6,394,713	7,138,727
Christian education	2,773,801	3,096,528
Peace making/Justice	1,178,657	1,315,792
Hunger	2,707,219	3,152,335
Presbyterian disaster assistance	9,090,395	11,102,847
Self development of people	<u>3,283,883</u>	<u>2,752,869</u>
	<u>\$ 46,684,932</u>	<u>\$ 52,258,993</u>

NOTE 4 - INVESTMENTS

Investments, including long-term investments, are primarily held in common funds managed by the Foundation on behalf of PCUSA, A Corporation. A summary of PCUSA, A Corporation's ownership of the investments held at December 31, 2009 and 2008 is as follows:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
	<u>Fair Value</u>	<u>Fair Value</u>
Short-term investments	\$ 42,507,435	\$ 46,440,773
Deposits	5,289,279	3,975,914
Stocks	17,530,498	19,126,554
Bonds	35,549,543	34,083,583
Stock mutual funds	185,692,875	153,451,033
Bond mutual funds	78,024,348	81,379,106
Alternative investments	<u>45,405,006</u>	<u>34,718,812</u>
Total investments	<u>\$ 409,998,984</u>	<u>\$ 373,175,775</u>

Income received by PCUSA, A Corporation from the Foundation is net of outside investment managers, custodian and Foundation administrative fees.

(Continued)

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 5 - FUNDS HELD IN TRUST BY OTHERS

Funds held in trust by others represent resources neither in the possession nor under the control of PCUSA, A Corporation, but held and administered by outside trustees, with PCUSA, A Corporation deriving only income from such funds. Such investments are recorded in the consolidated statement of financial position at the fair value of the principal amounts, which represents the estimated present value of the expected future cash flows, and the income, including fair value adjustments, is recorded in the consolidated statement of activities and changes in net assets.

NOTE 6 - ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION

Interpretation of Relevant Law: PCUSA, A Corporation classifies as permanently restricted net assets the original value of gifts donated to the permanent endowment, and the original value of subsequent gifts to the permanent endowment.

UPMIFA was enacted in Kentucky subsequent to year-end and is effective as of July 15, 2010. Therefore, PCUSA, A Corporation will report under UPMIFA in fiscal year 2010.

Appropriation of Endowment Assets: PCUSA, A Corporation has a spending formula agreement with the Foundation whereby PCUSA, A Corporation receives investment income from unrestricted and restricted endowments held by the Foundation on behalf of the General Assembly for mission use.

For the calendar year 2008 and 2009, the distribution of income was 5% of the average fair value based on the 20-quarter rolling average as of June 30, 2008 and 2007, respectively (an 18 month lag).

Starting with calendar year 2011, spending will be 90% of the prior year's spending amount in dollar terms. This adjusted policy will continue until the standard spending formula (5% of the five year average asset value, calculated using an 18 month lag) results in a spending amount that is less than 5% of the current asset value, at which time the standard policy will again be used to determine the spending level. It is anticipated that payments will approximate the estimated sustainable rates of total return (income and capital appreciation) after inflation. The spending formula will be monitored to determine the effects of changing return and inflation expectations on the preservation of purchasing power and the generation of appropriate levels of spendable income.

Investment Policies: The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation are charged with the responsibility of managing the endowment assets of the Church. The overall goal in management of these funds is to generate a long-term total rate of return that provides sustainable distributions to support the mission within reasonable levels of risk.

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12.

AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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NOTE 6 - ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION (Continued)

The Trustees adhere to modern portfolio theory, which has as its basis risk reduction through diversification. Diversification is obtained through the use of multiple asset classes as well as multiple investments within these asset classes. Asset classes that may be used include (but are not limited to) domestic and international stocks and bonds, hedge funds, private equity (venture capital and corporate finance), and real property (real estate, minerals, and timber). The investment strategy is implemented through the selection of external advisors and managers with expertise and successful histories in the management of specific asset classes.

The Trustees believe their role is one of setting and reviewing policy; and retaining, monitoring, and evaluating advisors and investment managers. It is the Trustees' desire to find ways to invest these funds in accordance with the social witness principles of the PCUSA. The Trustees will review the investment policy statement at least annually.

Return and risk expectations and investment constraints are the fundamentals that underlie all portfolio decisions. The return objectives, consistent with spending policy, is to distribute a percentage (net of all fees and expenses) of the assets in each permanent fund and have the value of each fund (and the corresponding distributions) grow with inflation. The funds should be invested to maximize return within appropriate risk tolerances, with the expectation that over a long (10 or 20 year) time horizon there is a reasonable expectation that the funds will be able to achieve both distribution and inflation goals. Based on current capital market assumptions, the funds have a 1% predicted probability of declining more than 19.4% in a given year.

Endowment net asset composition as of December 31, 2009:

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Permanently Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Donor-restricted endowment funds	\$ 23,671,205	\$ 79,997,073	\$ 175,835,723	\$ 279,504,001
Other restricted funds	-	-	78,154,223	78,154,223
Board-designated funds	<u>45,101,475</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>45,101,475</u>
Total endowment net assets	68,772,680	79,997,073	253,989,946	402,759,699
Net assets other than endowment	<u>16,950,058</u>	<u>82,363,077</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>99,313,135</u>
Total net assets	<u>\$ 85,722,738</u>	<u>\$ 162,360,150</u>	<u>\$ 253,989,946</u>	<u>\$ 502,072,834</u>

(Continued)

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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NOTE 6 - ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION (Continued)

Endowment net asset composition as of December 31, 2008:

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Permanently Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Donor-restricted endowment funds	\$ 12,023,404	\$ 61,761,889	\$ 176,930,183	\$ 250,715,476
Other restricted funds	-	-	66,281,728	66,281,728
Board-designated funds	<u>53,357,811</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>53,357,811</u>
Total endowment net assets	65,381,215	61,761,889	243,211,911	370,355,015
Net assets other than endowment	<u>150,358</u>	<u>92,367,864</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>92,518,222</u>
Total net assets	<u>\$ 65,531,573</u>	<u>\$ 154,129,753</u>	<u>\$ 243,211,911</u>	<u>\$ 462,873,237</u>

Changes in endowment net assets for the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008:

	2009			
	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Permanently Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Beginning balance, January 1, 2009	\$ 65,381,215	\$ 61,761,889	\$ 243,211,911	\$ 370,355,015
Additions	12,585,282	575,857	1,590,684	14,751,823
Income earned	3,297,442	2,460,144	450,399	6,207,985
Transfers and adjustments	(25,246,580)	763,318	(3,343,892)	(27,827,154)
Withdrawals	(7,645,081)	(9,080,447)	(76,116)	(16,801,644)
Realized/unrealized gains and losses	<u>20,400,402</u>	<u>23,516,312</u>	<u>12,156,960</u>	<u>56,073,674</u>
Ending balance, December 31, 2009	<u>\$ 68,772,680</u>	<u>\$ 79,997,073</u>	<u>\$ 253,989,946</u>	<u>\$ 402,759,699</u>

(Continued)

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AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 6 - ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION (Continued)

	2008			Total
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	
Beginning balance, January 1, 2008	\$ 127,986,432	\$ 125,811,368	\$ 263,831,527	\$ 517,629,327
Additions	14,284,983	89,239	1,882,167	16,256,389
Income earned	2,447,550	3,539,564	613,591	6,600,705
Transfers and adjustments	(17,205,932)	1,322,860	1,358,992	(14,524,080)
Withdrawals	(7,117,160)	(8,575,633)	-	(15,692,793)
Realized/unrealized gains and losses	(55,014,658)	(60,425,509)	(24,474,366)	(139,914,533)
Ending balance, December 31, 2008	<u>\$ 65,381,215</u>	<u>\$ 61,761,889</u>	<u>\$ 243,211,911</u>	<u>\$ 370,355,015</u>

Funds with Deficiencies: From time to time the fair value of assets associated with individual donor restricted endowment funds may fall below the level the donor requires PCUSA, A Corporation to retain as a fund of perpetual duration.

Deficiencies of this nature that are reported in unrestricted and designated net assets were \$9,146,619 as of December 31, 2008. These deficiencies resulted from unfavorable market fluctuations. There were no such deficiencies as of December 31, 2009.

NOTE 7 - MORTGAGES AND LOANS ON CHURCHES AND MANSES

A summary of the activity relating to mortgages and loans on churches and manses during the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008 are as follows:

	2009	2008
Receivables at January 1	\$ 4,593,909	\$ 5,324,586
New loans	349,000	-
Repayments	<u>(616,260)</u>	<u>(730,677)</u>
Receivables at December 31	4,326,649	4,593,909
Add accrued interest receivable	<u>6,711</u>	<u>10,714</u>
	4,333,360	4,604,623
Less allowance for loss	<u>(4,800)</u>	<u>(20,700)</u>
Net receivables at December 31	<u>\$ 4,328,560</u>	<u>\$ 4,583,923</u>

(Continued)

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 7 - MORTGAGES AND LOANS ON CHURCHES AND MANSES (Continued)

The ability of each borrower congregation to pay PCUSA, A Corporation for the loan(s) made to the congregation may depend on the contributions the congregation receives from its members. Therefore, payments to PCUSA, A Corporation may depend on the continued growth in membership of the borrower congregations, and on the maintenance of adequate contributions by individual members to their congregations, as well as on prudent management by those congregations of their finances. The following is a summary of the gross loan balances for each Synod at December 31, 2009 and 2008:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Covenant	\$ 421,906	\$ 446,856
Lincoln Trails	416,519	431,593
Living Waters	17,900	23,610
Mid-Atlantic	102,015	200,723
Northeast	352,188	387,712
Pacific	342,284	7,174
South Atlantic	1,574,636	1,802,787
Southern California/Hawaii	360,072	383,445
Southwest	175,106	196,194
The Sun	424,550	559,690
Trinity	<u>139,473</u>	<u>154,125</u>
	<u>\$ 4,326,649</u>	<u>\$ 4,593,909</u>

NOTE 8 - ALLOWANCES FOR LOAN LOSSES AND IMPAIRMENT OF LOANS

The outstanding principal balances of loans to churches, students, and Presbyterian schools and colleges for which an impairment has been recognized at December 31, 2009 and 2008 were \$68,309 and \$305,798, respectively, and the related allocated allowances for loan losses at December 31, 2009 and 2008 were \$0 and \$100,000, respectively. \$38,622 and \$0 in interest was received by PCUSA, A Corporation, on the impaired loans during 2009 and 2008, respectively. The total average impaired loan balances were approximately \$124,000 and \$294,000 at December 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively.

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AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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NOTE 9 - RECEIVABLES FROM RELATED ENTITIES

A summary of the activity relating to receivables from related entities, which includes unsecured student loans, during the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008, is as follows:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Receivables at January 1	\$ 8,620,967	\$ 9,089,351
New loans	14,104,259	18,469,682
Repayments	(14,604,283)	(18,459,731)
Loan recoveries (charge-offs)	<u>(195,939)</u>	<u>(478,335)</u>
Receivables at December 31	7,925,004	8,620,967
Less allowance for loss	<u>(1,254,485)</u>	<u>(1,597,210)</u>
Net receivables at December 31	<u>\$ 6,670,519</u>	<u>\$ 7,023,757</u>

NOTE 10 - PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

The components of property and equipment at December 31, 2009 and 2008 are as follows:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Land	\$ 3,909,666	\$ 3,887,958
Buildings and building improvements	46,465,397	46,234,773
Furniture and equipment	<u>25,206,283</u>	<u>24,701,756</u>
	75,581,346	74,824,487
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(50,618,171)</u>	<u>(47,130,284)</u>
	<u>\$ 24,963,175</u>	<u>\$ 27,694,203</u>

NOTE 11 - BENEFITS DATA

As explained below, PCUSA, A Corporation offers a multi-employer defined benefit plan, a major medical plan and a retirement savings plan to eligible employees.

Substantially all employees of PCUSA, A Corporation participates in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the "Benefits Plan") which is administered by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the "Board of Pensions"). The Benefits Plan is a comprehensive benefits program, which provides a defined benefit pension plan, a long-term disability plan, a death benefits plan and a major medical plan. The assets of the Benefits Plan are commingled for investment purposes; however, accounting for each plan is separately maintained.

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MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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NOTE 11 - BENEFITS DATA (Continued)

The defined benefit pension plan's total net assets available for benefits, as reported by the Board of Pensions, were approximately \$5,869,502,000 and \$4,831,658,000 at December 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively. The defined benefit pension plan's total Accumulated Plan Benefit Obligations, as reported by the Board of Pensions, were approximately \$4,833,829,000 and \$4,924,443,000 at December 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively. Since the Benefits Plan is a Church Plan under the Internal Revenue Code, PCUSA, A Corporation has no financial interest in the Benefits Plan assets nor does it have any liability for benefits payable, contingent or otherwise, under the Benefits Plan or its components.

PCUSA, A Corporation pays the entire cost associated with the major medical plan. Employees have the option to purchase additional coverage such as dental, long-term care, and life insurance.

In addition, PCUSA, A Corporation sponsors a retirement savings plan, which is a tax-deferred annuity plan. The employer contribution is designed to provide equalization of the impact of tax differences between clergy and lay personnel. All exempt lay employees are eligible to participate in the employer portion of the plan. PCUSA, A Corporation pays an amount based upon a calculation of tax differences. Substantially all employees may make voluntary contributions to the plan.

PCUSA, A Corporation's expenses for the plans for the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008 were as follows:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Administered by Board of Pensions		
Pension plan	\$ 3,697,239	\$ 3,651,788
Major medical plan	<u>6,399,865</u>	<u>6,343,390</u>
	10,097,104	9,995,178
Administered by others - retirement savings plan	<u>291,459</u>	<u>315,605</u>
	<u>\$ 10,388,563</u>	<u>\$ 10,310,783</u>

(Continued)

AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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NOTE 12 - CONCENTRATION OF RISKS

Revenue Risk: PCUSA, A Corporation's primary source of revenue is contributions from Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods and individuals. The majority of these contributions are transmitted via the Presbyteries that are grouped into 16 Synods comprising of a total of 173 Presbyteries. The following is a summary of the contributions by each of the Synods during the years ended 2009 and 2008:

<u>Synod</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Alaska-Northwest	\$ 909,646	\$ 1,086,501
Covenant	2,868,960	3,268,348
Individuals and Other Church Related	7,955,342	8,941,633
Lakes and Prairies	2,760,919	2,851,193
Lincoln Trails	2,419,616	2,783,643
Living Waters	1,753,289	2,070,114
Mid-America	1,419,094	1,531,971
Mid-Atlantic	4,559,870	5,592,913
Northeast	3,392,627	4,172,726
Pacific	2,463,997	2,717,152
Puerto Rico	31,436	20,400
South Atlantic	3,139,130	3,781,787
Southern California/Hawaii	1,809,507	1,907,651
Southwest	756,391	926,718
The Rocky Mountains	807,684	967,228
The Sun	2,218,192	2,587,299
Trinity	<u>4,495,520</u>	<u>4,727,897</u>
	<u>\$ 43,761,220</u>	<u>\$ 49,935,174</u>

Credit Risk: PCUSA, A Corporation maintains cash and cash equivalents with various financial institutions. At times, such cash and cash equivalents may be in excess of the FDIC insurance level.

At December 31, 2009 and 2008, approximately 4.7% and 5.7%, respectively, of total short-term investments and long-term investments held by the Foundation were held in one common stock, The Proctor & Gamble Company.

NOTE 13 - FAIR VALUE

The following methods and assumptions were used by PCUSA, A Corporation in estimating its fair value disclosures for financial instruments:

Cash, Cash Equivalents and Short-Term Investments: The carrying amounts reported in the consolidated statements of financial position for cash and short-term instruments, included in investments and accrued income, approximate their fair value.

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MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 13 - FAIR VALUE (Continued)

Mortgages, Loans and Receivables From Related Parties: Mortgages, loans and receivables from related parties that management has the intent and ability to hold for the foreseeable future or until maturity or payoff are reported at the principal balance outstanding, and an allowance for loan losses, which approximates fair value.

Fair value is defined as the price that would be received for an asset or paid to transfer a liability (an exit price) in PCUSA, A Corporation's principal or most advantageous market for the asset or liability in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date.

A fair value hierarchy requires an entity to maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs when measuring fair value. Three levels of inputs may be used to measure fair value:

Level 1: Quoted prices (unadjusted) for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the entity has the ability to access as of the measurement date.

Level 2: Significant other observable inputs other than Level 1 prices such as quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities; quoted prices in markets that are not active; or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data.

Level 3: Significant unobservable inputs that reflect a reporting entity's own assumptions about the assumptions that market participants would use in pricing an asset or liability.

In many cases, a valuation technique used to measure fair value includes inputs from multiple levels of the fair value hierarchy. The lowest level of significant input determines the placement of the entire fair value measurement in the hierarchy.

Other Investments: Other investments represent a pool of investments consisting of low-interest loans to community-based organizations to assist the poor and financially disenfranchised across the country and the world. The balance of these investments is reported by the Fund manager at the principal balance outstanding, which approximates fair value.

Certificates of Deposit: The fair value of certificates of deposit were recalculated by applying the interest rate to the initial investments and no discount for credit quality or liquidity were determined to be applicable.

Mutual Fund Equity and Mutual Fund Fixed Income: The equity and fixed income mutual funds invest in publicly traded securities and bonds with quoted market prices. The fair values of the equity and fixed income mutual funds are based upon the values of such funds reflecting all investments at fair value as reported by the Fund managers.

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AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 13 - FAIR VALUE (Continued)

Alternative Investments: Alternative investments consist of privately issued securities and investments in real estate. For privately issued securities, the Investment Manager uses the income approach which generally consists of the net present value of estimated future cash flows, adjusted as appropriate for liquidity, credit, market and/or other risk factors to determine fair value. The Investment Manager provides the fair value of the investments in real estate which is presented net of any debt and is determined based on management's best estimate of key assumptions, including the budgeted net operating income of the real estate investments and the capitalization rate or an appraisal obtained from a third party.

Assets and Liabilities Measured on a Recurring Basis

Assets and liabilities measured at fair value on a recurring basis are summarized below for 2009 and 2008:

	Fair Value Measurements at December 31, 2009 Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Assets:			
Investments			
Cash equivalents	\$ 38,919,980	\$ -	\$ -
Corporate bonds	12,283,569	-	-
Treasury bonds	16,904,240	-	-
Agency bonds	3,715,026	-	-
Mortgages	2,799,936	-	-
Equities	17,476,498	-	-
Other	920,478	-	7,876,270
Certificates of deposit	-	9,119,709	-
Mutual fund: equity	-	176,875,021	-
Mutual fund: fixed income	-	77,703,251	-
Alternative investments	-	-	45,405,006
Total investments	\$ 93,019,727	\$ 263,697,981	\$ 53,281,276
Life income funds	\$ -	\$ 7,549,710	\$ -
Funds held in trust by others	-	52,408,219	-

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MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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NOTE 13 - FAIR VALUE (Continued)

	Fair Value Measurements at December 31, 2008 Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Assets:			
Investments	\$ 17,280,557	\$ 310,888,422	\$ 45,006,796

The table below presents a reconciliation and income statement classification of gains and losses for all assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis using significant unobservable inputs for the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008:

	Beginning Balance January 1, 2009	Net Realized/ Unrealized Gains (Losses)	Purchase, Issuances and Settlements	Transfers In and/Out of Level 3	Ending Balance December 31, 2009
Corporate bonds	\$ 1,542,440	\$ (6,280)	\$ (1,536,160)	\$ -	\$ -
Agency bonds	190,474	(930)	(189,544)	-	-
Treasury bonds	343,259	(590)	(342,669)	-	-
Mortgages	170,720	1,220	(171,940)	-	-
Other	8,041,091	(62,340)	(102,481)	-	7,876,270
Alternative investments	<u>34,718,812</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,686,194</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>45,405,006</u>
	<u>\$ 45,006,796</u>	<u>\$ (68,920)</u>	<u>\$ 8,343,400</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 53,281,276</u>

(Continued)

AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 13 - FAIR VALUE (Continued)

	Fair Value Measurements Using Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3) <u>Investments</u>
Beginning balance, January 1, 2008	\$ 42,792,918
Total gains or losses (realized/unrealized)	(101,755)
Purchases, issuances, and settlements	<u>2,315,633</u>
Ending balance, December 31, 2008	<u>\$ 45,006,796</u>

The table below summarizes changes in unrealized gains and losses recorded in earnings for the year ended December 31, 2009 for Level 3 assets and liabilities that are still held at December 31, 2009 and 2008.

	Changes in Unrealized Gains/Losses Relating to Assets Still Held at Reporting Date for the Year Ended December 31, 2009		
	<u>Trading Securities</u>	<u>Available for Sale Securities</u>	<u>Total</u>
Other changes in fair value	\$ -	\$ (68,920)	\$ (68,920)

	Changes in Unrealized Gains/Losses Relating to Assets Still Held at Reporting Date for the Year Ended December 31, 2008		
	<u>Trading Securities</u>	<u>Available for Sale Securities</u>	<u>Total</u>
Other changes in fair value	\$ -	\$ (101,755)	\$ (101,755)

NOTE 14 - COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

PCUSA, A Corporation holds and participates in an insurance fund (the "Fund") that exists to provide a source of funds for that portion of certain losses not covered by commercial insurance to cover deductibles on commercial insurance and for certain classes of uninsured losses. Various General Assembly-level agencies and corporations are included in the Fund. The largest possible loss to be assumed in any one event or occurrence is \$250,000, with \$1,000,000 as the largest potential aggregate of all claims in a single calendar year.

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 14 - COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES (Continued)

The minimum balance of the self-insurance fund shall not fall below \$5,000,000 as a result of claims paid. In the event this happens, an assessment will be made to the insured entities to return the fund to the \$5,000,000 minimum balance. The assessment will be based on each insured entity's 5-year loss ratio. A 1% minimum assessment will be made by the entities that have not experienced any losses in the 5-year period.

The balance of the Fund held by PCUSA, A Corporation was \$4,944,106 and \$4,249,019 at December 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively. The self insurance fund fell below the minimum due to a decline in market value and not as a result of claims paid.

Additionally, PCUSA, A Corporation has excess insurance coverage for certain losses covered by commercial insurance up to \$25 million per occurrence on a policy that sits over the general liability and auto liability policies.

During the ordinary course of business, PCUSA, A Corporation is subject to pending and threatened legal actions. Management of PCUSA, A Corporation does not believe that any of these actions will have a material adverse effect on PCUSA, A Corporation's consolidated financial position or change in net assets.

NOTE 15 - RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Foundation provides certain investment, custodial and deferred giving services to PCUSA, A Corporation. The Foundation recoups the cost of those services not covered from the income of its own endowment funds and the annual grant from the General Assembly by quarterly charges against the investment pools in which the funds administered by the Foundation are invested. These charges were recovered equally from the principal and income of these pools. Such costs consist of salary and benefits, 51% of the Foundation's operating expenses; outside investment services, 23% of the Foundation's operating expenses; and other operating expenses, 26% of the Foundation's operating expenses.

The income received by PCUSA, A Corporation from the Foundation is net of outside investment managers, custodial and Foundation administrative fees as described previously. PCUSA, A Corporation's investments and unrestricted and restricted endowment funds held by the Foundation on behalf of the General Assembly at December 31, 2009, totaled approximately \$ 364 million.

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AUDIT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 15 - RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (Continued)

The Foundation's custodial cost recovery and investment management fees are assessed daily based on the prior day's market value against the total fund.

There are certain church loan funds whereby the fiduciary ownership belongs to the Board of National Missions, a constituent corporation of the Foundation. Accordingly, these funds are not reflected in the consolidated financial statements but are administered by PCUSA, A Corporation. These loan funds were approximately \$192 million and \$175 million at December 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively.

PCUSA, A Corporation served as a receiving agent for funds designated for the Board of Pensions. PCUSA, A Corporation received \$2,036,720 and \$2,268,271 for the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively, of which \$729,029 and \$790,396 was yet to be remitted to the Board of Pensions at December 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively.

PCUSA, A Corporation leases office space and provides administrative support to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. ("PILP") by contract. For the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008, administrative support charged to PILP was \$137,268 and \$134,027 respectively. Office space charged to PILP was \$ 49,302 and \$47,850 for 2009 and 2008, respectively.

On June 29, 2000, PCUSA, A Corporation entered into an operating agreement with PILP under which PILP will provide administrative services (e.g., origination and loan servicing) for PCUSA, A Corporation's church loan program at cost in an effort to streamline the coordination process between PCUSA, A Corporation's church loan program and PILP's loan program. PCUSA, A Corporation reimbursed PILP \$270,271 and \$257,183 for the actual costs of such services during 2009 and 2008, respectively.

PCUSA, A Corporation and PILP have issued joint loans through a participation arrangement. For the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008, total loans outstanding were \$31,256,161 and \$27,475,402, respectively, under this participation arrangement.

The current commitment, effective May 1, 2009, to PILP is a five-year commitment to invest up to \$5,000,000 in short and intermediate term deposit accounts. As of December 31, 2009 and 2008, investments with PILP were \$8,985,286 and \$8,690,082, respectively. At December 31, 2009 and 2008 fixed interest rates ranged from 1.78% to 4.070% and 2.66% to 4.26%, respectively, and the adjustable rate ranged from 1.78% to 2.08% and 2.71% to 2.96%, respectively. For the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008, the Foundation did not invest with PILP from PCUSA, A Corporation's unrestricted endowment funds.

PCUSA, A Corporation leases office space to Presbyterian Publishing Corporation ("PPC") under an operating lease. For the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008, rental income was \$161,597 and \$156,665, respectively. Future minimum rental income under the operating lease, which expires in December 2011 with an option to renew, is \$166,343 annually.

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MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
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NOTE 15 - RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (Continued)

Other related expenses charged to PPC for telephone and copy services were \$138,630 and \$130,681 in 2009 and 2008, respectively.

PPC publishes various pamphlets, magazines, and books for PCUSA, A Corporation during the year on a project-by-project basis. Expenses related to this type of work were \$138,630 in 2009 and \$130,681 in 2008. PPC also pays PCUSA, A Corporation for advertising space in various church publications. Advertising expense under such arrangements was \$13,873 and \$18,739 in 2009 and 2008, respectively.

PCUSA, A Corporation participates in commercial insurance programs, whereby premiums are negotiated and paid by PCUSA, A Corporation. The Board of Pensions, Foundation, PILP and PPC reimburse PCUSA, A Corporation for expenses paid on their behalf. Expenses incurred for commercial insurance paid by PCUSA, A Corporation for December 31, 2009 and 2008 are as follows:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Foundation	\$ 106,556	\$ 111,609
Board of Pensions	383,937	407,295
PILP	67,012	45,780
PPC	79,494	78,923

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ADDENDUM: HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B or C Co-infection

[Note: This addendum was added after the 219th General Assembly (2010) as an acknowledgement of the dangers of co-infection with Hepatitis B and C and other blood-borne diseases.]

In the United States, Hepatitis B and C viral co-infection are among the leading causes of hospital admission and death among HIV infected persons. While this report does not discuss Hepatitis B or C, and while they differ from HIV/AIDS in transmission, treatment, health impacts, and level of stigma, the danger of co-infection, particularly in the US, merits some discussion. Internationally, Hepatitis B and C are not considered diseases of poverty, nor are they predominantly diseases of poor women in developing nations, as are HIV/AIDS. (Note: Hepatitis, or disease of the liver, includes the form spread by the “A” virus that can be transmitted by contaminated water or food poisoning and is treatable by vaccine with generally full recovery, though antibodies remain in the blood providing immunity.)

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is a blood borne viral infection transmitted primarily through high-risk sexual behavior. Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a blood-borne viral infection transmitted primarily through injection drug use. Though it can be, it is not efficiently transmitted sexually. Thus these viruses share much of the same modes of transmission as HIV. They can also be transmitted by an infected pregnant woman during delivery to a newborn. Approximately 10 percent worldwide and 5 percent domestically of all persons infected with HIV are co-infected with HBV/HCV.¹ Among injection drug users specifically, coinfection with HIV and HCV is common (50 percent–90 percent). Not only are persons who are HIV infected at behaviorally increased risk of contracting HBV/HCV, the rate of progression and complications from viral hepatitis are accelerated in patients with HIV co-infection.² Both HBV and HCV have acute and chronic forms though HBV less frequently progresses to chronicity. Both can progress to cirrhosis or liver cancer and are the most frequent causes of liver cancer.³

Vaccination is available for both Hepatitis A virus (HAV; not associated with HIV) and B viruses. There is no vaccination for HCV. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination of children against HAV and HBV.^{4,5} To prevent HBV infection in HIV-infected persons, the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends universal Hepatitis B vaccination of susceptible patients with HIV/AIDS. Treatment for either HBV or HCV is supportive, not curative. In view of the incidence of HIV—hepatitis coinfection and its personal and social consequences screening of all persons at risk of HIV should also include screening for HBV/HCV. Access to treatment for HBV/HCV as well as for HIV/AIDS needs simultaneously to be assured.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the three most common forms of acute viral hepatitis in the United States—Hepatitis A, B, and C—have declined dramatically between 1995 and 2005, with hepatitis A and B at the lowest levels ever recorded since the government began collecting surveillance data more than forty years ago.⁶ Hepatitis B and C are diseases that can lead to liver cancer and death. The main factor behind the declines in new cases of Hepatitis A and B were the availability of vaccines and strong federally supported immunization programs. The declines in Hepatitis B were greatest among children and teens age 15 and younger, likely the result of high vaccination coverage in this age group.⁷ Declines in reported new cases of Hepatitis C were likely due to reductions in high-risk behaviors among injection drug users, as well as efforts to diagnose individuals infected with Hepatitis C and the promotion of health behaviors to reduce person-to-person transmission of the virus.

“The sharp declines in rates of Hepatitis A and B are one of the big public health success stories of the last 10 years. The drops in new cases of Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B are evidence that our prevention strategies have been successful, particularly the widespread use of vaccines for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B. In order for these declines to continue, our prevention efforts must be sustained,” according to Dr. Kevin Fenton, director of CDC’s National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention.⁸

The reported cases of acute Hepatitis B also dropped to the lowest rate ever recorded in 2005 (1.8 per 100,000), a decline of 79 percent from 1990. In addition to the declines noted in children, Hepatitis B rates also declined among adults but remained highest among those 25 to 44 years of age and among people with behavioral risk factors such as high-risk sexual activity and injection drug use. Cases of Hepatitis C have also declined steadily since the late 1980s. However, this trend should be viewed with caution since surveillance for acute Hepatitis C is limited because many individuals do not immediately develop symptoms and do not know they are infected with the virus.

In 2006, CDC issued new guidelines to increase vaccination coverage among adults at risk for Hepatitis B encouraging vaccination of adults at high risk for Hepatitis B, particularly those with multiple sex partners or whose sex partners are already infected, men who have sex with men, and injection drug users. More than 4.5 million Americans are currently living with chronic Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Numbers of persons overseas with these diseases, singly or in combination, are based on extrapolations from areas with more adequate screening and treatment programs.

¹ CDC. Coinfection with HIV and Hepatitis C Virus. Atlanta: CDC, November 2005.

² CDC. MMWR. Guidelines for Preventing Opportunistic Infections Among HIV-Infected Persons—2002. Atlanta: CDC, June 14, 2002 /51(RR08);1–46

³ Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Hepatitis and Liver Cancer

A National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Hepatitis B and C: Report Brief. Washington DC: IOM, January 2010.

⁴ CDC. MMWR. Prevention of Hepatitis A Through Active or Passive Immunization Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Atlanta: CDC, May 19, 2006 / 55(RR07);1–23

⁵ CDC. MMWR. Hepatitis B Vaccination Recommendations for Infants, Children, and Adolescents MMWR 2005;54(RR-16)

⁶ CDC stats for Hepatitis reported cases in the U.S. through 2003 <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics.htm>

⁷ Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), “Surveillance for Acute Viral Hepatitis—United States, 2005,” is available at www.cdc.gov/mmwr.

⁸ For information about viral hepatitis visit <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/>.